

India's river island, hill trains vie for World Heritage List

River island Majuli, in the Brahmaputra in Assam, and the Mountain Railways of India are part of 34 cultural properties, which will be considered for inclusion into the Unesco's World Heritage List.

The World Heritage Committee will discuss United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organisation's (Unesco) new list at its 32nd session in Canada July 2-22.

Majuli, which is the world's largest fresh water, mid-river deltaic island, is inhabited by more than 160,000 people. The island, which is a rare biodiversity hotspot of flora and fauna, has an unpredictable future with its rapidly declining shore due to erosion.

The Mountain Railways of India includes Darjeeling Himalayan Railways, Nilgiri Mountain Railway, Kalka-Shimla Railway and Matheran Hill Railway. The Mountain Railways of India is a collective term for the several railways built in the mountainous regions of the country.

Because of their unique cultural and natural heritage, Majuli and the Mountain Railways of India have been considered to be included in Unesco's World Heritage List.

In this year's session in Quebec in Canada, 41 state parties to the World Heritage Convention will present properties for inscription on Unesco's World Heritage List.

Among them will be five countries - Kyrgyzstan, Papua New Guinea, San Marino, Saudi Arabia and Vanuatu - that have no sites inscribed on the list.

The cultural property sites of these five countries to be considered in the list are Sulaiman- Too Sacred Mountain (Kyrgyzstan), The Kuk early architectural site (Papua New Guinea), San Marino historic centre and Mount Titano (San Marino), Al-Hijr archaeological site (Madain Salih) (Saudi Arabia), and Chief Roi Mata's Domain (Vanuatu).

The committee will also review the state of conservation of the 30 World Heritage sites inscribed in the list of World Heritage in Danger.

They will also discuss over addition of any new sites whose preservation may require special attention from dangers such as natural disasters, pillaging, pollution and poorly managed mass tourism.

The new World Heritage list to be considered includes 13 natural and 34 cultural sites, including two trans-boundary sites.

The trans-boundary sites are System of Fortification at the Confluence of the Rivers Danube and Vah in Komarno (Hungary/Slovakia) and Rhaetian Railway in the Albula/Bernina Cultural Landscape (Switzerland/Italy).

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