



## Miss World Japan 2016, Priyanka Yoshikawa Is Coming to Assam. We Find out What's on Her To-do List

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Most people know Priyanka Yoshikawa as the winner of Miss World Japan 2016, but not everyone is aware that she is also a certified elephant trainer. Priyanka will be participating in the Eastern Himalayan Naturenomics™ Forum which will be held in Assam on 2nd and 3rd November 2017. In fact, she will be the youngest elephant trainer to attend the forum. Organized by the Balipara Foundation, the Eastern Himalayan Naturenomics™ Forum will revolve around the theme of communities, conservation and botany.

We find out more about all the things that Priyanka wants to put on her to-do list when she visits this part of the globe.

### Tell us a little about yourself and your journey so far

I think growing up in three different countries made me able to adjust within and accept different cultures more easily and flexibly. I learned to embrace diversity and change. Miss World was a childhood dream, but I never really thought I would become a contestant. It was my first pageant, and I put all I had into it. It has opened many doors for me and India is one of them.

### Why made you want to get a license to train elephants? Are you aware of the man-animal conflict situation in the Northeast, what are your thoughts on the same?

I have been an elephant lover since I was a child. I remember asking my father to have them as pets and not dogs. After years, I started to learn and know about wild elephant conservation and how important the species is for our ecosystem. It became my dream to become an elephant trainer so that I could have a platform to speak to the society about it.

I am aware that Balipara Foundation has been dedicated towards Asian Elephant Conservation in the region and through Elephant Country, they are synergizing community and Asian Elephant conservation efforts. Through their afforestation and social mobility projects in Udalguri, they are working towards reducing the man-elephant conflict by empowering local communities and restoring habitats for Asian Elephants.

### What you will be speaking on at the Eastern Himalayan Naturenomics™ Forum in November?

I'll be talking about community development, Asian Elephant conservation and protection of the environment.

### You are working to encouraging Community-Based Ecotourism & Cultural Heritage Tourism between India and Japan, tell us a little about that.

I believe that both India and Japan have an abundance of natural beauty and cultural heritage. People to people tourism between the two countries will strengthen the Japan-India association and I hope to use my experience to impact in a small way – my goal is to learn, and have impact on a global level to bring community conservation awareness to a wider



audience.

**When you visit Assam, do you plan to travel to any spots in particular?**

Balipara Foundation is organising highlights of Assam, I am looking forward to seeing the tea plantation of Assam, different species of plants, birds and butterflies at the Eastern Himalayan Botanic Ark and visit the local villages and communities to experience ethnic food, local culture, dance and music. Maybe some readers could suggest where I should visit?

**What do you like to do when you have free time?**

I like to use my free time to go to kickboxing classes, read, and travel.

**Any female icon/personality you look up to?**

Priyanka Chopra, Cameron Diaz

**What are you looking forward to the most about your trip to Assam?**

Well, it will be my first time visiting Assam and I am really looking forward to every part of it but the most will be the beauty of nature – visiting the National Parks, riding an elephant, just being in nature and sipping on famous Assam tea, participating in the Forum and to experience the kindness, humility and hospitality of the people of Assam that I have heard and read so much about.

Featured Photo: Priyanka Yoshikawa FB Page

Inside Photo: Balipara Foundation FB Page

As told to Meeta Borah

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