

# Rising Stories In The East



Dear Travel Partners,

As we step into November, the Eastern horizon opens up to reveal some of the year's most remarkable landscapes and experiences. The season's change brings cooler days and vibrant surroundings, making it the ideal time for both new and returning travelers to dive deeper into the Northeast's beauty, culture, and unique offerings.

This month, Rising Stories of the East highlights the region's growing accessibility, with improved flight connections, enhanced infrastructure, and upcoming events that will draw travelers from across the globe. The ATOAI Convention in Tawang this December is a major milestone for the travel industry, spotlighting Northeast India's potential to inspire and surprise. For operators and travelers alike, it's a gateway to new partnerships, novel programs, and a deeper understanding of this culturally rich landscape.

In this issue, we introduce a range of hidden gems and time-honored destinations, each offering travelers a story worth experiencing. November is a time to be inspired by the Northeast's rare blend of natural beauty, history, and warm communities. Whether it's a quiet walk through tea gardens, a thrilling trek in the hills, or a discovery of ancient traditions, we invite readers to embrace the Eastern spirit with open hearts.

Thank you for being part of our journey as we shine a light on the stories, connections, and shared ambitions that continue to shape the East.

Best Regards,  
Amit Periwal

## Upcoming Events



**Cherry Blossom Festival**  
Date : 15-16th November, 2024  
Celebrated at : Meghalaya

**Significance:** Known as the "Scotland of the East," Shillong is a picturesque hill station celebrated for its stunning beauty, rolling hills, and pleasant climate, attracting visitors year-round. However, November is particularly special as the city transforms into a breathtaking spectacle of blooming cherry blossoms. Travelers flock to Shillong to witness the enchanting sight of *Prunus Cerasoides* adorning the Khasi hills, creating a captivating landscape that draws both admiration and photography, making it a memorable experience for all who visit.



**Sakewa**  
Date : 20th November, 2024  
Celebrated at : Sikkim

**Significance:** In Sikkim, Sakewa holds great cultural and religious importance, especially for the Limbu and Rai communities, who are part of the larger Kirat ethnic group. The festival marks the close of the harvest season, with particular emphasis on the celebration of Sakewa Udhauli. This event complements Udhauli, which is observed in the spring to pray for a successful planting season. During Udhauli, the Kirat people give thanks to nature and the deities for the abundant harvest and seek their protection as they prepare for the approaching winter.



**Wangala Festival**  
Date : 21st November, 2024  
Celebrated at : Dimapur, Kohima, Nagaland

**Significance:** Wangala is a post-harvest festival celebrated by the Garo tribe of Nagaland in honor of "Misi Saljong," the sun god of fertility, to give thanks for a successful harvest. Observed on November 21st, the festival includes traditional performances such as the Wangala dance and Rugala, along with indigenous games like Tug of War and stone lifting. Participants dress in vibrant attire, accompanied by rhythmic drum music, feasts, and Chu (rice beer). Key rituals, such as the pouring of rice beer (Rugala) and the burning of incense, are conducted by the village priest to commence the festivities.



# Sector Updates



## Flight operations resume at Rupsi Airport, restoring Dhubri's connectivity to Kolkata and Guwahati.

- Flight operations from Rupsi Airport to Kolkata and Guwahati have resumed after nearly a year-long suspension, with services initially running three times a week (Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays). The restart was inaugurated by Cabinet Minister Urkhao Gwra Brahma.
- The flights are operated by Alliance Air under the UDAN scheme using a 72-seater ATR-72 aircraft, benefiting students, business professionals, and patients who require faster transportation. Operations at the airport are managed by around 150 personnel.
- Flights are expected to increase to five days a week after October, with the refurbished airport aiming to enhance regional connectivity and boost the local economy.

## The Postcard Hotel at Durrung Tea Estate, Tezpur.



- The Postcard at Durrung Estate is set amidst 1,400 acres of lush tea plantations, offering a unique holiday experience that combines luxury with the tranquility of nature, celebrated for producing some of the finest teas in the world.
- The estate features twelve exquisitely designed luxury rooms, each crafted to create an intimate connection with the surrounding landscape, ensuring a delightful escape for guests.
- Guests enjoy a range of lavish amenities, including endless cups of premium tea brewed from the estate's own leaves, all while taking in breathtaking views from their private patios overlooking the verdant plantations.



## The attempt to set a Guinness World Record for the largest underwater human chain in the Andaman Islands.

- The Andaman and Nicobar Administration is organizing a Guinness World Record attempt for the longest underwater human chain at Radha Nagar Beach in Swaraj Dweep (Havelock Island) from November 11 to 17, 2024.
- The event is open to both certified and recreational scuba divers from across India and aims to promote tourism by highlighting the region's diving opportunities.
- Support for the event will come from the Andaman Nicobar Command, the Andaman Chamber of Commerce, and certifying agencies such as PADI, SSI, and NIWS.

## GTA to start Siliguri-Mirik helicopter services



- The Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) is introducing helicopter services between Siliguri and Mirik to enhance tourism and promote Mirik as a wedding destination.
- Passengers will enjoy stunning aerial views of Mt. Kanchenjunga, Mirik Lake, and surrounding tea gardens, using a helipad established in 1991.
- This initiative aims to attract adventure enthusiasts while highlighting the region's natural beauty and boosting its tourism appeal.



# De-Coding Paradise Unexplored



## Baratang Island: A Paradise of Limestone Caves and Mangrove Creeks

- Baratang Island is renowned for its natural wonders, including impressive limestone caves, dense mangrove creeks, tidal swamp forests, and intriguing mud volcanoes. Located between the Middle and South Andaman, it serves as the first gateway north from the capital city.
- Although slightly less developed and not a major tourist hub, Baratang offers a unique charm as a hidden gem of the Andaman Islands. Visitors can enjoy the island's natural beauty without the distractions of commercial tourism, as there are no luxury accommodations or fancy restaurants.
- The local community primarily speaks languages other than English, which adds to the island's authentic experience and enhances its natural allure.



## Budha Organic Kiwi Garden

- Budha Organic Kiwi Garden is near Helipad Ground in Yuksam, West Sikkim, with an entry fee of Rs 20. A 30-minute lecture on kiwi cultivation by Mr. Budha Hang Subha, the "Kiwi Man of Sikkim," is available for Rs 500.
- The kiwi season runs from September to December, peaking from October to December, allowing visitors to see and taste fresh organic kiwis.
- The garden emphasizes sustainable farming practices, making it a great destination for nature lovers to enjoy Yuksam's beauty while learning about organic kiwi farming in a tranquil setting.



## Pfutsero-Chizami Region in Nagaland

- The Pfutsero-Chizami region in southern Nagaland boasts picturesque hills and rich biodiversity, supporting endangered species and forming part of the Chindwin River's catchment.
- Home to the Chakhesang tribe, the area is known for its vibrant festivals and crafts, with Pfutsero being the highest town in Nagaland and a gateway to Chizami's cultural richness.
- Pfutsero's cool weather attracts visitors seeking to explore the natural beauty and cultural heritage of the region.



## Market Tour - Explore the distinctive nature of Kolkata's traditional markets

Duration: 08 hours from hotel to hotel (approx)

Timings: 08:00 hrs to 16:00 hrs.

Pick Up Point: Hotel

Season: October – March

Strictly For: 01 to 05 pax

Inclusions: AC Transport, Local guide, Mineral Water & Incidentals.  
Places Covered: Flower Market – Burra Bazar – Ezra Street – Chitpur Road: – Mechua Fruit Market – Kumartuli – College Street Book Market - New Market

- The walk will be conducted by experienced licensed guides from the department of tourism.
- Confirmation of language speaking guides will be subject to availability at the time of booking.
- Small group gives exclusivity to the participants and the guide is able to conduct the walk without any hassle.



# Flavours Of the East

## Watepa: Fish Grilled in Banana Leaves



Watepa is a traditional dish from Northeast India, especially popular in Meghalaya. This unique culinary creation involves fresh fish marinated in a blend of fragrant spices and herbs, wrapped in banana leaves, and grilled to perfection over an open flame or in a tandoor.

### Method :

- Clean the fish and make shallow cuts. In a bowl, mix the marinade ingredients and coat the fish thoroughly. Allow it to marinate for at least 30 minutes.
- Heat the banana leaves over a flame or in hot water until they become pliable.
- Place the marinated fish on a banana leaf, adding green chilies and fresh coriander on top. Wrap the leaf securely around the fish.
- Cook the wrapped fish on a grill or in an oven preheated to 180°C (350°F) for 25-30 minutes, or until the fish is cooked through.
- Carefully unwrap the fish and serve it hot with steamed rice and your choice of dipping sauce.

## Reviews

**Lalgudi Venkatesh Sridhar**  
3 reviews · 0 photos  
★★★★★ 3 hours ago **NEW**

Self and wife were on a tour to Pelling and Darjeeling from 12th SEP to 17th SEP. The transport for my journey was organised by Clubside Tours. I must say that the entire trip with regard to transport was organised well and co-ordinated very well by ABHINAV RAI. I must say that Abhinav Rai planned it immaculately and we had no issues at any place. Also at Darjeeling we were handled by driver Man Bahadur very well. Man Bahadur a perfectionist was always on time and performed his duty diligently with smile. Overall I appreciate the support provided by Abhinav and Driver Man Bahadur. Just wish to say that was not that comfortable with the hotel provided in Darjeeling though Clubside tours had nothing to do with HOTAC. My best wishes to Clubside tour.

with best wishes.  
LALGUDI SRIDHAR / USHA SRIDHAR

**Arvind Bhatia**  
6 reviews · 0 photos  
★★★★★

Have been working with Clubside for a long time now. They are very professional, proactive, responsive and above all is quality of services they provide. Highly recommended

**Positive**  
Professionalism

**Alpa Asher**  
4 reviews · 0 photos  
★★★★★

Very professional with a human touch. Not only do they provide best of cars and drivers but help out in providing all the details and guidance as and when needed. Even on last minute booking they managed to provide the best.

Salma has been a great support person to connect with and I have been reaching out to her since 3-4 years now.

Great work guys!! Keep rocking

**Positive**  
Responsiveness, Quality, Professionalism

**janardhanan Bakka**  
1 review · 7 photos  
★★★★★ 3 weeks ago **NEW**

Went for a 5 days tour to Guwahati and Shillong. Driver was good and took us to all places patiently. Coordinator was following it up regularly and checked whether all ok with care and concern. We were only 2 ladies and we travelled very safely. Thanks ekanantha Nath and Soniya 🙏🙏🙏🙏🙏

**Adventure54631259602**  
1 contribution  
★★★★★

**Untouched Paradise - Andaman**  
Sept 2024 · Couples

This is such a wonderful trip, amazing views, locations and excellent coordination by tour operator. Enjoyed a lot...

### OFFICES AT

Siliguri | Darjeeling | Kolkata | Guwahati | Port Blair | Thimpu

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