

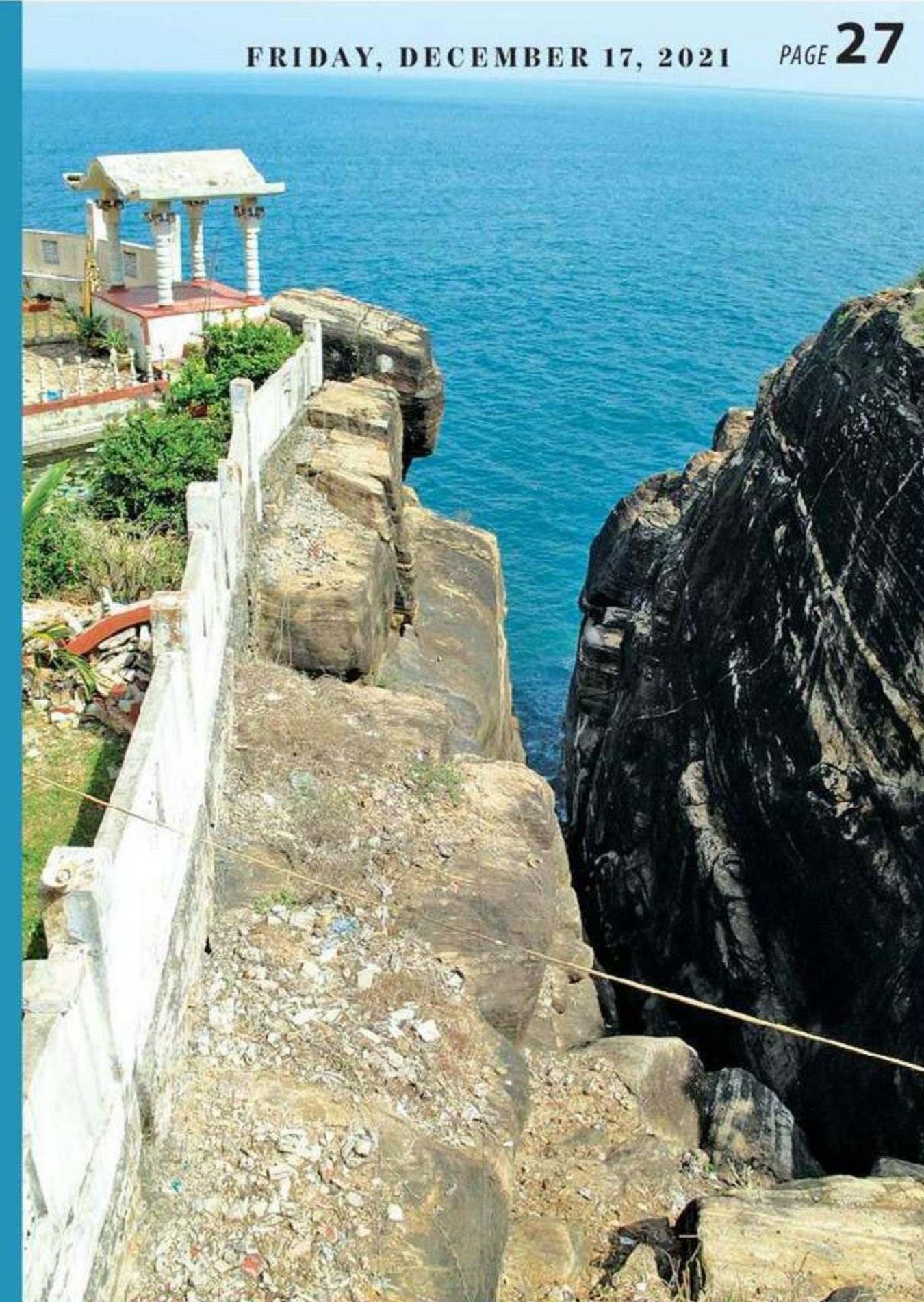
Daily News

Trinco

To re-ignite the passions of town & country folk

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Groups love doing birding and wildlife tours



Trinco Fort and Koneswaram Kovil Temple

PIGEON ISLAND AND TRINCO MAGIC



Sacred sari trysts, great for making wishes



Make a ritual offering



Hire a helicopter and see it from the sky

JULIET COOMBE

Off Nilaveli Beach is a fascinating nature reserve, where extremely rare blue rock pigeons flock and you can escape the buzzy and lively town of Trinco, where deer have also made it their home.

Every morning at dawn these beautiful blue pigeons fly inland to the paddy fields and return at about 6 o'clock in the evening. Here the hundreds of rare blue rock pigeons that nest and roost on the island eat their full before returning to the island just off Nilaveli Beach. You can hire a nature expert or go with one of the fisherman to Pigeon Island, a tiny piece of land only a short distance away from the mainland. There is an air of the pirate about the local fisherman, with sharp eyes, and always with a sense of adventure which is required on these short choppy sea trips.

The reefs around the island are very shallow, which means that you can walk in off the beach and see blue and purple corals, colourful fish, shells, starfish, kalamari, groupers, sea snakes and turtles within seconds. Jamaldeen a local guide will point out some hollows in the sand where turtles have laid and hatched their eggs. When asked if there is a season when they come, he and his friend smile and reply, "They come when they feel like it."

The island is the perfect place to take a picnic lunch and after exploring its many natural wonders, you can cool off from the heat of the day with a swim or capture iconic pictures like the twinkling Trinco fishing boats and of course their flock of loyal blue birds. The famous blue pigeons flying high are also great postcard images to send home.

Trincomalee is also a great spot to explore, it has been a pilgrimage site for thousands of years and home to all sorts of interesting characters. Ravanna Gate in the heart of the Koneswaram Kovil (temple) complex is a fascinating place, as is the fort, which is still occupied by the military and its hanging off a rock temple is truly spectacular.

Make sure you make a wish on the tree tied with coins wrapped in saris with little notes and messages to the gods.

Also check out

the colourful town market to see the deer left behind in the 1800s by an English family who kept a pair of spotted deer as pets, because leopards were it seems increasingly in short supply to impress their neighbours and probably also not the fashion that year. The deer couple bred and the herd escalated over the next two hundred years and has now become a familiar feature of the town as I discovered in a three wheeler, seeing a deer crossing the road in front of you happens more often or not.

Trinco is an amazing place to base yourself whether you are a lover of artisan shopping or like hanging out on one of the many beautiful beaches or taking time out for a spiritual pilgrimage and most interesting climb to Koneswaram Kovil. An incredible Hindu temple complex with over a thousand pillars and for me one of Sri Lanka's most epic views of the sea. Just remember to take plenty of water and don't get too close to the edge if you suffer from vertigo.



It is a great way to discover this amazing wildlife reserve by fishing boat



Great spot for arty fishing shots



Snorkel of Dive: this is a beautiful spot



Rare Blue rock pigeons live here



Pigeon Island looks great seen from the sky