



# BEYOND ROCK CAPITAL

## MEGHALAYA'S CONCERT ECONOMY

(2024 – 2025)



Department of Tourism  
Government of Meghalaya





Alan Walker-Sunburn Arena, Shillong Lariti Performance Center, 2024



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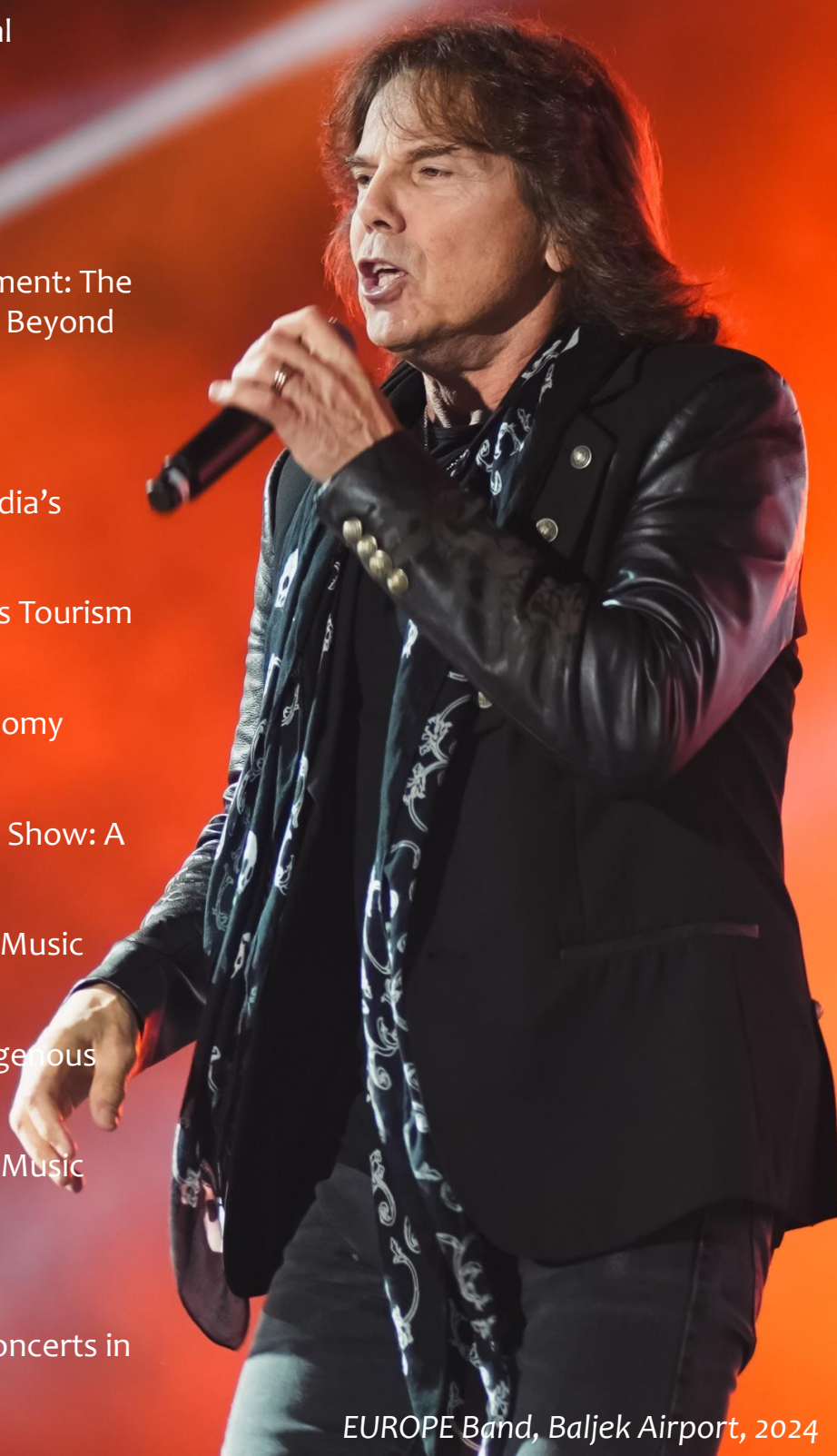
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EUROPE Band, Baljek Airport, 2024

A large-scale photograph of Ed Sheeran performing on stage at J.L.N Stadium. He is in the foreground, singing into a microphone, with his face partially in shadow. The background is filled with stage lights and scaffolding, creating a vibrant concert atmosphere. A large screen in the background shows a close-up of him playing a guitar.

# Executive Summary

In a transformative leap for the state, Meghalaya has redefined its tourism landscape by harnessing the power of live entertainment as a strategic growth engine. In just 13 days, seven flagship festivals—including the Shillong Cherry Blossom Festival and international concerts by Bryan Adams and Ed Sheeran—attracted nearly **76,000 visitors** — **a remarkable 4.7% of the state's annual tourist footfall**, underscoring the state's capacity to host large-scale, world-class events. With just ₹23.5 crore in public investment, the event ecosystem delivered a total economic stimulus of ₹133.42 crore — a 5.6x return for FY-25.



## Message from Hon'ble Chief Minister



### Shri. CONRAD K SANGMA

Hon'ble Chief Minister, Meghalaya

**"In Meghalaya, every concert is more than a performance — it's a catalyst for our talent, and a celebration of who we are. We are not just hosting events; we are building a creative economy that speaks to the world"**

Meghalaya has always been a land of legends with rolling clouds, timeless hills, and vibrant cultural heritage. In these coming years, we are scripting a new story: one where music, creativity, and community come together to chart economic & cultural transformation of the state.

Shillong is called the Rock Capital of India—this report on Meghalaya's entertainment economy highlights not just a reflection of concerts and festivals. It is a celebration of how purpose meets the cultural energizing our local economy, generating employment, and redefining the way the world sees our state. From international icons like Bryan Adams and Ed Sheeran gracing our stages, to local artisans, this is Meghalaya rising, with harmony and in ambition.

As a government, we are committed to building a future where creative industries are not seen as luxury, but as pillars of sustainable development. Our events strategy is rooted in this belief — that every show is a catalyst for creation of new jobs, every performance a platform for Meghalaya's talent, and every visitor a messenger of our cultural richness.

This report serves as an account of what we've achieved and as an invitation to what we can co-create. We welcome you to Meghalaya into India's most vibrant cultural and creative hub.



## Message from Hon'ble Tourism Minister



### Bah Paul Lyngdoh

Hon'ble Tourism Minister, Meghalaya

**“Long before the term ‘concert economy’ was coined, we started integrating music with tourism back in 2004. Today, Shillong is a must-visit destination for artists and event organizers. This is a defining moment for our tourism and music industries.”**

Over the last few years, Meghalaya has undergone a quiet yet powerful transformation for cultural and experiential tourism. As this report illustrates, our events are no longer just occasions for celebration — they are strategic instruments of economic growth, regional development, and global visibility.

From the Cherry Blossom Festival and Winter Tales to international concerts by Bryan Adams and Ed Sheeran, each event has been a carefully curated experience that blends our natural beauty with our cultural richness.

What sets Meghalaya apart is that the benefits of tourism are not confined to the capital or major towns. Our approach ensures that every homestay owner, taxi driver, food vendor, and young artist feels part of the journey. The economic stimulus driven by organic footfall — is proof that our model works.

As the Minister of Tourism, I have witnessed first-hand how music has become a bridge — connecting our hills to the world, and our traditions to new opportunities. We are proud that even during traditionally lean seasons, our festivals have created full bookings, extended stays, and new memories for thousands of visitors.

This report is a testament to the resilience and creativity of our people. It also marks a new beginning — one where tourism is not just seen through the lens of monuments or destinations, but through experiences, and empowerment. Meghalaya is ready to welcome artists, investors, and explorers to come, collaborate, and co-create with us.



## Shri. DP Wahlang, IAS

Chief Secretary, Meghalaya

**“In Meghalaya, we believe that cultural celebration is not just heritage—it is economic strategy. Our concert economy is proof that creativity can be a cornerstone of inclusive development.”**

The emergence of Meghalaya’s concert economy is a powerful example of how cultural vibrancy and economic development can go hand in hand. This report reflects our government’s commitment to building inclusive, sustainable growth models that empower local communities, create employment, and elevate the state’s profile nationally and globally. I commend the Department of Tourism for envisioning a future where music and creativity are key drivers of Meghalaya’s economic transformation.



## Dr. Vijay Kumar D, IAS

Commissioner & Secretary, Meghalaya

**“From community stages to global spotlights, Meghalaya’s events are powering livelihoods and possibilities—anchored in policy, driven by people.”**

Meghalaya’s success in hosting large-scale cultural and musical events stands as a testament to the strength of our vision and partnerships. This report captures how strategically curated festivals and concerts have not only drawn visitors but also generated significant value for small businesses, local artists, and rural economies. As we move forward, our focus remains on scaling this momentum through policy innovation and sustained public-private collaboration.



## Shri. Cyril V. D. Diengdoh, IAS

Director Tourism, Govt. of Meghalaya

**“Music and tourism are no longer parallel tracks—they are now Meghalaya’s unified path to prosperity, talent recognition, and transformative growth.”**

This report captures a pivotal chapter in Meghalaya’s tourism journey—one where creativity, community, and commerce converge. The growth of our concert economy has shown that with the right support, cultural events can evolve into powerful platforms for economic opportunity and global engagement. We remain committed to deepening this impact by strengthening infrastructure, enabling talent, and expanding access across districts.







Bryan Adams-So Happy It Hurts Concert, J.L.N Stadium, 2024





## Meghalaya's Story of Cultural Pride & Economic Transformation

In a visionary shift, Meghalaya is redefining tourism by transforming entertainment into a dynamic economic force. No longer just about scenic landscapes, the state is now harnessing the electrifying energy of music and cultural festivals to fuel growth, create jobs, and amplify its global appeal. In just 13 days, 7 major festivals have already set the stage, proving that Meghalaya's future isn't just green—it's vibrant, rhythmic, and unstoppable.

*Akon-Cherry Blossom Festival, Madan Kurkalang Stadium, 2024*





Seasons of Celebration:  
Meghalaya's year of festivals

<b>ALAN WALKER WORLD TOUR</b> SHILLONG LARITI PERFORMING CENTER SEPT <b>28</b>	<b>MEGHA KAYAK FEST</b> UMTHAM, RI BHOI OCT <b>10-12</b>	<b>SHILLONG CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL</b> RBDSA SPORTS COMPLEX, MADAN KURKALANG, BHOI RYMBONG NOV <b>15-16</b>
<b>SHILLONG LITERARY FESTIVAL</b> WARD'S LAKE, SHILLONG NOV <b>18-20</b>	<b>ME-GONG FESTIVAL</b> BALJEK AIRPORT, JENGJAL WEST GARO HILLS NOV <b>29-30</b>	<b>SPOKEN FEST</b> WARD'S LAKE, SHILLONG DEC <b>6</b>
<b>THE HILLS FESTIVAL</b> LUM'ER PYNGHGAD, UMBIR, RI BHOI DEC <b>6-7</b>	<b>BRYAN ADAMS: INDIA TOUR 2024 - SHILLONG</b> JN STADIUM, POLO GROUND, SHILLONG DEC <b>10</b>	<b>WINTER TALES</b> WARD'S LAKE, SHILLONG DEC <b>12-14</b>
<b>MEGHALAYA GRASSROOTS MUSIC PROJECT</b> ACROSS SHILLONG, SOHRA, JOWAI, RI BHOI, GARO HILLS REGION <b>DAILY</b>		

In a transformative leap for the state, Meghalaya has redefined its tourism landscape by harnessing the power of live entertainment as a strategic growth engine. In just 13 days, seven flagship festivals—including the Shillong Cherry Blossom Festival and international concerts by Bryan Adams and Ed Sheeran—attracted nearly **76,000 visitors** — a **remarkable 4.7% of the state's annual tourist footfall** , underscoring the state's capacity to host large-scale, world-class events.

1

Events drew **3.86 lakh attendees**, including **76,000 tourists**, underscoring the state's rising appeal as a cultural and tourism hub.

2

An investment of **₹23.5 crore** yielded an **economic stimulus of ₹133.42 crore**—a **5.7x return** across tourism and local commerce.

3

Events generated up to **5,509 daily jobs**, benefiting youth, rural communities, and informal workers.





Alan Walker-Sunburn Arena, Shillong Lariti Performance Center, 2024

# **Meghalaya on the National Entertainment Stage**

Meghalaya has rapidly emerged as a powerhouse for live entertainment and cultural tourism by harnessing music and festivals as dynamic drivers of economic growth not just as celebration. This visionary approach has transformed the state into a magnet for national and international visitors, unlocking new investment and setting a benchmark for how creative economies can fuel inclusive, sustainable development.

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Event wise Visitor Count 2024 - 25



Event  
Summary

From Bryan Adams to Cherry Blossoms — how 13 days of music, culture, and strategy redefined Meghalaya as India’s newest powerhouse in global live entertainment.

**3.86 Lakhs** attendees across 13 Days

76,000 Tourists - **4.7% of the state’s annual tourist footfall**

**5.6x** estimated total economic impact across multiple industries.

**INR 33.78 crore** contribution in Hotel Revenue **nearly 27% of the overall economic stimulus.**

**60,000 organic social posts and 22-million-reel views** – catering massive Digital Impact

**Created 5509 jobs daily across the value chain.**





*Bryan Adams-So Happy It Hurts Concert, J.L.N Stadium, 2024*

# Concert Economy: Meghalaya's Festivals

Meghalaya has emerged as a pioneer in organizing large-scale concerts and cultural events, driving the rise of a thriving concert economy in the post-COVID era. Leading this transformation is the Cherry Blossom Festival, which since its landmark 2021 edition has become the state's most influential event, attracting massive crowds and showcasing both local and international talent. This momentum has sparked a boom in live music and concert tourism, with major events like the Ed Sheeran concert drawing over 30,000 attendees. Today, the concert economy is a vital force in Meghalaya's growth—boosting employment, energizing local businesses, and positioning Shillong as a vibrant hub for global music and cultural exchange.



Kanika Kapoor-Cherry Blossom Festival, Madan Kurkalang Stadium, 2024

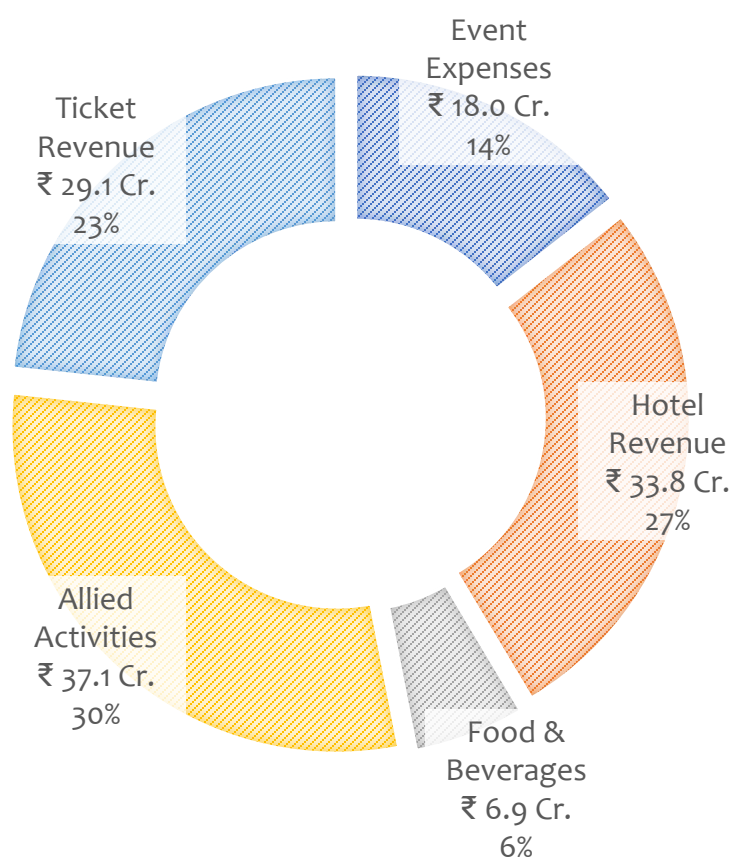
## Meghalaya's Music

## Movement: The Cherry Blossom Festival and Beyond

Launched in 2021, the Shillong Cherry Blossom Festival has grown into a landmark cultural IP, attracting international artists who have made history in the global music scene. Celebrating the bloom of Himalayan cherry blossoms and Meghalaya's regional culture, the festival quickly became the state's largest event, symbolizing revival through global engagement. The inaugural edition featured international acts like PIXY (K-pop), Pyra (Thailand electronic pop), CNR Mafia (Dubai funk), and DJ Mari Ferrari. In 2023, Indian artists such as Sanam and Lou Majaw took the stage, while the 2024 edition saw a record footfall of 54 lakh, headlined by global stars including Akon, Boney M, and Lucas from SuperM.



# TOTAL ECONOMIC STIMULUS CONTRIBUTION



Strategic investment in global concerts and flagship festivals has transformed Meghalaya into a national live entertainment hub—driving a 5.6x economic return, over 5,500 daily jobs, and record tourism, while spreading prosperity across the state’s value chain.

With just ₹23.5 crore in public investment, the event ecosystem delivered a total economic stimulus of ₹133.42 crore — a 5.6x return for FY-25





Bonny.M-Cherry Blossom Festival, Madan Kurkalang Stadium, 2024

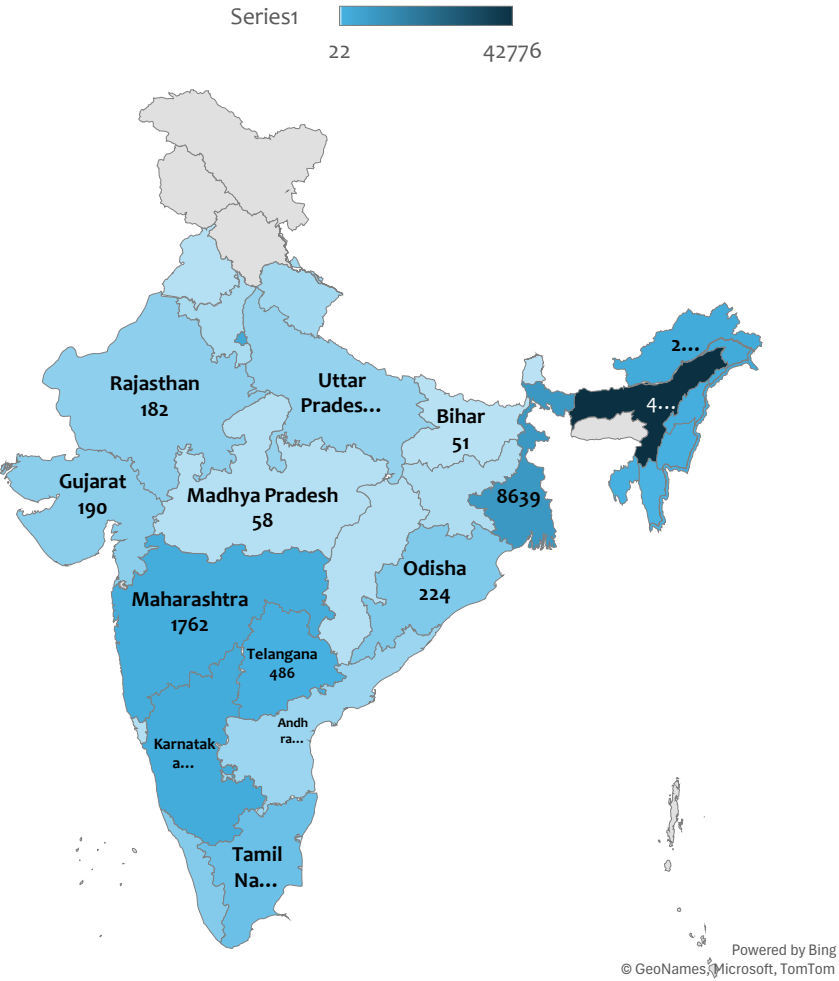
## **Elevating Meghalaya as India's premiere tourist Hotspot**

Marquee festivals and international concerts drew over 76,000 visitors in just 13 days, propelling hotel revenues to ₹33.78 crore and driving record bookings across the state. This surge in high-value tourism, coupled with booming aviation and transport sectors, has firmly established Meghalaya as India's leading destination for immersive cultural experiences and economic growth.



# Events Power Meghalaya's Tourism Boom:

State-wise Distribution of Tourists Visiting  
Meghalaya



Over 76,000 - recording approximately **4.7% of its total annual tourist footfall** from a base of 16 lakh visitors flocked to the state in just 13 days of concerts and festivals, driving record hotel bookings, surging local revenues, and showcasing the transformative economic impact of live entertainment.



R3HAB-Cherry Blossom Festival, Madan Kurkalang Stadium, 2024

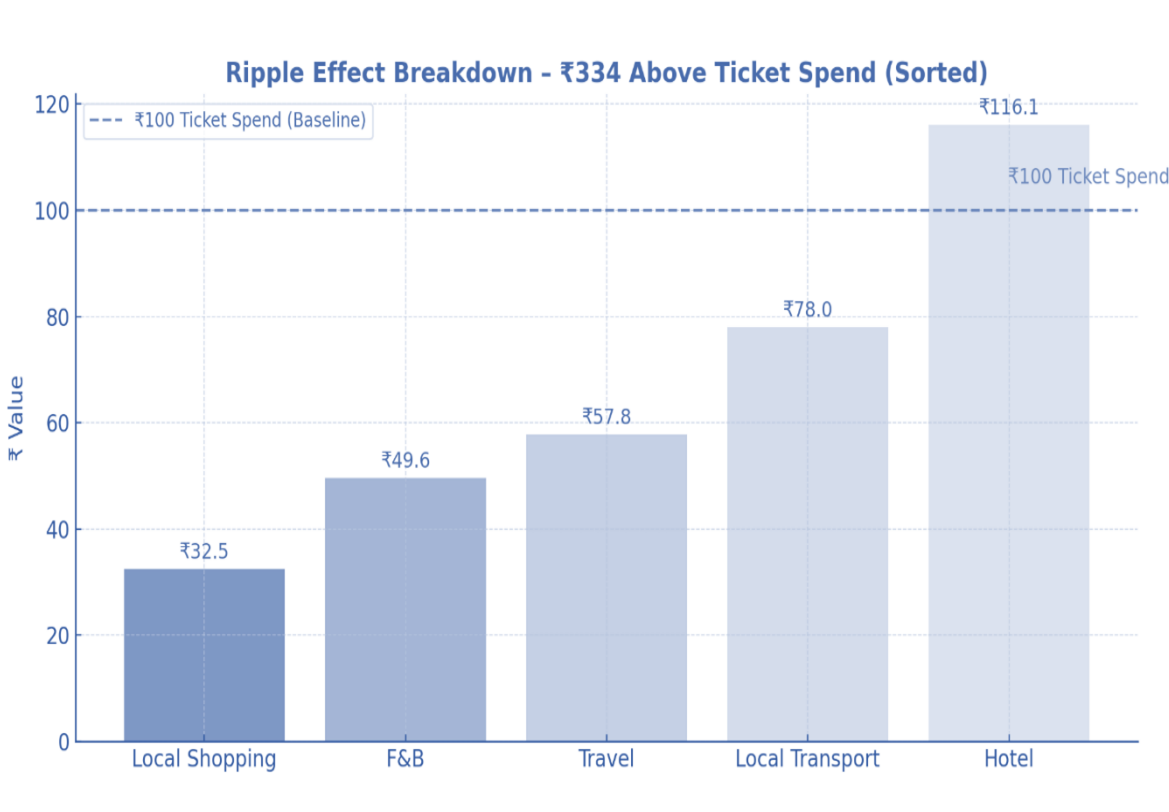
# Meghalaya’s Festival Economy:

Powering Unprecedented Tourism and Economic Gains

- 1. Hotel Boom: Full bookings across Shillong and Cherrapunji, ₹33.78 crore - **contributing nearly 27% of the overall economic stimulus.**
- 2. Extended Stays: Tourists exploring Meghalaya beyond events, enhancing local experiences.
- 3. Aviation Surge: Over 18,000 air tourists generating ₹16.80 crore and expanding airline routes.
- 4. Transport Windfall: Cab services earning ₹5.38 crore from increased tourist demand.

## Normalized spend across categories per ₹100 spend on tickets

For every INR100 spent on a ticket, attendees contributed an additional INR 334 towards services like hospitality, travel, and dining, creating a ripple effect.







Alan Walker-Sunburn Arena, Shillong Lariti Performance Center, 2024

THESE ARE THE  
BEST DAYS OF  
OUR LIVES

*Bryan Adams-So Happy It Hurts Concert, J.L.N Stadium, 2024*

## Media Spotlight

### **Meghalaya's Cultural Wave Goes Viral — Without the Hype, Just Impact.**

Meghalaya's entertainment boom lit up digital platforms, achieving viral traction with almost no paid marketing. What made it unique? Events were rooted in real communities, spreading beyond Shillong to empower local vendors, artists, and regions—turning cultural pride into widespread visibility.



Home > News > Latest News > Me'gong Festival 2024: A perfect fusion of Garo art & culture with...

News Latest News

## Me'gong Festival 2024: A perfect fusion of Garo art & culture with the best of global music

By Hub Network - November 20, 2024 2404 0

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**Shillong, Nov 30:** The much awaited and one of the biggest musical festivals of the North East being organized in the picturesque landscape of Garo Hills in Meghalaya, the 4th Edition of Me'gong Festival 2024 kick off on Friday evening with electrifying performances and vibrant cultural extravaganza at Baljek Airport in West Garo Hills near Tura.

The festival is the perfect representation of the fusion of Garo art and culture with the best of global music that has touched music lovers from around the world.

ASD Promotions and BookMyShow Live by arrangement with One Flink Live

# Ed Sheeran

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2025 INDIA TOUR

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TOUR DATES

JAN 30	FEB 02	FEB 06	FEB 08	FEB 12	FEB 15
PUNE	HYDERABAD	CHENNAI	BENGALURU	SHILLONG	DELHI NCR

TOURISM PARTNER

meghalaya

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## Bryan Adams Rocks Shillong With Summer Of 69: Electrifying Performance Draws Over 40K Fans

First Published: 11th December, 2024 9:34 IST

The atmosphere was electric as fans from all walks of life gathered to witness the global icon perform some of his greatest hits.

Northeast Live Digital Desk

SHARE IT NOW f t g

Legendary musician Bryan Adams rocked Shillong last night and delivered an unforgettable performance at the JN Stadium, drawing a massive crowd of around 30,000-40,000.

The strong crowd sang along as the Canadian rock legend belted out his top numbers as the 65-year-old set the stage on fire with his husky voice. The atmosphere was electric as fans from all walks of life gathered to witness the global icon perform some of his greatest hits.

## ALAN WALKER'S SHILLONG SHOW: A NIGHT TO REMEMBER! SHILLONG LIGHTS UP WITH ALAN WALKER'S ELECTRIFYING PERFORMANCE

## Meghalaya's Cultural Wave Goes Viral — Without the Hype, Just Impact

Meghalaya's rise in the entertainment economy wasn't fueled by flashy influencer campaigns — it was powered by people. With over 60,000 organic social media posts and 22-million-reel views, the state's festivals and concerts sparked a digital wildfire with minimal marketing spend.

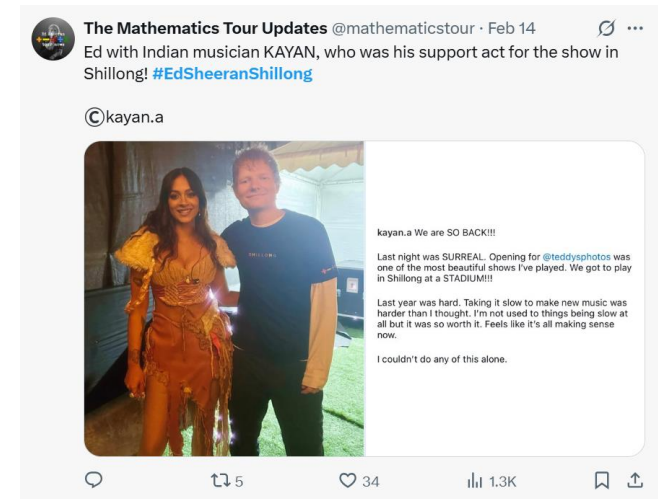
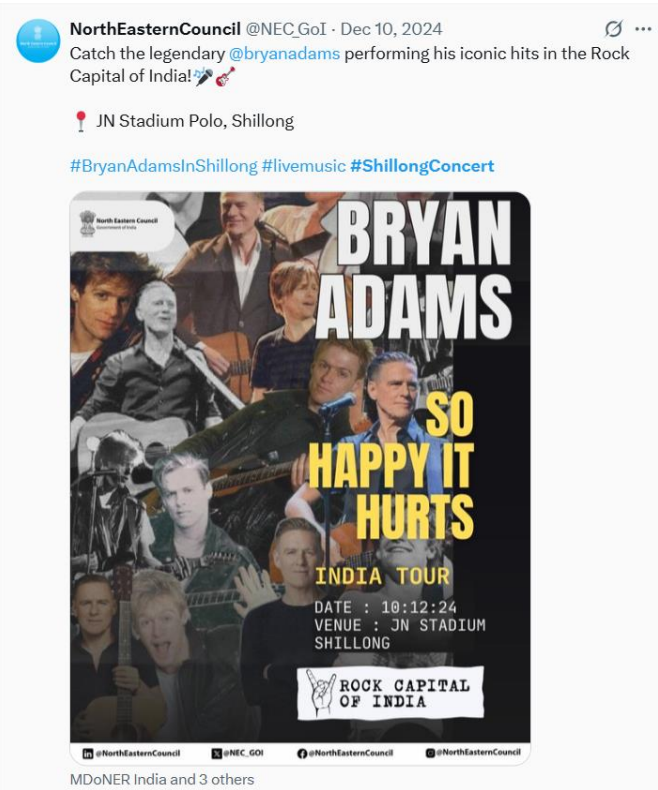
# Influencers amplified the concert's digital footprint

“A symphony of global harmony—Shillong just became the stage for the world”

The city joined in chorus with global stars like Bryan Adams and Ed Sheeran who performed in a spectacular musical extravaganza that lit up Shillong. With the symphony, local brands added to the tune—The Assam Tribune from Guwahati distributed free tickets for Ed Sheeran’s performance, amplifying regional excitement. Meanwhile, Escape to Meghalaya, a local adventure tour operator, also joined the celebration by giving away free tickets, blending music with the spirit of local exploration



Local brands stood up to the unprecedented attention. They seized the moment with innovative marketing campaigns, designed to harness the spotlight and engage audiences in creative, culturally resonant ways—turning the concert into a canvas for brand storytelling.



Many fans also shared their once-in-a-lifetime experience on social media, creating a ripple effect. This organic digital buzz not only reinforced the narrative of Shillong as a the rock capital of India.





Me'Gong Festival, Baljek Airport, 2024

## **Festivals for all: Not Just a Show—A Movement**

Meghalaya's live entertainment boom didn't just fill concert venues—it activated a full ecosystem. From women-led home kitchens and freelancers to local artisans and youth volunteers, the ripple effect extended deep into the informal economy, unlocking new income streams, inspiring entrepreneurship, and proving that cultural celebration can be a serious economic strategy.





Ed-Sheeran, Training ground in Shillong, 2024

## **Beyond the Stage:** Where Music meets Community

During his recent Mathematics Tour stop in Shillong, Ed Sheeran delighted the local community by joining young footballers for a friendly match. The playful interaction featured players from Northeast United FC (NEUFC) and was warmly embraced by John Abraham, co-owner of the club. The event showcased Sheeran's enthusiasm for connecting with fans and celebrating local culture through sport.







Indus Creed Band, Baljek Airport, 2024

## **International Vibes in Indigenous Vistas – Me’Gong Festival**

The Me’Gong Festival is a vibrant cultural celebration held at Baljek Airport in Jengjal village, West Garo Hills, Meghalaya, organized by the Meghalaya Tourism Department. It showcases the rich heritage and traditions of the Garo community through music, dance, traditional games, and local crafts. Aimed at promoting tourism, preserving Garo culture. The festival has grown into a major cultural event. It has been graced by international acts such as EUROPE in 2024 and MLTR in 2022, along with renowned Indian artists like Gajendra Verma and Euphoria, adding star power to its cultural significance and appeal.



EUROPE Band, Baljek Airport, 2024

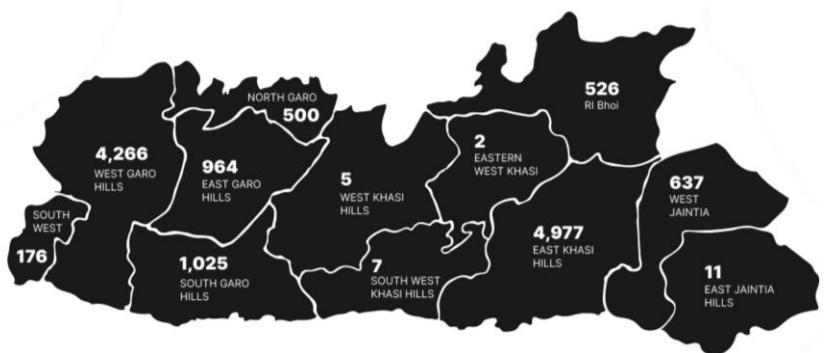




# The Meghalaya Grassroot Music Project

Inspired by global icons who began on the streets and in cafés, Meghalaya envisions a thriving music culture that also supports artists, vendors, and event firms. Launched on **26th April 2022** by Hon'ble Chief Minister **Shri Conrad K. Sangma**, the **Meghalaya Grassroot Music Project** aims to drive cultural and economic transformation through music. With a total investment of **₹38.69 crore**, the project has hosted **13,104 performances**, registered over **7,750 artists**, and created **numerous jobs**.

MGMP Events organized  
in all 12 districts of  
Meghalaya.







EUROPE Band, Baljek Airport, 2024

## Testimonials:

*“We've been a proud hospitality partner for marquee events like the Bryan Adams and Ed Sheeran concerts, as well as key state government initiatives. These collaborations have boosted our revenues, increased occupancy, and enhanced our brand visibility through strategic campaigns and social media. With the strength of the Marriott network, we're excited about the growing scope of future events.”*

**— Sabyasachi Roshini A. Chatterjee, Manager-  
Courtyard, Marriott**



*“Events like the Bryan Adams and Ed Sheeran concerts brought incredible footfall—every room was fully booked, and the guest feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Many have promised to return. Vivanta is proud to be part of this journey and is ready to support all future events. From modest beginnings just a couple of years ago, we're now seeing a surge in interest. The future is bright—for us, for Meghalaya, and for the state's growing presence on the national stage. “*

**— Gaurav Sharma, General Manager- Taj  
Vivanta, Shillong**





## Testimonials:

*“Hosting events like Bryan Adams and Ed Sheeran has been truly commendable—our property saw a full house with guests arriving from across India. Music has a unique power to unite, and here in Meghalaya, where people are naturally musically inclined, the atmosphere is perfect for such experiences. These events not only attract visitors but also beautifully showcase our rich art and culture, giving a strong boost to tourism. All four of my rooms were completely booked, and the feedback was fantastic. We’re excited for more such events in the future—Vivanta is ready, and the future looks bright for the state.”*



**Vera, Homestay Owner, Risa Forest Green**



*“We support the Government of Meghalaya’s initiative in bringing world class performers to Shillong. Tourists extended their stay post-events, leading to additional nights of occupancy and a steady revenue stream.”*

**Farah, Homestay Owner, Belmont Homestay**

”

“Meghalaya as a state and Shillong as a city has a lot to offer. We are not like Mumbai where the tourist will only go to enjoy the concert, we have so much to offer other than just the concert. We will like the state to organise more such concerts for our state to give others a flavour of Meghalaya.”



**Elton, Event Manager, Opus & Scene**

”

“Meghalaya’s economy is thriving, with the entertainment industry playing a key role. Over the past decade, live shows and cultural events have grown rapidly, driven by urbanization and rising demand for experiences. We’ve seen full bookings and enthusiastic guest feedback. This cultural momentum is transforming Meghalaya into a vibrant destination, and we’re proud to be part of this journey toward continued growth and recognition”



**Smita Chetri Thomas, Managing Partner, The Circus Entertainment**

”

“Tourism in Meghalaya has grown tremendously in recent years, and it’s made a real difference in our lives. Earlier, tourists in Shillong were rare, but now we see visitors every week. Most tourists start in Shillong and then travel to places like Dawki and Cherrapunjee. Thanks to this boom, my income has increased significantly. I now travel regularly with tourists, guiding them to these beautiful destinations. Meghalaya Tourism is doing a great job, and it’s creating real opportunities for local people like me.”



**Khraw, Taxi Driver, Shillong**





*Bryan Adams-So Happy It Hurts Concert, J.L.N Stadium, 2024*

## **Way Forward: Future of concerts in Meghalaya**

Meghalaya won't just host concerts—we'll pioneer a model where culture fuels commerce, sustainability drives spectacle, and every rhythm resonates with inclusive growth.

From the kaleidoscopic opening of the Cherry Blossom Festival under November's full moon to the thunderous applause for Alan Walker and Ed Sheeran, Meghalaya has proven its prowess as India's newest entertainment powerhouse. As we step into FY26, we transform this energy into a structured blueprint for sustainable growth, community empowerment, and global cultural leadership.

### **Scaling Cultural calendar Strategically: Creation of 365-Day Festival Economy.**

- **For FY- 2026, State has already hosted Strawberry festival and Culinary cascade in the Month of May.**
- A year-round concert series across districts in Meghalaya is currently in the planning stage.
- Tie-ups with travel influencers, online platforms, and OTT promotions.



R3HAB-Cherry Blossom Festival, Madan Kurkalang Stadium, 2024





*Bonny.M-Cherry Blossom Festival, Madan Kurkalang Stadium, 2024*

### **Sustainability & Inclusion:**

- **Zero-Waste Mandate:** Mandatory Compostable tableware.
- **Local Sourcing:** 60% F&B from tribal home kitchens and organic farms.
- **Artisan Integration:** 30% vendor stalls reserved for tribal weavers, bamboo crafters & home kitchens





Queen Sensation-Cherry Blossom Festival, Madan Kurkalang Stadium, 2024

### Enhancing Infrastructure:

- Upgrading Key Venues such as Polo Grounds (Shillong), PA Sangma Stadium (Tura), etc for the upcoming events.
- Establishing Multi-Use Cultural Hubs across districts – The government is already undertaking the development of convention centers, amphitheatres and hospitality projects to reinforce the

**Deploying Concert Impact Tracker:** Like Tourist spend, informal sector income, carbon footprint.



Me'Gong, Baljek Airport, 2024





*R3HAB-Cherry Blossom Festival, Madan Kurkalang Stadium, 2024*

## The Stage is set:

In FY26, Meghalaya will not merely host events—we will pioneer a movement. Where every concert fortifies our tribal heritage, every festival choreographs economic justice, and every stage echoes our commitment to planetary stewardship. From the misty hills of Shillong to the thundering waterfalls of Cherrapunji, we invite the world to witness: Culture is our currency, community our core, and concerts our catalyst for a trillion-rupee future."\*



— Hon'ble Chief Minister of Meghalaya





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<https://www.meghalayatourism.in/>



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