

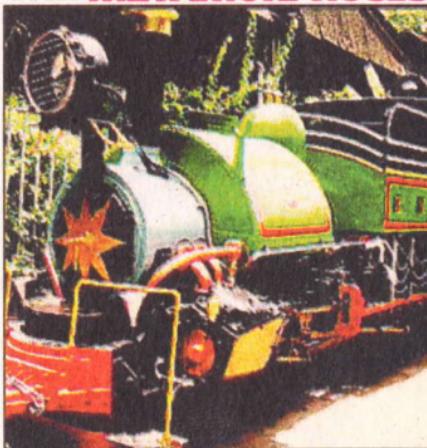
Ride to Matheran on steam engine powered by diesel

Manthan K Mehta | TNN

Mumbai: From June, railway enthusiasts will again have a chance to witness a "steam engine" hissing its way up the hills of Matheran. The engine was last seen in Matheran's hills in November 2011.

It was pulled out of operation after embers from the coal-fired steam engine sparked fire on dry grass along the route. After the forest department and locals objected to the plying of the coal-fired train, the Central Railway (CR) has now found a solution to the problem. "Instead of coal, the newly modified steam locomotive will be fired by diesel," said CR's divisional railway manager, Mumbai, Mukesh Nigam.

THE METAMORPHOSIS



► The Steam Locomotive Engine was built in the US in 1917

The modification of the B-794 steam locomotive is being carried out at Golden Rock

► The B-794 Steam Locomotive Engine operated on Darjeeling Himalayan Railway till 1988

► Steam engines ceased to ply on a regular basis on Matheran Light Rail by 1982-83

► The coal-fired engine was brought to the Parel Workshop in 2010

► In Nov 2011, the steam engine was pulled out of service

► The diesel-fired engine will arrive in May-end

Workshop, Tiruchirapalli, in South Eastern Railway at an approximate cost of Rs 20 lakh.

"The steam engine has its own charm and there were many requests to run the services through such locomotives," Nigam added.

Despite the modification, it will have the authentic sounds of the steam whistle. The engine will also get a fresh coat of corrosion-free glossy paint.

The refurbished locomotive is scheduled to arrive in the last week of May. The trial will be carried out for a few days after which the locomotive will be pressed into service in June. The train will be run only as a chartered service. It will be able to pull three coaches. The tariff is yet to be finalized. An official said, "Due to huge demand, we decided to reintroduce the service."