

Goa wins ‘Best Coastal Spirit Showcase’ Award

Goa has achieved a significant milestone in global tourism by winning the prestigious *Best Coastal Spirit Showcase* award at the Tashkent International Tourism Fair (TITF) 2024, held at CAEx, Tashkent. The award, presented by Dilshad Bahadirovich, Director of the National PR-Centre SUE under Uzbekistan’s Tourism Committee, highlights Goa’s diverse tourism appeal and growing prominence as a key player in the international tourism industry.

The delegation representing Goa was led by Rohan A. Khaunte, Minister for Tourism, Information & Technology, Electronics & Communications, and Printing & Stationery. Accompanying him were Shawn Mendes, Officer on Special Duty to the Tourism Minister; Deepak Narvekar, Deputy General Manager of GTDC; and Anil Dalal, Manager of GTDC. The team presented Goa as a comprehensive travel destination, showcasing its iconic beaches, vibrant cultural heritage, and responsible tourism initiatives, with a special focus on hinterland experiences.

During the visit, Rohan Khaunte paid homage at the Lal Bahadur Shastri Monument in Tashkent, commemorating the enduring friendship and cultural ties between India and Uzbekistan. This gesture underscored Goa’s commitment to strengthening bilateral relations and fostering mutual respect.

Khaunte also held pivotal meetings to enhance connectivity and collaboration between the two regions. Discussions with Shukhrat Yadgarov, Deputy Chairman for Commerce and Tourism of Uzbekistan Airlines, explored increasing flight frequency between Tashkent and Goa, a move expected to boost tourism and economic exchange. Additionally, a dialogue with Umid Shadiev focused on deepening tourism partnerships, cultural exchange programs, and collaborative initiatives to promote sustainable growth.

Goa’s presence at TITF 2024 was further amplified by its engaging Tourism Pavilion, which drew significant attention through innovative VR experiences, captivating cultural performances, and in-depth discussions on potential collaborations and investments. Visitors were offered an immersive glimpse into Goa’s unique charm and tourism potential.

Chief Minister of Goa, Dr. Pramod Sawant, expressed pride in the recognition, stating:

"Winning the Best Coastal Spirit Showcase award at TITF 2024 is a proud moment for Goa. This accolade highlights our dedication to sustainable tourism, celebrating Goa's breathtaking landscapes, rich culture, and unparalleled hospitality. It reinforces our position as a leading global destination and motivates us to create authentic, meaningful experiences for visitors while preserving the essence of what makes Goa so special."

Tourism Minister Rohan A. Khaunte echoed the sentiment, saying:

"This achievement underscores Goa's vision of being a world-class destination rooted in culture, heritage, and eco-tourism. TITF 2024 offered a valuable platform to share our approach to sustainable tourism, balancing growth with conservation. The connections made here will propel Goa's mission to lead the global tourism industry while preserving its natural and cultural treasures."

A special *meet-and-greet* event in Tashkent, organized by the Embassy of India in Uzbekistan and Goa Tourism, further solidified Goa's presence. Hosted by Rohan Khaunte and Smita Pant, Ambassador of India to Uzbekistan, the event brought together trade partners, co-exhibitors, and influencers. It featured an engaging presentation on Goa's offerings, a mesmerizing cultural showcase, and a dinner celebrating the bonds of friendship, culture, and tourism.

Goa Tourism's participation at TITF 2024 stands as a testament to its commitment to promoting the state's unparalleled beauty, cultural richness, and sustainable tourism efforts on the global stage.