

## Choo Choo!! Make way for the Joy Ride

Visit to the Rail Museum by KG students of Santa Maria Integrated Learning Environment

A report by Parijata Bhardwaj mother of Kanishka Tathagat, KG-A

The foggy morning of 30th January couldn't hide the sparkling excitement of the children of KG at Santa Maria, who were all set to go to the Rail Museum. After the class attendance, the teacher wrote the words '*rail museum*' on the black board and informed the children they were going there. She asked them to identify the



first sound while saying rail and the entire class roared, "rrrrrrrrrr!" Ma'am told the children a little about the museum but many children had already visited the museum with their families and eagerly shared their inputs.

The children by now were experienced outdoor visitors and knew the dos and don'ts

on their own. Whether it was the Don'ts like not talking to strangers, no screaming, no running or Dos like taking care of oneself, walking in a line or asking for the teacher, didi or parent volunteers if they wanted to go to the washroom; they needed no reminding and knew it all themselves. The teacher asked each of them to put on their ID cards. After one last trip to the washroom, the children fell into a neat line and waited for Priyanka Ma'am to take them to the bus.

One of them very seriously mentioned that, '*Bina Ma'am ke ye train nahi chal sakti.*' Another was quick to add that, "We will sit in whichever bus Priyanka Ma'am tells us to." Soon they were marching smartly towards their bus.



Each child waited his/her turn and climbed calmly despite their excitement and sat in their respective seats.

Soon the bus ride to the rail museum commenced. Nikita ma'am instructed all the children to keep their eyes open and observe their surroundings. She asked them to keep an eye for the different sign boards they would see. Priyanka ma'am



mentioned that they can also see different kinds of vehicles and even make note of the licence plates of cars and their colours.

The bus ride was full of excited chatter with each child pointing out things outside or the wonderful snacks they had packed for themselves. On reaching the museum the children were asked to

leave their bags in the bus and only take their water bottles.



Soon they deboarded the bus and stood in lines while waiting for the teachers to instruct them further.

Once the formalities of ticketing was completed each class proceeded to enter the museum along with the teachers and volunteers.

Inside the museum there were short videos about the different trains and each child gasped in excitement as they saw it. There were also old trains they could see and they pointed them to their friends.

After some photo sessions the children proceeded further in. The roads were wet and each as per their personality chose either to splash in the water or carefully cross it. As they were observing their surroundings they would suddenly discover they had fallen back which would lead to a sudden quickening in the pace to catch up. Some were constantly pointing to things while others quietly sipped from their water bottles.



Then the children stumbled upon the Indian Railway symbol and Priyanka Ma'am took this opportunity to explain the different aspects of the symbol. She pointed at the national emblem and informed the children that the lions and the Chakra were the national emblem.

By this point several children needed to use the washroom and soon Didi came to take the children to the washroom. While one set went to the bathroom the other set of children took the opportunity for some pictures and observations. They all noticed how the sun looked like the moon and discussed the fog and winter.



It was now time for the much awaited Joy ride and all the children went towards the railway station. A few other visitors were glad to have the chatter of the children to break an otherwise quiet visit. The children got into the respective coaches brimming with excitement waiting for the ride to start.



The highlight of the ride was the tunnel as well as a small patch where a few bushes scraped the carriage. The ride seemed to end too soon and many children wanted another ride.

After the ride each class went into the museum to learn more about the trains. The teachers patiently explained the history of trains; from being pulled by animals to steam engines to the recent Vande Bharat trains.



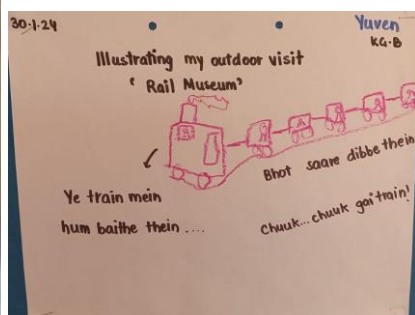
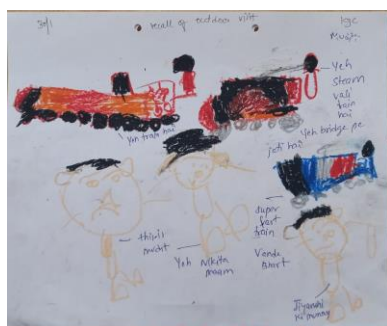
Now it was time to head back to the bus.



As the energy reduced, the children were eager to eat their tiffin box. A small lunch was had as the buses were waiting to start but soon they kept it back in as

the buses started. Few children slept in the bus while others wanted to reach school soon to have the remainder of their food.

Once in school, the children went to wash their hands and ate their food. After food each child was given a sheet to draw their observations for the day. One by one they went and explained their drawing to the teacher.



Finally, it was time to go home. After an exciting outing beautifully organised and executed by the teachers, didis, bus drivers, conductors and support staff, it was time to go home.

Even for us volunteers it was wonderful to see not only the joy of children but also their wonder. It was indeed a Joy Ride for everyone.



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