

# Jorhat Tourism

NEWSLETTER

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Dear Reader,

Jorhat has a number of firsts it can lay claim to. Just like the heritage legacy of tea, the city plays host to Assam's oldest horse racing events - the Jorhat Horse Races.

Beginning with participants from a few segments of society, it has over the decades grown into a popular event with wider involvement and much celebration.

This month we feature the Jorhat Horse Races. The next edition of the event is slated for the end of March 2024. Watch this space, plan your travel and enjoy one of India's legacy events. Welcome to Jorhat!

**Pulak Mahanta, ACS**  
*District Commissioner -  
Jorhat &  
Chairman-Destination  
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## THE JORHAT HORSE RACES

What is common to tea, Assam, the Assam Valley Light Horse, Manipuri polo, the Allied forces, Dibru-Saikhowa and Mising tribesmen? It is - Jorhat Races!

The races here are considered among the oldest horse racing events in Assam, with the earliest accounts traced to 1864\*. The initial years saw European participation, and it included golf tournaments, polo and even rugby matches. Leading up to 1947, the race in February coincided with the Assam Valley Light Horse (AVLH) Annual Camp.

The 140th edition of this very eagerly looked forward to 'Races' took place in February 2023.

More than 10,000 enthusiasts congregate at the Gymkhana grounds to watch and enjoy the races that have added a celebratory flavour over the years.



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The Jorhat Horse Races has evolved into a prestigious status with the current trophy named as 'The Governor's Cup', handed over to the winners by His Excellency the Governor of Assam.

The scope of the Races now includes a wider range of events ranging from golf and tennis tournaments, a car rally and horse-and-dog-shows, to live music bands and ladies football.

The underlying idea for these races was to display tea planters' equestrian skills in a carnival-like atmosphere. At the same time, it was also a gesture of goodwill, where all levels of tea plantation workers could be thoroughly entertained.

The spin-off would be a small surplus from the week-long festivity, which would then go towards the welfare of the economically weaker participants.

The 'Amazing Namaste Foundation' together with Jorhat Gymkhana Club - the venue for the event since the first event, will focus on encouraging the young among the 'Mising' tribe to take up career as Professional Jockeys.



### The 'Mising' jockey Style

*Post independence, the Jorhat Race Committee reached out to the 'Mising' tribesmen - an amicable people who lived along the banks of the Brahmaputra to take to horse races. 'Mising' riders and ponies were invited, and the Jorhat Races have continued since.*

*For 70-odd years now, 'Mising' jockeys have been racing in their inimitable style - bareback, and without saddles and stirrups.*



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# TEA PLUCKING SEASON PRIMER

One of the fundamental aspects to ensure a good brew of hot tea is the process of 'tea leaf plucking'. Tea is harvested up to four times a year. The 'first flush' is from late March to May and the 'second flush' in June, followed by a 'rains flush' and the 'autumn flush'. Leaves plucked during the 'second flush' is usually of better quality.



Plucking of tea leaves follows a meticulous process of 'hand-picking' to harvest tender, young leaves and buds. This delicate art that requires training and improves with experience involves a set of traditional methods.

The tea leaf plucking season is a great time for tea

afficianados to observe the process and be part of making a hot cup of tea.

Tea gardens often allow for tea tours that include tours during the tea leaf plucking season. Contact your nearest travel agent or tea gardens to book tours that start in April.

## SWADESH DARSHAN 2.0 PROGRESS

### TOURISM AWARENESS PROGRAM

A Tourism Awareness Program was held on January 29 and 30 at the Gulmohar Grand hotel at Jorhat. Topics covered included the importance of maintaining hygiene, and service levels, trends and customer expectations in hospitalit. 21 participants were given an orientation on tourism by the Institute of Hotel Management, Guwahati.

Those trained under this program included street vendors, shopkeepers, front office and other hotel staff, tourist guide and craftsmen. The objective was to present to them the larger opportunities a successful tourism industry provides them.



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