

INDIA'S TOP RAIL JOURNEYS

The great rail journeys of India unveil the grandeur of the Majestic Himalaya, the great Indian dessert, the undulating Deccan plateau. The quaint hill stations, colourful Rajasthan and the enigmatic western coast. Our selection this month features these five illustrious train journeys. Welcome aboard.....



Toy Train, Nilgiri -The beautiful journey by the Nilgiri Mountain Toy Train offers a real memorable experience. Travelling at a maximum speed of 33km per hour, the train passes through 16 tunnels, forest-clad hills, and lush green tea-

plantations, and rumbles across tall girder bridges. The fresh clean air and the breathtaking views become part of an unforgettable memoir.

Occasionally dubbed as the Queen of Indian Hill Stations, this little hill resort in Tamil Nadu nestles about 2600m above sea level, and has a pleasant climate all the year round.

The journey up begins at Mettupalayam and covers the distance of 46 kms in 4 hours. Mettupalayam is on the railways mainline to Chennai, Coimbatore, 90kms away, is a major railhead.

The line is a metre gauge for the first four and a half miles to Kallar at the immediate foothills. As soon as the train leaves Kallar, the rack rails appears and the long climb begins. In the next 12 miles to Coonoor, the line rises 4363 feet curving almost continuously as it clings to the mountainside, crossing lofty viaducts or tunnels, the longest being 317 feet in length. **Novelty factor** - The rail line is an engineering marvel using the Alternate Biting System (rack and pinion rail system) to traverse the steepest gradient(1 in 12) in Asia.



Himalayan Railway, Darjeeling - The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway is one of the most well known hill railways in the world... and a delight it is! The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway (DHR)

was built in 1881 and is over a century old today. It connects the plains of West Bengal at New Jalpaiguri with the popular hill station of Darjeeling (6812 ft), a distance of about 50 miles. On the way it passes the most breathtaking scenery and climbs to a height of 7400 feet at Ghum (the highest station on IR & the 2nd highest station in the world), where on a clear day magnificent Mt. Kanchenchunga can be viewed.

The 80km (seven and a half hours) long journey, on a 2ft wide track up the mountains, offers stunning and breathtaking views of the Himalayas- of rolling tea plantations and wild orchids. The rail doesn't have a single tunnel, unlike most hill railways, but makes use of the unique system of loops and Z's. It has 3 loops and 5 Z-type reverses in it. The most famous of all loops is the Batasia loop, which is between Ghum and Darjeeling stations.

UNESCO has declared Darjeeling a World Heritage Site, only the second railway in the world to get this honour. While special impetus had been given to the Darjeeling-Siliguri sector, the station building and the rolling stock have been restored, as far as possible, to the original façade. **Novelty factor** - The 50-mile rail journey doesn't have any tunnels giving an uninterrupted view of Darjeeling Himalayas.

Deccan Odyssey, Maharashtra - As the wind whispers through the halo of legends crowning the land of the mighty Marathas, a lone majestic whistle blows

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Cultural Calendar for February

- February 6** Film: Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam
Language: Hindi
Directed by: Sanjay Leela Bhansali
Venue & Time: ICC 5.30 p.m. Duration : 3 hrs
- February 8** Gok kalawa, The art of using tender coconut leaves for decorations, A demonstration by Mr.A.Chandradasa
Venue & Time: ICC 6.00 p.m.
- February 14** Launch of the book "New Compositions for North Indian Classical Music", by Her Excellency Smt. Nirupama Rao, High Commissioner for India in Sri Lanka, written by Mr. Anil Mihiripenne
Venue & Time: ICC 6.30 p.m.
- February 17** Film: Vanamae Ellai (with English subtitles)
Language: Tamil
Directed by: K.Balachander
Venue & Time: ICC 5.30 p.m. Duration : 3 hrs
- February 22** Violin recital
By Mr. Ruwin Rangeeth Dias, Assistant Lecturer, University of Kelaniya
Venue & Time: ICC 6.30 p.m.
- February 24** Bharatha Natyam Recital
by Miss. Thivya Sivanesan, Student of Mr. C.V.Chandrasekhar, Nriyashree school of Dance, India
Venue & Time: ICC 6.30 p.m.
- February 27** Film: Munna Bhai MBBS (with English Subtitles)
Language: Hindi
Directed by: Vindhu Vinod Chopra
Venue & Time: ICC 5.30 p.m. Duration : 3 hrs

(Admission to all programmes is free on first come first served basis except 14th February programme)



it's salutation of honour as it gracefully traverses this land of incredible fantasy. Welcome to the mesmerizing Maharashtra experience aboard the luxurious Deccan Odyssey.

The weeklong Deccan Odyssey tour includes several exotic destinations covering the vast expanse of Maharashtra and a pinch of Goa, Mumbai, Ganpatipule, Ratnagiri, Sindhudurg, Pune, Aurangabad, Ajanta and Ellora. Deccan Odyssey offers 44 suites in 11 cars, and a total of 21 coaches in all. The décor offers a rich interior reflecting the face of Indian royalty. Air conditioned rooms, foreign exchange facilities and a small health spa, that offers a beauty salon, steam room and massages facilities, are all on board to pamper the travellers. The dining room serves a different selection every night and the chef is open to special orders. The Deccan Odyssey is much more than a mere luxury train cruise. It's a "Classical Odyssey" of time beyond the realms of the present. **Novelty factor** - The rail voyage offers water cruises off the Western coast along with the breath taking Western Ghats.

Toy Train, Shimla Kalka - The bravura Toy Train runs between Shimla and Kalka was built in 1903 at an altitude of 2076 meters offers a panoramic feast to experience the grandeur of the picturesque Himalayas. The train cruises it's way through valleys and beautiful landscapes at an extremely slow pace making the

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ICCR

February 2006



Lalu Prasad Shaw, Lady with fan, Tempera, 53.5 x 46 cms.,2001

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In Retrospect

7th December

An evening of Hindustani vocal music recital By Mr. Sujith Priyadarshana



Mr. Sujith Priyadarshana, Assistant lecturer at the Kelaniya University presented an evening of captivating Hindustani vocal music at the Centre on 7th December. Sujith obtained his B.Music degree at the Indira Kala Sangeet University

(M.P) India.

Sujith commenced the programme with a “Bada Kheyal” and continued with “Chota Kheyal”, “Thumri” and concluded with two Ghazals. Sujith's melodious voice mesmerized the audience and his performance was greatly appreciated by the audience gathered at the Centre comprised of students, musicians and music lovers.

9th December

“The Indian Experience” A cookery demonstration of Indian dishes By Chef Pawan Singh Rana



An enthusiastic audience gathered at the Centre to witness the expert skill of the Chef Pawan Singh Rana of the Hotel Taj Samudra turn out the most mouth watering Indian cuisine. Chef Pawan Singh has many years of experience in the art of preparing Indian dishes and it was indeed a special treat to have him at ICC.

The audience was given clear instructions on the preparation of each recipe. Members of the audience were treated to a sample of the preparations. The items prepared were “ Zafrani Murg Biryani”, “Mava Phirni”, “Dahi ke Kebab”, & “Channa Masala”

22nd December

An evening of Carnatic vocal music recital by Ms. Priyadarshini Selladurai & Ms. Dilani Visvanathan



Ms. Priyadarshini Selladurai & Ms. Dilani Visvanathan, upcoming vocalists gave an impressive Carnatic vocal music recital at the Centre which lasted for nearly an hour. They had

their formal training in classical Carnatic music in Sri Lanka and had their advanced training at the Tamil Nadu Government Music College, India. Both Priyadarshini & Dilani enthralled the audience with their vast repertoire of devotional and classical songs. They started the recital with “Vinayagar Sthuthi” and continued with “Jagath Janani”, “Thakath Thakath” a Keerthani, “Kurai Onrum Illai”, “Enna Thavam Seithanai”, “Sinnanji Siru Kiliye”, “Kannada naal mudhal”, “Bhavayami” and concluded with “Thillana”. The evening was very well enjoyed by the audience gathered at the Centre.

LIBRARY Recent Library Accessions

Contemporary Maithili Short Stories

Thakur M.M. ed.
Delhi: Sahitya Akademi,2005.342p.
002323
F CON

Nineteenth Century Indian English Prose

Ramanan M.
Delhi: Sahitya Akademi,2004.249p.
002324
823 NIN

The Partings

Kahini X.P.
Delhi: Sahitya Akademi,2004.263p.
002322
F PAR

Mother Teresa

Mehta V. and Mehta V.R.
Delhi:MEA,2004.154p.
002325
923 TER

Gold Nuggets

Krishnamurthi Bh. And Vijayasree C.
Delhi: Sahitya Akademi,2004.471p.
002321
F GOL

Unquiet Waters

Kannan L.
Delhi: Sahitya Akademi,2005.193p.
002327
891.2

NEW COURSES

HINDI

Course begins	:	1 st March 2006
Class day	:	Monday to Friday
Age limit	:	Children class 6 to 15 years Adults class over 16 years
Course fee	:	Registration fee Rs.150/= Monthly fee Rs.200/=
Registration	:	Commenced from 4 th January 2006 Vacancies exist

CARNATIC VOCAL MUSIC

Course begins	:	1 st March 2006
Class day	:	Saturday
Age limit	:	Over 6 years
Course fee	:	Registration fee Rs.250/= Monthly fee Rs.300/=
Registration	:	Will commence from 1 st February 2006

Films in February

Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam

Language: Hindi
Directed by: Sanjay Leela Bhansali
Starring : Salman Khan, Ajay Devgan,
Aishwarya Rai, Vikram Gokhale& Helen



Vanamae Ellai (with English subtitles)

Language: Tamil
Directed by: K.Balachander
Starring : Ananthbabu, Gowtham,
Mathubala & Ramya Krishnan



Munna Bhai MBBS (with English Subtitles)

Language: Hindi
Directed by: Vinthu Vinod Chopra
Starring : Sanjay Dutt, Sunil Dutt & Gracy Singh



INDIA'S TOP RAIL JOURNEYS.. Contd.



entire journey enormously pleasant. It snakes through places like Dharampur, Solan, Kandaghat, Taradevi, Barog, Salogra, Summerhill, Shimla and beyond up to the slivery snow line near the towering peaks of the majestic Himalayan range. The Toy Train is of

two types- one is the normal multi coach train, and the other is the single car train, which has a glass roof giving an enthralling experience throughout the voyage. **Novelty factor** - The 96 km. Journey offers an unforgettable experience. It covers the distance through 103 tunnels and 969 bridges, it has 919 curves, 20 railway stations and 5 level crossings on the route.



Palace on Wheels, Rajasthan - Experience Rajasthan on board of Palace on Wheels on its splendid and enchanting royal journey through the bygone era of the erstwhile Maharajas. Relish the lifestyles of the kings of yore on board the Palace on Wheels, while listening to the silent tales of glory and valour narrated by the majestic forts and splendid palaces of Rajasthan.

During the Palace on Wheels Tour, you will be immersed in the culture, history, wildlife and geography of each region included in the itinerary of Palace on Wheels - starting from Delhi and stopping at Jaipur, Jaisalmer, Jodhpur, Sawai Madhopur (Ranthambore), Chittaurgarh, Udaipur, Bharatpur, and Agra. The historic train stations built by the royals in the hinterlands of the Thar Desert add to the romantic adventure.

The exquisite and exclusive Palace of Wheels has luxurious cabins, wall to wall carpeting, a well stocked bar, two dining cars and a very personalized service. The 14 plush cream salons of Palace of Wheels, adorned with fragrant flowers, are named after former Rajput states Kota, Jaipur, Udaipur, Jaisalmer, Jodhpur, Bikaner, Alwar, Sirohi, Kishangarh, Bundi, Dungarpur, Bharatpur, Jhalawar and Dholpur- each evoking visions of those royal kingdoms. Each coach colors most reminiscent of the state and highlighted by its royal emblem. **Novelty factor** - Palace on Wheels offers royal splendour in a dreary desert with vibrant colours of Rajasthan

Source : Hiranya Bharadwaj, Incredible India