

# Golden Chariot luxury trail now across S India

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**Bangalore:** Golden Chariot, which has managed to find a place among the world's best — the only Indian luxury train to do so as per recent lists — will soon begin to offer two-week long trips across South India. If all goes well then from this October.

Managing director of Karnataka State Tourism Development Corporation (KSTDC) Vinay Luthra told The Times of India that the off-board destinations are being finalized.

The Golden Chariot will, for one week, will go along the current route of heritage destinations in Karnataka. In the second week, it will travel along Coimbatore, Madurai, Kanyakumari, Trivandrum, and Kochi and then enter into Karnataka again. Passengers will be able to opt for either a two-week long journey, one of the two weeks or shorter packages for a few days, all differently priced.

The fares along the Kerala and Tamil Nadu route will be 20 percent higher than the current fares. "We hope to continue the current occupancy levels of 35% as most of them are international tourists. The primary markets have been USA, UK and Japan; France and Germany have also been good," he said.

One year ago, when the luxury train was introduced, one of the target markets was the cor-



## EXTENDED RUN

- Karnataka's flagship Golden Chariot to cover Kerala, TN
- KSTDC to offer two-week-long holiday packages
- 2nd week route along Coimbatore-Madurai-Kanyakumari-Trivandrum-Kochi and then into Karnataka
- Off board destinations to be finalized soon
- Fares to be 20 percent higher than existing fares

porate sector, with plans of booking the luxury train for events, meetings and conferences. But corporate participation has been low so far, given the economic situation. "We have also not been aggressively pursuing it,"

Luthra said.

Incidentally, March 30 will be the train's 30th run. KSTDC will not be making major changes in the train, except "a little tweaking in the menu and a few changes in itinerary as per customer feedback." Shorter packages for a few nights, stops at Doodh Sagar and jungle resorts are part of the options. Come September, the Golden Chariot fares will be charged in dollar terms, \$350 per person per day. Recession has not dipped occupancy levels, Luthra added.