Darjeeling Himalayan Railway

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| **Darjeeling Himalayan Railway** | |
| [Small black steam engine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:DarjeelingTrainFruitshopCrop.JPG)  Passing a fruit shop in Darjeeling | |
| **Terminus** | [Darjeeling](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darjeeling) |
| **Commercial operations** | |
| **Built by** | [Franklin Prestage](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Franklin_Prestage&action=edit&redlink=1) |
| **Preserved operations** | |
| **Operated by** | [Northeast Frontier Railway](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northeast_Frontier_Railway) |
| **Stations** | 14 |
| **Length** | 88 km |
| **Preserved gauge** | [2 ft](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2_ft_and_600_mm_gauge_railways) (610 mm) |
| **Commercial history** | |
| **Opened** | 1879 |
| **Preservation history** | |
| **Headquarters** | Elysia Place, [Kurseong](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurseong" \o "Kurseong) |
|  | |
| [**UNESCO World Heritage Site**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Heritage_Site) | |
| **Inscription** | (Unknown [Session](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Heritage_Committee)) |
| [[edit on Wikidata](https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Q463874)] | |
| |  | | --- | | [[hide](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darjeeling_Himalayan_Railway)]**Route map** | | [DHR Route Map.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:DHR_Route_Map.jpg) | | |

The **Darjeeling Himalayan Railway**, also known as the **DHR** or Toy Train, is a [2 ft](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2_ft_and_600_mm_gauge_railways) (610 mm) [narrow-gauge](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Narrow-gauge) railway based on [zig zag](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zig_zag_(railway)" \o "Zig zag (railway)) and [loop-line technology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Loop_line_(railway)) which runs between [New Jalpaiguri](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Jalpaiguri) and [Darjeeling](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darjeeling" \o "Darjeeling)in the [Indian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India) state of [West Bengal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Bengal). Built between 1879 and 1881, with six zig-zags and five loops, the railway is about 88 km (55 mi) long. Its elevation varies from about 100 m (328 ft) at New Jalpaiguri to about 2,200 m (7,218 ft) at Darjeeling. Although four diesel locomotives handle most scheduled service, the daily tourist trains (from Darjeeling to [Ghum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ghum,_West_Bengal" \o "Ghum, West Bengal)—India's highest railway station—and the *Red Panda*, from Darjeeling to Kurseong) and steam-enthusiast specials are hauled by vintage British-built [B-Class](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/DHR_B_Class) [steam locomotives](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Steam_locomotive). The railway's headquarters are in [Kurseong](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurseong" \o "Kurseong).

On 2 December 1999, [UNESCO](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UNESCO) declared the DHR a [World Heritage Site](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Heritage_Site).[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darjeeling_Himalayan_Railway#cite_note-autogenerated1-1) Two more railway lines were later added, and the site became known as the [mountain railways of India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_railways_of_India).

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* [3Rolling stock](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darjeeling_Himalayan_Railway#Rolling_stock)
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    - [3.1.1Steam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darjeeling_Himalayan_Railway#Steam)
    - [3.1.2Diesel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darjeeling_Himalayan_Railway#Diesel)
  + [3.2Past](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darjeeling_Himalayan_Railway#Past)
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  + [4.1Stations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darjeeling_Himalayan_Railway#Stations)
* [5In popular culture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darjeeling_Himalayan_Railway#In_popular_culture)
  + [5.1Film](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darjeeling_Himalayan_Railway#Film)
  + [5.2Television](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darjeeling_Himalayan_Railway#Television)
* [6See also](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darjeeling_Himalayan_Railway#See_also)
* [7References](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darjeeling_Himalayan_Railway#References)
* [8Further reading](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darjeeling_Himalayan_Railway#Further_reading)
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History[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Darjeeling_Himalayan_Railway&action=edit&section=1" \o "Edit section: History)]

[Siliguri](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siliguri), at the base of the [Himalayas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Himalayas), was connected with [Calcutta](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calcutta) (now Kolkata) by [metre gauge](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metre_gauge" \o "Metre gauge) railway in 1878. Between Siliguri and Darjeeling, [Tonga](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tanga_(carriage)) services ran on a cart road (present-day [Hill Cart Road](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Hill_Cart_Road&action=edit&redlink=1)).[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darjeeling_Himalayan_Railway#cite_note-darjnews-2) [Franklin Prestage](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Franklin_Prestage&action=edit&redlink=1), an agent of the [Eastern Bengal Railway](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern_Bengal_Railway), approached the government with a proposal to lay a steam tramway from Siliguri to Darjeeling.[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darjeeling_Himalayan_Railway#cite_note-darjnews-2) [Ashley Eden](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ashley_Eden), lieutenant governor of [Bengal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bengal), formed a committee to assess the project's feasibility. The proposal was accepted in 1879 after a positive report by the committee,[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darjeeling_Himalayan_Railway" \l "cite_note-darjnews-2) and construction began that year.

Gillanders Arbuthnot and Company was hired for the construction, and by March 1880 the line extended to [Tindharia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tindharia" \o "Tindharia). [Lord Lytton](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Bulwer-Lytton,_1st_Earl_of_Lytton), the first [viceroy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Governor-General_of_India) to visit Darjeeling, rode to Tindharia on the train.[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darjeeling_Himalayan_Railway#cite_note-darjnews-2) The stretch from Siliguri to [Kurseong](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurseong" \o "Kurseong) opened on 23 August 1880, and from Siliguri to Darjeeling on 4 July 1881.[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darjeeling_Himalayan_Railway#cite_note-DHRofc-3) The company's name was changed to Darjeeling Himalayan Railway Company.

Although the railroad originally followed Hill Cart Road, the steepness of the road was more than the locomotives could handle in some areas. In 1882, four loops and four reverses (zig-zags) were built between [Sukna](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sukna" \o "Sukna) and [Gayabari](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Gayabari&action=edit&redlink=1" \o "Gayabari (page does not exist)) to ease the gradient.[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darjeeling_Himalayan_Railway#cite_note-DHRsoc-4) The line was extended by a quarter-mile to Darjeeling Bazar in 1886.[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darjeeling_Himalayan_Railway#cite_note-DHRofc-3) The Darjeeling station was renovated in 1891 and Kurseong got a new station building and storage shed in 1896,[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darjeeling_Himalayan_Railway" \l "cite_note-DHRsoc-4) but the railway was impacted by an 1897 earthquake and a major cyclone in 1899.[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darjeeling_Himalayan_Railway#cite_note-DHRsoc-4)

By 1909–1910, the DHR carried 174,000 passengers and 47,000 tons of goods annually.[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darjeeling_Himalayan_Railway#cite_note-DHRsoc-4) The first [bogie](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bogie) carriages entered service, replacing basic four-wheel carriages. DHR extension lines were built to Kishanganj in 1914 and Gielkhola in 1915.[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darjeeling_Himalayan_Railway#cite_note-DHRofc-3)At Tindharia, the railway works were relocated from behind the locomotive shed to a larger site.[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darjeeling_Himalayan_Railway#cite_note-DHRsoc-4)

The [Batasia Loop](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Batasia_Loop" \o "Batasia Loop) was constructed in 1919, creating easier gradients on the ascent from Darjeeling.[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darjeeling_Himalayan_Railway#cite_note-DHRsoc-4) The DHR began facing competition from buses operating on the Hill Cart Road which took less time than the railway to reach Darjeeling. In 1934, a major earthquake in [Bihar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bihar) shook all of Northeast India. Many buildings in Darjeeling were heavily damaged and the railway was also affected, although it soon recovered and played a vital role in transporting repair materials.[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darjeeling_Himalayan_Railway#cite_note-DHRsoc-4) During [World War II](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_II), the DHR transported military personnel and supplies to the camps around Ghum and Darjeeling.[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darjeeling_Himalayan_Railway#cite_note-DHRsoc-4)

In 1951, the railway was purchased by the Indian government and was absorbed into the government railway organisation[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darjeeling_Himalayan_Railway" \l "cite_note-DHRsoc-4)before it was managed by the [Assam Railway](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Assam_Railway&action=edit&redlink=1). Assam Railway (including the DHR) became part of the [North Eastern Railway zone](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Eastern_Railway_zone) in 1952,[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darjeeling_Himalayan_Railway#cite_note-DHRsoc-4) and part of [Indian Railways](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_Railways)' [Northeast Frontier Railway zone](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northeast_Frontier_Railway_zone) six years later.[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darjeeling_Himalayan_Railway#cite_note-DHRsoc-4) In 1962, the railway was realigned at Siliguri and extended by nearly 4 miles (6 km) to [New Jalpaiguri](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Jalpaiguri) (NJP) to meet the new broad-gauge line there.[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darjeeling_Himalayan_Railway#cite_note-DHRsoc-4)The extension began freight service that year, and passenger service in 1964. The locomotive shed and carriage depot at Siliguri Junction were moved to NJP.

The railway was closed for 18 months during the [Gorkhaland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gorkhaland" \l "History" \o "Gorkhaland) hostilities in 1988 and 1989.[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darjeeling_Himalayan_Railway#cite_note-DHRsoc-4) It was declared a [World Heritage Site](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Heritage_Site) by [UNESCO](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UNESCO) in 1999.[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darjeeling_Himalayan_Railway#cite_note-heritageunesco-5)

# Tiger Hill, Darjeeling

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**Tiger Hill** (2,590 m) is located in Darjeeling, in the Indian State of [West Bengal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Bengal), and is the summit of [Ghoom](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ghum,_West_Bengal" \o "Ghum, West Bengal), the highest railway station in the [Darjeeling Himalayan Railway](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darjeeling_Himalayan_Railway) – a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It has a panoramic view of [Mount Everest](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_Everest) and Mt. [Kangchenjunga](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kangchenjunga" \o "Kangchenjunga) together.

It is 11 km from the town of [Darjeeling](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darjeeling) and can be reached either by [jeep](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jeep) or by foot through Chowrasta, Alubari or Jorebangla and then climbing up the incline to the summit.[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger_Hill,_Darjeeling#cite_note-1)[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger_Hill,_Darjeeling#cite_note-2)

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Panorama_Kangchenjunga_from_Darjeeling.jpg)

Panorama of the [Kangchenjunga](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kangchenjunga" \o "Kangchenjunga) massif from Darjeeling's Tiger Hill.

At sunrise, the peaks of [Kangchenjunga](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kangchenjunga" \o "Kangchenjunga) are [illuminated before the sun is seen at lower elevations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alpenglow).

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Sukhiapokhri_Map.jpg)

From Tiger Hill, [Mount Everest](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_Everest) (8848m) is just visible. [Makalu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Makalu) (8481m) looks higher than Mt. Everest, owing to the curvature of the Earth, as it is several miles closer than Everest. The distance in a straight line from Tiger Hill to Everest is 107 miles (172 km).[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger_Hill,_Darjeeling#cite_note-3)[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger_Hill,_Darjeeling#cite_note-4)

On a clear day, [Kurseong](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurseong" \o "Kurseong) is visible to the south and in the distance, along with [Teesta River](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teesta_River" \o "Teesta River), [Mahanada River](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahananda_River" \o "Mahananda River), [Balason River](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Balason_River" \o "Balason River) and [Mechi River](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mechi_River" \o "Mechi River) meandering down to the south.[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger_Hill,_Darjeeling#cite_note-5) Chumal Rhi mountain of Tibet, 84 miles (135 km) away, is visible over the [Chola Range](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Chola_Range&action=edit&redlink=1" \o "Chola Range (page does not exist)).[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger_Hill,_Darjeeling#cite_note-6)

[Senchal Wildlife Sanctuary](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Senchal_Wildlife_Sanctuary) is close to Tiger Hill.

## References

# Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park

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|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park পদ্মাজা নাইডু হিমালয়ান জুওলজিক্যাল পার্ক দার্জিলিং চিড়িয়াখানা** | |
| [Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park logo.png](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Padmaja_Naidu_Himalayan_Zoological_Park_logo.png) | |
| [Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park Entrance.JPG](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Padmaja_Naidu_Himalayan_Zoological_Park_Entrance.JPG)  Zoo entrance | |
| **Date opened** | 1958[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Padmaja_Naidu_Himalayan_Zoological_Park#cite_note-darjeelingnews-1) |
| **Location** | [Darjeeling](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darjeeling), [West Bengal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Bengal), [India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India) |
| [**Coordinates**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geographic_coordinate_system) | https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/5/55/WMA_button2b.png/17px-WMA_button2b.png[27.0586099°N 88.254405°E](https://tools.wmflabs.org/geohack/geohack.php?pagename=Padmaja_Naidu_Himalayan_Zoological_Park&params=27.0586099_N_88.254405_E_type:landmark_scale:500)[Coordinates](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geographic_coordinate_system): https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/5/55/WMA_button2b.png/17px-WMA_button2b.png[27.0586099°N 88.254405°E](https://tools.wmflabs.org/geohack/geohack.php?pagename=Padmaja_Naidu_Himalayan_Zoological_Park&params=27.0586099_N_88.254405_E_type:landmark_scale:500) |
| **Land area** | 67.56 acres (27.3 ha)[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Padmaja_Naidu_Himalayan_Zoological_Park#cite_note-zoo_about-2) |
| **No. of animals** | 156 (2006)[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Padmaja_Naidu_Himalayan_Zoological_Park#cite_note-indiatraveltimes-3) |
| **Annual visitors** | 300,000 (2006)[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Padmaja_Naidu_Himalayan_Zoological_Park#cite_note-indiatraveltimes-3) |
| **Memberships** | [CZA](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_Zoo_Authority_of_India),[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Padmaja_Naidu_Himalayan_Zoological_Park#cite_note-cza_list-4) [WAZA](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Association_of_Zoos_and_Aquariums)[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Padmaja_Naidu_Himalayan_Zoological_Park#cite_note-waza_list-5) |
| **Website** | [pnhzp.gov.in](http://pnhzp.gov.in/) |

**Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park** (also called the **Darjeeling Zoo**) is a 67.56-acre (27.3 ha) zoo in the town of [Darjeeling](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darjeeling) in the [Indian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India) state of [West Bengal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Bengal). The zoo was opened in 1958, and an average elevation of 7,000 feet (2,134 m), is the largest high altitude zoo in India. It specializes in breeding animals adapted to alpine conditions, and has successful [captive breeding](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Captive_breeding)programs for the [snow leopard](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Snow_leopard), the critically endangered [Himalayan wolf](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Himalayan_wolf) and the [red panda](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_panda). The zoo attracts about 300,000 visitors every year. The park is named after [Padmaja Naidu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Padmaja_Naidu" \o "Padmaja Naidu) (1900–1975), daughter of [Sarojini Naidu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarojini_Naidu" \o "Sarojini Naidu). The zoo serves as the central hub for [Central Zoo Authority of India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_Zoo_Authority_of_India)'s red panda program and is a member of the [World Association of Zoos and Aquariums](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Association_of_Zoos_and_Aquariums).

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* [3Gallery](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Padmaja_Naidu_Himalayan_Zoological_Park#Gallery)
* [4Notes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Padmaja_Naidu_Himalayan_Zoological_Park#Notes)
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## History[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Padmaja_Naidu_Himalayan_Zoological_Park&action=edit&section=1" \o "Edit section: History)]

A zoo was established on 14 August 1958 in the Birch Hill neighbourhood of Darjeeling under the Department of Education of the [Government of West Bengal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Government_of_West_Bengal) with a goal to study and preserve [Himalayan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Himalaya) fauna. Its first Director and founder was Dilip Kumar Dey. Mr. Dey, who belonged to the Indian Forest Service was on deputation to the Department of Education for the express purpose of establishing a high-altitude zoological park specializing mainly in Himalayan flora and fauna. The park's prized possessions were a pair of Siberian (Ussuri) tigers presented to the Government of India by Soviet Premier [Nikita Khrushchev](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nikita_Khrushchev) in 1960. Over the years famous names in the world of Conservation have been attracted to and have visited the HZP. The zoo now contains endangered animals like snow leopards, red pandas, [gorals](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Goral) (mountain goat), [Siberian tigers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siberian_tiger) and a variety of endangered birds. However, there has been concern regarding the fact that the Himalayan animals may face a threat due to rising temperatures in the hilly area.[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Padmaja_Naidu_Himalayan_Zoological_Park#cite_note-indiatraveltimes-3)

In January 1972, the park became a registered society, with an agreement that maintenance costs would be shared by the central and state governments. In May 1993, the park was transferred to the West Bengal Department of Forests.[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Padmaja_Naidu_Himalayan_Zoological_Park#cite_note-beacononline-6) The park was renamed in 1975 when [Indira Gandhi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indira_Gandhi" \o "Indira Gandhi), the Prime Minister of India, visited the park and dedicated it to the memory of [Padmaja Naidu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Padmaja_Naidu" \o "Padmaja Naidu).[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Padmaja_Naidu_Himalayan_Zoological_Park#cite_note-beacononline-6)

## Conservation[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Padmaja_Naidu_Himalayan_Zoological_Park&action=edit&section=2" \o "Edit section: Conservation)]

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Red_Pandain_Darjiling_Zoo.jpg)

Red panda in the zoo

The zoo includes an off-display breeding center for [snow leopards](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Snow_leopard) and [red pandas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_panda). Captive breeding of snow leopards was started in 1983, with leopards which were brought to the zoo from Zurich, the United States, and Leh-Ladakh. The red panda program was started in 1994 with individuals from the [Cologne Zoo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cologne_Zoological_Garden), the [Madrid Zoo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zoo_Aquarium_de_Madrid), Belgium, and the [Rotterdam Zoo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diergaarde_Blijdorp). In addition to these species, the zoo is breeding the Himalayan tahr, blue sheep, Himalayan monal, grey peacock pheasant, Himalayan salamander, blood pheasant and satyr tragopan.[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Padmaja_Naidu_Himalayan_Zoological_Park#cite_note-beacononline-6) The zoo is famous for its conservation breeding programmes of the red panda, Himalayan salamander, Tibetan wolf, and snow leopard.

## Japanese Temple & Peace Pagoda

There is a wonderful Japanese temple located at a 10 minutes driving distance from the Darjeeling town center. The temple is also known as the Nipponzan Myohoji Buddhist Temple. The two storied white building was built in a traditional Japanese style in the year 1972.

Close to the temple is the Peace Pagoda that showcases four avatars of Lord Buddha. From the top of the Pagoda, you get a panoramic views of Darjeeling landscape including the Kanchenjunga range.

Earlier the car could enter through the main gate of the temple premises and park right below the temple. These days you will need to walk for about 5-6 minutes from the main gate along a narrow road that first goes downhill and then uphill. On the way you will notice a few small houses on the right with prayer flags fluttering in front of them. As you walk along, you will reach another gate. Right next to the gate and on the left are some flights of stairs that lead to the Japanese Temple.

As you enter the temple, there is picture of the founder Fujii Guruji. There is also a model of Buddha suggesting that it's a Buddhist religious temple. Fujii Guruji was the founder and preceptor of 'Nipponzan Myohoji', a Buddhist order for world peace. He was a close associate of Mahatma Gandhi and had seen the tragedy of atom bomb in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.

Walk up the wooden stairs and you will reach the large prayer room upstairs. The prayer timings are from 4:30am to 6am in the morning and again from 4:30pm to 6:30pm in the evening. If you can time it right, you can also join the prayers and get an opportunity for introspection and feel the divine peace the temple offers.

**Japanese Temple Darjeeling**



I had that opportunity once. In the prayer room you will see the present Guruji or the chief priest offering the prayers, beating a huge drum (also known as Ho-ko) from which a reverberating sound originates that fills the entire temple premises. The humming sound and the chants add to the solemn atmosphere.

As you enter the room, you will be invited to sit and join the prayer. A small drumming pad and a stick will be given to you so that you too can drum in the same rhythm. I was amazed how such a small pad too can generate similar resonating sound.

**Prayer Room, Japanese Temple Darjeeling**



You can leave anytime you want. On your exit, you will be offered small sweet balls that represent the deity's blessings. While photography is allowed inside the temple, it is prohibited in the prayer room when the prayer is going on.

Close to the temple some 100 yards away is the Peace Pagoda. The foundation stone of the Peace Pagoda was laid on November 3, 1972 by Nichidatsu Fujii and it was subsequently opened in November 1, 1992.  According to the Lotus Sutra, the very appearance of the Peace Pagoda is an embodiment of Lord Buddha that radiates peace and non-violence. It purifies the land as well as the mind and soul of the people. The first Peace Pagoda was built in Kumamoto, Japan, in the year 1954 by Fujii Guruji.

The Peace Pagoda here showcases four avatars of Buddha. This is the tallest free standing structure in Darjeeling. It's height is 28.5 meters and diameter is 23 meters. As you climb up the stairs in the Pagoda, you will see two concrete models of lions on two sides at a lower level. The avatars of Buddha are all large statues carved in the walls and polished in gold color. The Peace Pagoda was designed by Dr. M Ohka of Japan and took three years to construct.

**Peace Pagoda Darjeeling**



Take a walk ('Parikrama') around the pagoda at the pinnacle. You will see beautiful artwork etched on sand stones that look like wooden framework depicting the life of Buddha and his relics. There are mythological depictions like 'Gift of Mango Grove by Amrapali at Vaishali' and 'Great departure of Siddhartha'. You will see the four avatars of Buddha during the Parikrama, that includes Buddha's postures such as sitting, sleeping, standing and meditating.

From top of the pagoda you get wonderful views. Straight down you will see the Japanese Temple at a distance. Behind that there are rows of pine trees. As you look around to the left, you will see the mountain range. On a clear day, the snow peaks are clearly visible from here.

**View from top of Peace Pagoda Darjeeling**



**Open Hours**

The temple open hours is from 4:30am in the morning up to 7pm daily. There is no admission fee. Prayer timings are from 4:30am to 6am, and 4:30pm to 6:30pm.

**Facilities**

There is a toilet below the temple. However over the years I have noticed that it is not well maintained and often remains virtually unusable.

**Location**

Japanese Temple & Peace Pagoda are located at the Jalapahar hill area. It's about 10 minutes by car from the center of the Darjeeling town. Check out [Darjeeling Map](https://www.darjeeling-tourism.com/darj_000011.htm) to see the location.

## Senchal Lake & Wildlife Sanctuary

If you like to go for a day's picnic in a wonderful nature's surrounding that has a lake with mountains in all sides, then choose Senchal Lake and the sanctuary as the place. It's about 11kms (7 miles) from Darjeeling town and can be reached via Ghoom and Jorebunglow. Senchal is at an elevation of about 8,160ft (i.e. 2,490 meters). However the sanctuary spreads across elevations of 1500 to 2600 meters.

Senchal Lake is part of the Senchal Sanctuary which is one of the oldest wildlife sanctuaries of Darjeeling hills. The lake is fed by a mountain spring and is the main reservoir for water supply to the town. The narrow longish Senchal Lake is surrounded by trees and forests in all sides.

However the main forest area is a bit bar from the lake. 40% of the forest is natural and the balance is man made. But the blend is so nice that you won't be able to make the difference. The forest has different kinds of trees and plantation including oak forest, pines and Birch. There are over 350 types of flowering plants in this area including Rhodendrons and Orchids.

The entire Senchal sanctuary covers an area of about 39 sq. km. including the lake. It is actually the south east extension of the Singhalila National Park. This sanctuary is considered one of the oldest in India and was opened in 1915.

Although access to the sanctuary is restricted, you can take special permission from the ranger's office at Jorebunglow and take a guide to go around the area. A road (although not in a very good condition) goes through the Sanctuary and you can ask the driver to keep driving along as you watch the flora and the fauna.

**Senchal Lake, Darjeeling**



There are different types of wildlife that can be seen in the dense forest here. Animals include Himalayan black bears, barking deers, leopards, monkeys, flying squirrels, wild dogs, scaly ant eaters and many more. The sanctuary is also great for bird watching. You can commonly see golden back woodpecker, emerald cuckoos, black-backed pheasant, red jungle fowl, hornbills, Babblers, Sunbirds etc.

**Other Nearby Attractions**

There is a 9-hole golf course at the Senchal area which is supposed to be one of the highest golf courses in the world. It has a club house as well. However the course can be accessed through the Senchal road that leads to the Tiger Hill and is little away from the lake. If you are planning to see the sunrise from [Tiger Hill](https://www.darjeeling-tourism.com/darj_000016.htm) early in the morning, it can be a great idea to combine that visit with a day picnic at the Senchal Lake. Both the places are close to each other. From Tiger Hill you will need to come down to Jorebunglow and then take an uphill narrow road towards Senchal Lake.

**Admission and Timing**

You will need to collect admission ticket from the Ranger's office at Jorebunglow to access the Senchal area. The sanctuary and access to the lake is closed during the monsoon time and usually reopens after September 15th.

**Accommodation inside the Sanctuary**

A nice forest lodge known as *Rambi Forest Rest House* is located right inside the forest. It is managed by the Wild Life Division of Darjeeling. It has two rooms. Although it is mainly meant for official use, if free the rooms are also offered to public (Indicative rate Rs. 1000/- per room, Updated January 2016).

If you want to stay here overnight, you will need to carry your groceries. There is a care taker at the rest house who can help with the cooking.

*How to book Rambi Rest House*

Call the Wildlife Division of Darjeeling. Phone: (0354) 2257314

**Location & Contacts**

The Senchal area in Darjeeling is located towards the South-Eastern side of the town. There is a narrow road from Jorebunglow known as the old Military Road that leads towards the Senchal Lake. It's about 3km from Ghoom. So the total distance from Darjeeling town is about 11kms and takes about 40 minutes by car to reach. It's best to book a private cab/vehicle for visiting the place as getting a return transport is a problem. Check out [Ghoom & Its Map](https://www.darjeeling-tourism.com/darj_000082.htm) to see the way to the lake.

Divisional Forest Office (Darjeeling)

Phone: (0354) 2252159