



22nd July 2009, 0626 Hrs IST
Level four-one-zero

View the Greatest Eclipse of 21st Century, starboard side!

The Greatest Eclipse of the 21st century is occurring on 22nd July 2009, in the thick of the Indian Monsoon. Why not fly above the cloud tops at level four-one-zero for a clear view of the eclipse? Only a few fortunate eclipse chasers will have the perfect view above the Ganges valley, Patna and high above the monsoon clouds that will besiege the eclipse view from the plains. Seeing the Sun's Corona is virtually guaranteed. 41000 feet above ground! Its an "eclipse observing location, so unique" that you can look up to the eclipse in the dark blue sky and can also look down upon the green and white earth with the lunar shadow sweeping beneath you at 15 mach. Watching the corona at that height looks brighter, it's an electric phenomena. You are above 75% of the earth's atmosphere, no water vapour, dust or clouds. It's a grandstand view of Nature's most beautiful celestial phenomena.

The maximum duration of this eclipse is 6 minutes 38 seconds at a location in the Pacific Ocean. The eclipse is starting at sunrise near Surat in Gujarat. The shadow of the moon is so large at this eclipse that even at sunrise the duration of totality is more than 3 minutes. Indeed this is a great eclipse. The shadow very quickly moves across the breadth of India towards Arunachal Pradesh. The shadow spans a third of the entire path in India, 900 kilometres out of 2500 kms across entire India.

This long eclipse occurs in the middle of the monsoon season in the subcontinent. Similar "seasonal winds", 'Mei-yu' in China and 'Baiu' or 'Tsuyu' in Japan, lower the probability of seeing this eclipse in clear skies. The Indian Monsoon advances to cover the entire country by this date. A lot of weather data of the past many years has been studied by eclipse meteorologists and the result – *Observers in India will have to make the best of an unfortunate lot.* An airbourne observation is the highest probable way of viewing this eclipse!

Eclipse Chasers Athenaeum, the eclipse sphere of SPACE, is conducting a dedicated, non-stop, round eclipse flight. The aircraft chartered is a brand new 737-700, which has 21 'Sun Side Windows' and 21 'Earth Side Windows'. The eclipse flight will take off at 0430 Hrs IST, fly towards and hold over Gaya till its eclipse time. At a precise time the totality run towards north-north-west will be initiated. The aircraft will be intercepting the middle of the eclipse shadow at 0626 IST, 41000 feet, Longitude 85°, Latitude 25° 20'.

India is the only likely place where such an airbourne observation is possible. The eclipse altitude, 15°, is just about right to be visible from the passenger aircraft windows. At the height of 41000 feet, 75% of the atmosphere, 99% of the water vapour and aerosols will be below the aircraft. At this altitude scattering of sunlight by airbourne particulates is low, giving rise to exceptionally dark sky during totality, enabling eclipse viewing with high contrast. The airmass along the line of sight to the Sun is significantly reduced, resulting in exceptional sky transparency, reduced atmospheric turbidity, and better astronomical "seeing".

The intercept point has been planned over Taregna, a village 35 kms south of Patna. Taregna Math is the place where Aryabhata – Ancient

India's astronomer & mathematician observed the skies and practised. Coincidentally the eclipse centreline is passing right over this historical Patliputra town. Cloud permitting we will have a bird's eye view of the mighty Ganges flowing below! Two alternate totality runs have been planned in case the cloud ceiling is higher than the planned height at Patna. Fly from Delhi to Eclipse to Delhi and back to your office in one day, very unlike an eclipse expedition that lasts for days together.

Itinerary :

	Duration	Actual Time* (IST)
Assemble at Delhi airport		03:30
Aircraft Push Back		04:40
Taxi duration	00:15	
Take-Off		04:55
Flight duration	01:10	
Reach Holding point		06:05
Holding duration	00:17	
Totality Run Starts		06:22
Eclipse Total Starts C2		06:24
Middle of Eclipse		06:26
Eclipse Total Ends C3		06:28
Totality Run Ends		06:29
Holding duration for partial eclipse	00:10	
Fly back to Delhi		06:39
Flight duration to Delhi	01:11	
Landing Delhi		07:50

Cost Per Person :

Sun Side Seats	Rs. 79000/-
Middle Seats	Rs. 67000/-
Aisle Seats	Rs. 59000/-
Earth Side Seats	Rs. 29000/-*

*For Indian Amateur Astronomer affiliated to an Indian amateur astronomy organisations, the earth side window seats (column 'A') a discount of 10% should be offered.

Interested in chasing the eclipse? Then contact fast, as the Sun Side Window seats are getting eclipsed quickly.



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Disclaimer : Solar eclipse is a natural phenomenon. In the event of bad weather, clouds, rains or for any other reason, you are unable to view the eclipse, SPACE and Cox and Kings will not be held responsible. No refund claims shall be entertained if you are unable to view the solar eclipse for any reason whatsoever.

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