

## A JOURNEY OF A MILLION DREAMS

The last remnant of the Double Decker Bus saga in the capital city of Kerala, Trivandrum is the protagonist of my photo story "Vanishing Lines - The Urban Villages". It is Trivandrum's pride to say Kerala was the first state and Trivandrum the only city in Kerala, to own a Double Decker Bus. In the year 1938 the King of Travancore (earlier name for Trivandrum) commissioned the Double Decker Bus, which was imported from London and the first passengers of this bus, were the royal family themselves. Just as in London, double-decker buses have always been a part of Trivandrum's landscape.

Documenting the last two Double Decker Buses running in the city, one that is used as the tourist bus for sightseeing and the other, as a part of public transportation which has gone off road in the recent times due to engine failures. However it is hoped to be back on the roads soon. In the course of the shoot over six months, many a times the bus has gone for repairs. The idea of documenting the bus was based on the certainty that this bus, which was once introduced 80 years ago as a part of urbanization and development will sooner or later vanish from the city. In the present scenario the same development or up-gradation done to the transportation system is en route to being obsolete and stands on the verge of vanishing. 25 years ago, the double decker was sent for scrap but the same bus was reworked and brought to life after considering its heritage value. Today this mode of transportation has evolved to become an interesting part of the heritage cities tourism package, which allows one to hire the bus on a daily basis.

As it strolls through the roads of this city with its open windows it gives its passengers a glimpse of Trivandrum's cultural landscape. It passes through the city's many historical riches, architectures and landmarks like Victoria Jubilee Town Hall, which was built to commemorate the golden jubilee

of Queen Victoria's coronation in 1896; the Padmanabhaswamy temple, the richest temple in the world; St Joseph Cathedral, the Roman structure built in 1873; the Kerala Government Secretariat, a blend of Roman and Dutch architecture constructed about a century and a half ago; it's much acclaimed sports stadium and the ornate walls of Trivandrum replete with mural art works.

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