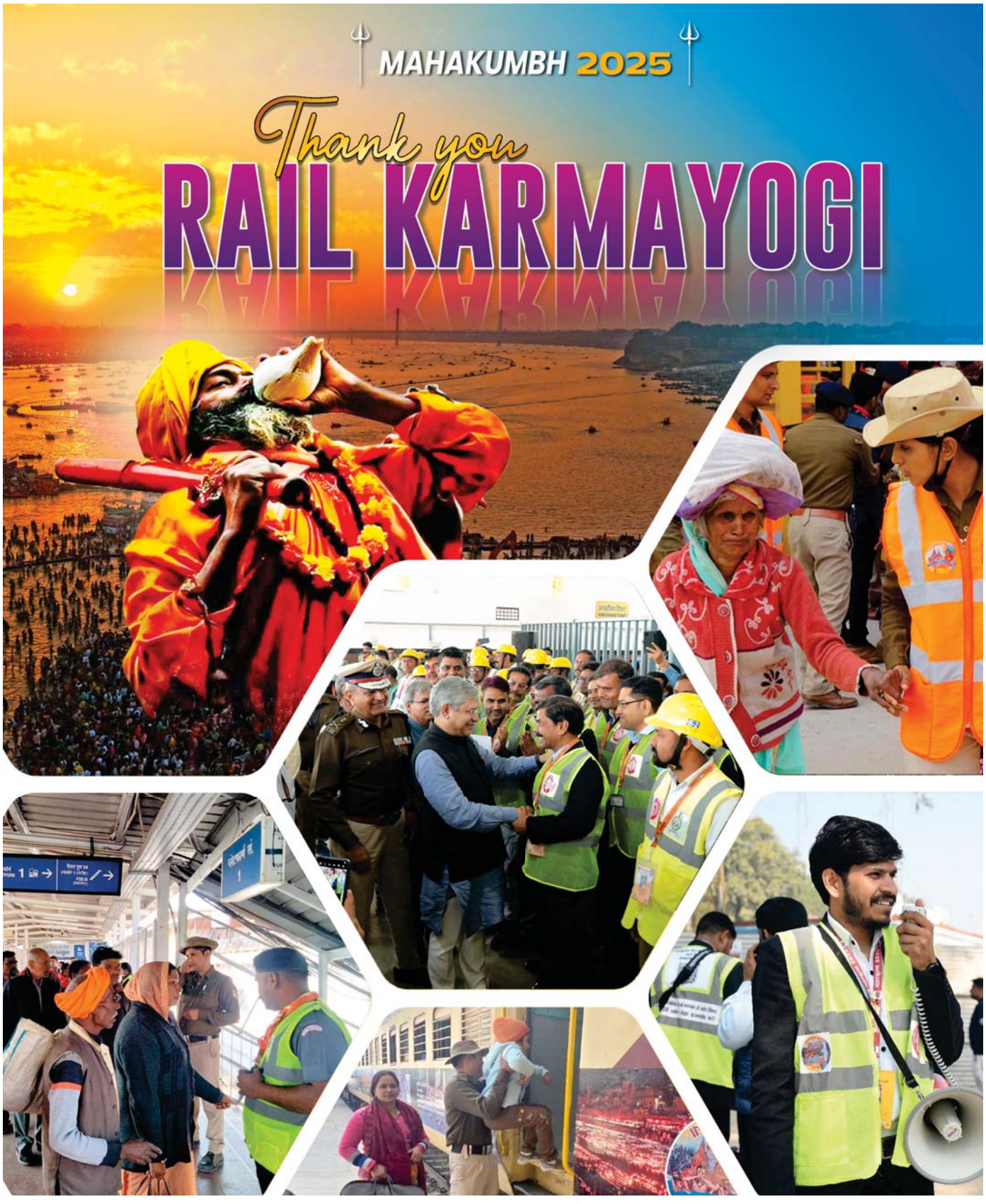
INDIAN RAILWAYS

MARCH 2025

PRICE ₹ 20





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50 Grams Silver Coin
Stylised Laxmi Ganesh
Colour Coin Capsule Type



10 gm - 24 Ct Gold Coin



20 gm - 24 Ct Gold Coin



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- For the benefit of our Members, the Society is offering Four Welfare Schemes (as per Rules and Regulations)
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  - Distress Relief Fund
  - Personal Accident Coverage Scheme
  - Education Award
- Personal Accident Coverage of Rs. 10 Lakhs :
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- All Welfare Schemes are subject to the Rules and Regulations applicable for each such Scheme/s, Bye Laws of the Society, as per MSCS Act 2002 and its rules and other relevant laws.
- Suicide and Accidents / Incidents, occurring on account of Consumption of Alcohol / Drugs / Intoxicants / Violation of Laws are NOT COVERED, under any of the Welfare Schemes.
- Conditions as per the Bye-Law, rules and regulations framed by the Board of Directors, as existing and as may be amended from time to time, shall apply. All disputes / issues are covered under the provisions of MSCS Act & Rules 2002, Bye-Laws of the Society and are under Chennai Jurisdiction only.

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For enquiry Contact

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Chief Executive

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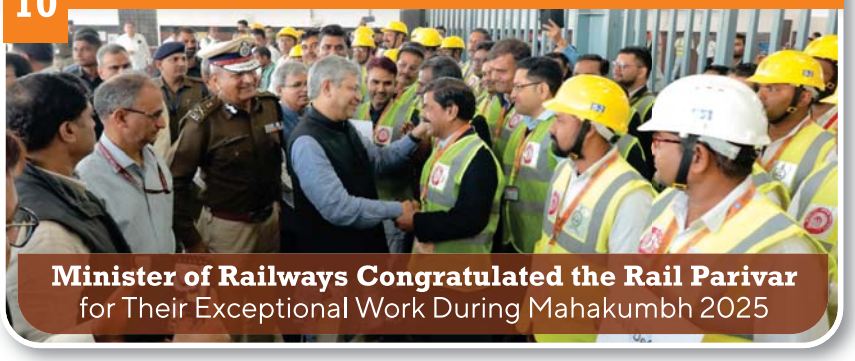
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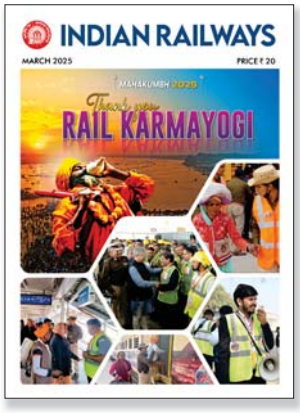
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Editorial

The grand, unparalleled, and magnificent Mahakumbh 2025 has come to a historic conclusion. More than 66 crore devotees from across the country and the world took a holy dip in the sacred Triveni, expressing their faith and devotion. On this occasion, Indian Railways set a new benchmark of excellence in serving pilgrims. An unprecedented arrangement was made to transport, welcome and safely return over 4.24 crore passengers to and from Prayagraj through a total of 17,152 special trains, a service that was widely appreciated by all pilgrims and the administration.

On the occasion of the Mahakumbh's conclusion, the Minister of Railways visited Prayagraj station and wholeheartedly praised the dedication, commitment and coordination of railway employees who had been tirelessly serving for the past two months. He expressed his gratitude and described their teamwork as an exemplary model. The history of Indian Railways has always been driven by innovation and learning and a commitment was reaffirmed to provide even better facilities for the next Kumbh.

Indian Railways had laid a strong foundation for its preparations well before the Mahakumbh. More than ₹5000 crore worth of projects were completed at nine major railway stations in the Prayagraj region to enhance passenger facilities. Drawing from its vast experience, the Railways constructed additional shelters at all stations, equipped with modern public toilets, food stalls, an advanced information and announcement system, digital display boards and easy-to-access inquiry centers.

For Mahakumbh 2025, Indian Railways provided far more services than initially planned. A total of 17,152 trains were operated, exceeding the scheduled 13,000 trains and marking a four fold increase compared to the previous Kumbh. This included 7667 special trains and 9485 regular trains, ensuring a smooth and efficient journey for the devotees. Among the total 66 crore pilgrims, more than 4.24 crore passengers were managed solely at Prayagraj's nine major railway stations.

A multi-layered security and surveillance system was implemented. Continuous monitoring was carried out at the divisional, regional and Railway Board levels through CCTV cameras. From the war room at Rail Bhawan, the Minister of Railways along with the Chairman & CEO, personally supervised operations and issued necessary directives.

Indian Railways is proud of its entire railway family who perform exceptionally during any given situation be it in managing mega events or in calamity.

Prime Minister Dedicated to the Nation the Doubling of Rail Section and Road Over Bridge in Bihar



Narendra Modi, Prime Minister on 24th February, 2025 dedicated key railway projects worth over ₹526 crore to the nation at an event held in Bhagalpur, Bihar. These projects include the doubling of the Warisaliganj-Nawada-Tilaiya railway section and the Ismailpur-Rafi Ganj road over bridge.

The event was also attended by Arif Mohammad Khan, Governor of Bihar, Nitish Kumar, Chief Minister of Bihar, Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Jitan Ram Manjhi, Giriraj Singh, Lalan Singh and Chirag Paswan, Union Ministers, Ram Nath Thakur, Minister of State and other distinguished dignitaries.

Doubling of Warisaliganj-Nawada-Tilaiya section (36.45 km): This project is part of a comprehensive initiative to improve the Gaya-Kiul railway line. This rail section will also play an important role in reducing the traffic pressure of Grandcord and Main Line. With the completion of this project, the speed of trains in the Kiul-Gaya section will increase and industrial development of the region will accelerate. It will benefit the people of Bihar as well as the passengers of other states.

Ismailpur-Rafiganj road over bridge: This bridge is expected to ease vehicular movement, reduce congestion and enhance connectivity between Ismailpur and Rafiganj, which will contribute to the overall development of the region.■

Revision of Divisional Jurisdiction Under the Proposed South Coast Railway at Vishakhapatnam

The Cabinet chaired by Narendra Modi, Prime Minister on 7th February, 2025 gave its ex-post facto approval to the following:

Partial modification of the earlier decision of the Cabinet dated 28th February, 2019 to retain Waltair division in truncated form and rename it as Vishakhapatnam division.

Thus, one part of Waltair division, comprising approximately of the sections between stations Palasa-Vishakhapatnam-Duvvada, Kuneru–Vizianagaram, Naupada Jn.– Paralakhemundi, Bobbili Jn.–Salur, Simhachalam North–Duvvada bypass, Vadalapudi–Duvvada and Vishakhapatnam Steel Plant–Jaggayapalem (around 410 km), will be retained as Waltair division under new South Coast Railway. It would be renamed as Vishakhapatnam division.

The other part of the Waltair division, comprising approximately of the sections between stations Kottavalasa–Bacheli, Kuneru–Theruvali Jn., Singapur Rd.–Koraput Jn. and Paralakhemundi–Gunpur (around 680 km), will be converted into a new division with headquarter at Rayagada under East Coast Railway.

Retention of Waltair division even in its truncated form, will meet the demand and aspirations of the people of the area.■

Governor of Tamil Nadu Visited Integral Coach Factory

R. N. Ravi, Governor, Tamil Nadu visited Integral Coach Factory, Chennai, on 19th February, 2025. A presentation was made demonstrating various milestones of ICF and flagship projects to the Governor.

The Governor inspected Vande Bharat train shell manufacturing facilities and furnishing activities at the Furnishing Division of ICF. He also inspected 82nd Vande Bharat chair car rake and the first AC EMU rake manufactured for Southern Railway. The salient features of the coaches, passenger amenities and safety aspects were explained by U. Subba Rao, General Manager, ICF to the Governor.



The Governor appreciated Team ICF for the latest developments and innovations made in coach manufacturing by ICF.

Minister of Finance Dedicated WAP-7 Electric Locomotive to the Nation



Nirmala Sitharaman, Minister of Finance inaugurated and dedicated Banaras Locomotive Works manufactured WAP-7 Electric Locomotive to the Nation on 21st February, 2025. The event, held at BLW, was attended by Braj Mohan Agrawal, Member, Traction & Rolling Stock, Naresh Pal Singh, GM, BLW along with senior officials and employees. The Minister of Finance flagged off the 375th locomotive produced in the financial year 2024-25 and personally inspected its advanced technical features from the driver's cab. The WAP-7, known for its high efficiency and powerful traction, is a key component in Indian Railways' modernization and electrification drive. As part of her visit, Sitharaman also inaugurated the newly constructed Supervisors' Rest House and Amrit Kanan Community Park. The Rest House is designed with modern amenities, including high-quality furniture, comfortable bedding and enhanced sanitation facilities. The Amrit Kanan Community Park adds to the well-being of workers and their families, offering a serene environment within the BLW premises.

READERS
are requested to send their
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Minister of Railways Reviewed the Progress of Various Ongoing Railway Infrastructural Projects in Gujarat

Ashwini Vaishnaw, Minister of Railways, during his visit to Gujarat on 1st March, 2025, inspected Ahmedabad, Anand and Dahod Railway stations and took stock of the progress of various ongoing railway infrastructural projects at these locations.

Minister of Railways Vaishnaw on reaching Ahmedabad station, conducted inspection of the station. He also reviewed the progress of the ongoing station redevelopment work. Thereafter, Vaishnaw interacted with the media representatives. He informed that this year ₹17,155 crore have been allocated for Gujarat state, which is 29 times of average annual outlay of 2009-14. The investment by Railways in Gujarat is around ₹1,27,000 crore including Bullet train. Giving details about Ahmedabad station redevelopment, he mentioned that the work is going on in full swing. The design has been done considering the structural requirements and integrating it aesthetically with local heritage values. A Concourse Roof Plaza have been planned over the railway tracks equipped with waiting area and passengers' facilities. The project also envisages elevated road network connecting Kalupur ROB and Sarangpur ROB which will be more than twice the surface area of existing roads and will facilitate seamless transportation by multimodal integration of Railways with National High Speed Rail Terminal (Bullet Train), Metro and Bus Rapid Transport (BRT). MR informed that the sequence of work has been planned in such a manner to ensure least inconvenience to passengers and with minimum train cancellation.



Ashwini Vaishnaw, Minister of Railways inspected the redevelopment works at Ahmedabad Railway Station and interacted with the media persons.



Ashwini Vaishnaw, Minister of Railways inspected various aspects of the most powerful locomotives (9000HP) being manufactured at the Dahod Locomotive Workshop.

Minister of Railways arrived at Anand Railway station and conducted inspection of the station. He also visited the One Station One Product (OSOP) stall at the station. Talking to media representatives at Anand station, Vaishnaw informed that since 2014, more than 1000 Rail Over Bridges and Rail Under Bridges have been constructed in Gujarat. Also, 3144 km has been electrified since 2014. The work of KAVACH is also progressing at a rapid pace. The work of Dedicated Fright Corridor is completed in Gujarat. This has enhanced Port connectivity in the region. He further mentioned that 87 stations in Gujarat are being re-developed under Amrit Bharat Station Scheme.

Minister of Railways Visited the Bullet Train Construction Sites in Anand, Gujarat

Ashwini Vaishnaw, Minister of Railways visited the Bullet Train construction sites in Anand, Gujarat on 1st March 2025. He was accompanied by Managing Director/NHSRCL, Vivek Kumar Gupta, Directors and senior officers of NHSRCL.

Following sites were visited:

1. Under-construction Anand Bullet Train station
2. Steel Bridge construction site (GAD 32)
3. Track Slab Manufacturing Facility
4. Track Construction Base (TCB)

Anand Bullet Train Station

'The facade and interior design of Anand Bullet Train station is inspired from the fluid nature, shape and colour of milk droplets, owning to its vicinity to milk capital of India, Anand.

The station will have three floors (Ground, Concourse and Platform) having two side

> "The progress of the bullet train project is going exceptionally well, with approximately 360 km of viaduct work completed. The construction of the Anand Bullet Train Station is also progressing efficiently, ensuring that it meets the modern requirements for trains running at speeds of up to 350 km/h.
>
> The first bullet train in the world operated between Osaka and Tokyo in Japan, transforming the six cities along the route into a major economic hub. Similarly, the Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train corridor is expected to drive rapid economic growth in the regions along its path.
>
> One of the biggest advantages of the bullet train is that it integrates multiple cities into a single economic zone. This project is not just a means of transportation but a catalyst for regional development and growth."
>
> ***Ashwini Vaishnaw***
> Minister of Railways



Ashwini Vaishnaw, Minister of Railways visited and inspected the inspection of ongoing Anand High Speed Rail station work. Vaishnaw interacted with the workers and applauded them for their contribution to nation building and he also took selfies with them.



Under-construction Anand Bullet Train Station.

platforms and four tracks in between and will be equipped with all modern and advanced facilities and amenities like waiting areas, business-class lounge, nursery, restrooms, information booths, retail centres etc.

Till date, concourse, rail and platform level slab casting work is completed. Structural steel work of roof and roof sheeting work is completed. Structural steel work of external façade is in progress. Escalator installation work is completed and flooring work at platform level is in progress.

Under-construction Steel Bridge

A 200 m 'Make in India' steel bridge will be launched over National Highway-48 (connecting Delhi, Mumbai and Chennai) near Nadiad. The bridge comprises of two spans of 100 m each. This 14.3 m wide and 14.6 m in height steel bridge weighs around 1500 MT (each span) and has been fabricated at Salasar workshop near Hapur, U.P.

One of the span of this steel bridge which is planned to be launched in March 2025 was inspected by Minster of Railways.



Under-construction Make in India Steel Bridge near Nadiad.

Track Slab Manufacturing Facility at Anand

A state-of-the-art track slab manufacturing factory has been established in Anand, Gujarat to support the ambitious project of India's first Bullet Train, marking a significant milestone in the country's high-speed rail infrastructure. The factory is designed to produce ballastless track slabs (J-Slab) of different sizes, as required. Till date nearly 35,000 track slabs have been cast (from two factories), which are equivalent to nearly 175 track km.



Ashwini Vaishnaw, Minister of Railways inspected the ballastless track slabs.

Track Construction Base (TCB)

The Mumbai Ahmedabad Bullet Train corridor will have J-Slab ballastless track system based on Japanese Shinkansen track system. This track system consists of four main components i.e. RC Track Bed, Cement Asphalt Mortar, Pre-cast Track Slab and Rails with Fasteners. The process of track installation is fully mechanized with cutting edge machinery especially designed and manufactured, as per Japanese construction practices.

Dedicated Track Construction Bases (TCBs) are being planned and constructed to facilitate track construction including handling of rails, track slabs, machineries and equipment on ground and at the viaduct. They also serve as a base for engineers and other man-power working for track construction.

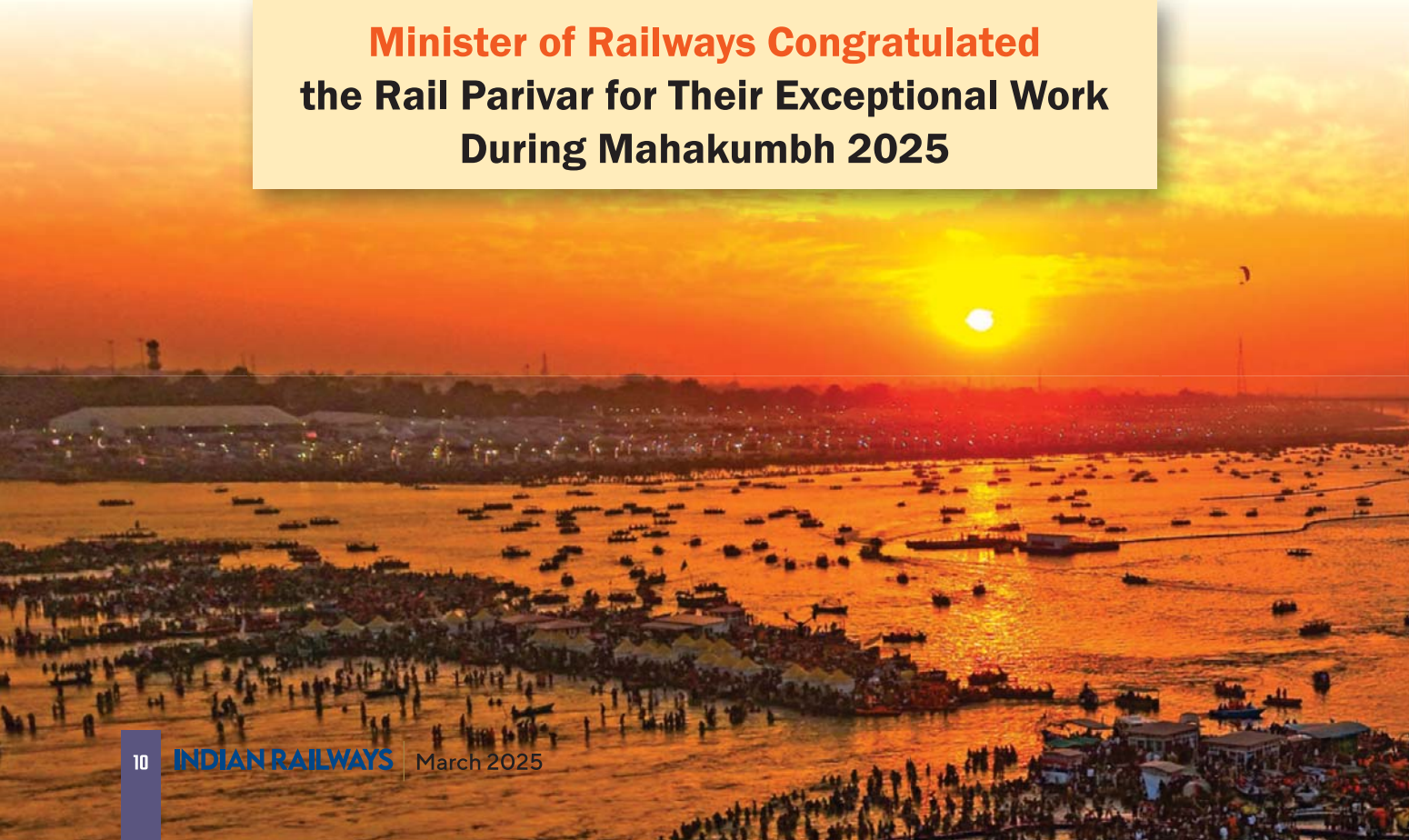
Six track construction bases, three in between Surat, Billimora, Vapi and three in between Vadodara, Anand, Ahmedabad in the state of Gujarat have been made operational, at present.

Thank You Rail Karmayogi



Ashwini Vaishnaw, Minister of Railways alongwith Satish Kumar, Chairman & CEO, Board Members and Manoj Yadava, DG/RPF interacted with the Indian Railways personnel who worked at Mahakumbh 2025.

Minister of Railways Congratulated the Rail Parivar for Their Exceptional Work During Mahakumbh 2025



Ashwini Vaishnaw, Minister of Railways on 27th February, 2025 undertook a visit to Prayagraj to personally review Indian Railways' extensive preparations for Mahakumbh 2025. Recognising the scale and significance of this grand religious gathering, he visited various stations under North Central Railway (NCR), North Eastern Railway (NER) and Northern Railway (NR) to assess on-ground operations. During his visit, he interacted with railway personnel, inspected key arrangements and ensured that all systems were functioning smoothly to accommodate the unprecedented influx of devotees.

Vaishnaw also lauded the seamless coordination between different departments and reaffirmed Indian Railways' commitment to facilitating safe, efficient and comfortable travel for all pilgrims. Minister of Railways thanked Prime Minister for his continuous guidance and also thanked Amit Shah, Home Minister, Yogi Adityanath, Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Mohan Yadav, Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh and the Governments of neighbouring states for their unwavering cooperation in handling the massive influx of pilgrims.

Minister of Railways Commends the Outstanding Dedication of Rail Karmayogi

During his visit, the Minister of Railways personally met and extended his appreciation towards every individual of the Railway Workforce who played a role in managing an event of this magnitude.

From frontline staff assisting passengers to RPF, GRP and police personnel ensuring security, from engineers maintaining seamless train operations to safai karmis upholding cleanliness and from doctors and paramedics providing medical aid to

Unprecedented Scale of Rail Operations

Operational Plan for

Mahakumbh 2025

17,152
Total trains run

13,000
Originally Planned Trains

7667
Special Trains





9485
Regular Trains

66 crore
Total Number of Pilgrims Attended Mahakumbh

4.24 crore
Passengers Handled at the Nine Key Railway Stations of Prayagraj



Enhanced Passenger Facilities in Prayagraj Region

48 Platforms

23 Permanent Holding Areas

21 Road Over and Under Bridges (ROBs/RUBs)

21 Foot Over Bridges (FoBs)

554 Ticketing Counter Facilities

1186 CCTV Cameras

151 Mobile UTS Counters

23 Languages Improved Passenger Communication



help desk officials and booking staff facilitating travel—each contribution was recognised. He also extended his gratitude to TTEs, Drivers, Assistant Drivers, Signal and Telecom personnel, TRD and electrical teams, ASMs, Control Officials, Trackmen and Railway Administrators, whose coordinated efforts ensured the smooth execution of this massive event. He thanked every employee starting from the first to last row personally walking through the stations, exchanging words of encouragement and expressing heartfelt gratitude to those who worked tirelessly round the clock to ensure a seamless Mahakumbh 2025 experience for millions of pilgrims.

Unprecedented Scale of Rail Operations

Indian Railways significantly exceeded its initial operational plan for Mahakumbh 2025. A total of ***17,152*** trains were run, surpassing the originally planned ***13,000*** trains, marking a four fold increase compared to the last Kumbh. This included ***7667*** special trains and ***9485*** regular trains, ensuring that pilgrims reached their destinations smoothly. The total number of pilgrims who attended the Mahakumbh stood at ***66*** crore, with ***4.24*** crore passengers handled at the nine key railway stations of Prayagraj alone.

Enhanced Passenger Facilities in Prayagraj Region

To accommodate the vast number of pilgrims, Indian Railways implemented extensive infrastructural and operational enhancements across nine key stations in Prayagraj, adding second entry points, ***48*** platforms and ***21*** foot over bridges (FoBs) to streamline movement. Surveillance was strengthened with ***1186*** CCTV cameras, including facial recognition technology and drone monitoring for crowd control. To manage peak-hour congestion, ***23*** permanent holding areas were established, while multilingual announcements and leaflets in ***23*** languages improved passenger communication. Ticketing



Holding cum ticketing area built at Anand Vihar Terminal in 3800 sq.feet

facilities were expanded with ***554*** counters, including ***151*** mobile UTS counters and a QR-based system. Additionally, ***21*** road over and under bridges (ROBs/RUBs) were constructed to ensure seamless connectivity.

Strengthening Medical and Emergency Preparedness

Indian Railways implemented a robust medical and emergency support system to ensure passenger safety and convenience. Centralised help desks, medical facilities, ambulances, fire brigades and mobile toilets were deployed in coordination with district authorities, while additional catering services were arranged at stations. To maintain smooth passenger movement, parcel traffic was restricted and an app-based system was introduced for efficient staff deployment and accommodation. Continuous monitoring of rakes, coaches and locomotives ensured operational efficiency, while focused efforts enabled the swift completion of the last ***34*** km of track linking in the Varanasi-Prayagraj section within a month.



Medical and Emergency Preparedness at Prayagraj Jn.

A Testament to Indian Railways' Commitment

The seamless execution of Mahakumbh 2025 operations stands as a testament to Indian Railways' unwavering dedication to public service. Through multi-tier coordination and advanced crowd management, the Railway network successfully transported millions of devotees.

Acknowledging this extraordinary effort, Ashwini Vaishnaw, Minister of Railways personally expressed his gratitude to the entire rail workforce whose relentless dedication ensured smooth and efficient travel for all. Their commitment and teamwork have once again set a new benchmark in large-scale operational excellence, reinforcing Indian Railways' role as the backbone of the nation's transport system.

Preparations Made by Railways during Mahakumbh 2025

- All the goods trains were diverted in DFC.
- ***200+*** rakes have been provided in the Kumbh area having either train set or engines on both sides (to avoid shunting operations).
- ***5000*** crore work done in last 3 years for Mahakumbh area.
- Banaras - Prayagraj doubling (including Ganga bridge).
- Phaphamau - Janghai doubling.
- ***17,152*** trains ran for Mahakumbh against ***13,000*** planned trains, 4 times more than the last Kumbh (***7667*** special trains and ***9485*** regular trains = ***17,152***)
- Total no. of pilgrims to Kumbh ***66*** crore (out of which ***4.24*** crore passengers handled at nine Kumbh railway stations of Prayagraj). Passenger facilities in prayagraj area.
- Nine stations, all with second entry, ***48*** PF, ***21*** FoB.
- ***1186*** CCTV (10% cameras with facial recognition), drones for surveillance.
- ***23*** permanent holding areas.
- Announcement in ***12*** languages at Prayagraj, Naini, Cheoki and Subedarganj and information leaflets in ***23*** languages.
- ***554*** ticket counters (***151*** mobile UTS) and also QR based ticketing facility.
- ***21*** ROB/RUBs : Improved mobility of road as well as rail.

Colour Coding

Colour coding of holding areas and tickets for easy identification and direction-wise segregation of passengers.

Red: Lucknow, Ayodhya

Blue: DDU, Sasaram, Patna

Yellow: Manikpur, Jhansi, Satna, Katni, MP area

Green: Kanpur, Agra, Delhi

- ***5*** tier Monitoring System PF/ holding area → Station → Division→ Zonal → Railway Board war room.
- ***13,000*** extra staff deployed.
- RPSF women's team ***2*** battalion, ***22*** Dog squad, ***1000+*** sanitation workers, ***1500+*** TTE and booking staff, more than ***3000*** running staff (Guard, Driver and Asistant driver).
- Medical help provided to more than ***3*** lakh pilgrims.

Special Arrangements Done

- Adequate holding areas made for passengers at critical stations - ***20*** acre area.
- Fixed barricading, segregated pathways, signages to guide and control passengers movement.
- 24x7 Intensive deployment of Railway manpower: more staff at peak hours.
- Help from Scout /Guides for crowd guidance.
- Coordination with Chief Secretary, DGP, District Collectors and SPs, Magistrates and thanas.
- Close coordination and monitoring with State Govt. through focussed WhatsApp groups and live monitoring of crowd Inflow/movement + bulk bus movement + vehicular movement.
- Additional Ticketing Arrangements: Additional windows (Portable UTS Counters) in the holding areas.
- Regular Manual Announcements: from PA system and megaphone in the entire station area and platforms.
- Special Mela Trains: as per the need to clear passengers rush.
- Extra halts: provided to regular Mail/Express trains for boarding/de-boarding of passengers to handle heavy rush.
- Five tier coordination: PF→Station→Division →Zonal→Railway Board war room.
- Hot lines communication and CCTV monitoring of crowds at Platforms, FOB, Entry/Exits and holding areas.
- Central help desk at enquiry counter and in the holding areas.
- Basic medical facilities.
- Increased catering provided in circulating areas/stations.
- Ambulance, Fire Brigade and Mobile Toilets have been arranged with the help of Civil / District Administration.
- Parcel traffic has been restricted to facilitate free passenger movement.
- App based deployment of other division's staffs and their resting arrangements.
- Rake, coach and loco monitoring.
- Assistance to stakeholders in deploying manpower for track linking of the last ***34*** km in a month in Varanasi-Prayagraj section.



The RoB in Bettiah was Inaugurated by Women in the Presence of MR

MR Reviewed the Redevelopment Works of Bettiah and Muzaffarpur Stations



Ashwini Vaishnaw, Minister of Railways inspected the Bettiah railway station in Bihar, which is being redeveloped under the 'Amrit Bharat Station Yojana' and also observed its 3D model.

Ashwini Vaishnaw, Minister of Railways on 9th February, 2025 in Bettiah dedicated the road over bridge at level crossing no. 2 to the nation through women of the Nari Shakti Swaroop. The Minister of Railways also observed the 3D model of Bettiah station which is being redeveloped under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme.

On this occasion, Satish Chandra Dubey, Minister of State for Coal and Mines, Dr. Sanjay Jaiswal, Sunil Kumar and Gopal ji Thakur, MPs and many other guests including MLAs were present in the function organized in Bettiah. Chhatrasal Singh, General Manager of East Central Railway was also present.

Addressing the reporters at Bettiah station, the Minister of Railways said that between 2009 and 2014, an average budget of ₹1132 crore was allocated every year for the development of Railways in Bihar, but in this year's budget, the Prime Minister has allocated a record budget of ₹10,066 crore for Railways in Bihar. That means almost nine times more budget has been allocated. As a result of this record budget, the work of construction of new railway lines, electrification, running of new trains, development of stations and increase in passenger facilities are being done at a record level in Bihar.

He said that an investment of ₹95,566 crore is being made for the overall development of Railways in Bihar, which will lead to complete transformation of railway network in Bihar in the next 5 years. In Bihar, between 2009 and 2014, on an average 64 km of new line was constructed every year, whereas since 2014 to 2025, an average of 167 km of new lines built, which is about 2.6 times more. In Bihar, since 2014, 1832 km of new railway line has been constructed which is equal to the total railway network of

Malaysia. Along with this, 3020 km of railway track has been electrified in Bihar since 2014. As a result, presently, 100% electrification has been done.

He said that under the Amrit Bharat Station, a total of 98 stations in Bihar including major stations around Champaran like Bettiah, Bapudham Motihari, Narkatiaganj, Raxaul etc. are being redeveloped. Along with this, for the development of railway infrastructure in this region, the doubling work of Narkatiaganj-Raxaul-Sitamarhi-Darbhanga railway section has been approved by the Cabinet. Presently the doubling work of Valmikinagar-Sagauli and Sagauli-Muzaffarpur railway sections is going on. Once it is completed, operation of many more trains will be possible in this area. Earlier, the Railway Minister carried out a window trailing inspection of the Gorakhpur-Valmikinagar-Bagaha-Bettiah section by a special train from Gorakhpur.

After dedicating ROB to the nation in Bettiah, the Railway Minister reached Muzaffarpur by special train where he also saw the 3D model of Muzaffarpur Junction which is being redeveloped under Amrit Bharat Station Scheme. He said that



Ashwini Vaishnaw, Minister of Railways observed the poster design of Muzaffarpur Junction.

it is a matter of joy for the people of Muzaffarpur that Muzaffarpur Junction is being developed as a world class station at a cost of ₹442 crore.

Addressing the press present on the occasion, he said that work for railway development is under progress in Bihar. He also said that there is a plan to manufacture 100 Amrit Bharat trains for long distance and 50 Namo Bharat trains for short distance. He said that the recruitment of 95,000 youth by the Railways are under process. Last year, more than 1.51 lakh recruitments were done by the Indian Railways in a transparent manner.

Redeveloped Entrance of Rail Bhawan and Crèche was Inaugurated by MR



The redeveloped entrance of Rail Bhawan along with Crèche (Gokul) was inaugurated by Ashwini Vaishnaw, Minister of Railways on 7th February, 2025. On this occasion, Satish Kumar, Chairman & CEO and other senior officials were also present.

Indian Railways is Marching Towards Achieving the Objective of Net Zero - Minister of Railways

MR addressed the Investors and Entrepreneurs at the Global Investors Summit 2025



Ashwini Vaishnaw, Minister of Railways addressed investors and entrepreneurs at the Global Investors Summit 2025 through video conferencing from Rail Bhawan.

- ***Power purchasing agreement of 170 MW signed between Indian Railways and Madhya Pradesh Government, marking the procurement of cheapest renewable energy in India***
- ***Minister of Railways urges States to share solar and wind energy to Indian Railways***
- ***Till date, Indian Railways has tied up 4260 MW (installed) of Solar and 3427 MW (installed) of wind energy for its energy requirements***
- ***Commitment to achieve 100% electrification in Railways and maximize renewable energy usage***

Addressing investors and entrepreneurs at the Global Investors Summit 2025 in Bhopal, Ashwini Vaishnaw, Minister of Railways outlined Indian Railways' vision for electrification and the adoption of alternative energy sources.

Mohan Yadav, Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, and Rakesh Shukla, Minister of New and Renewable Energy, Government of Madhya Pradesh were also present in the event.

Participating via video conferencing from Rail Bhawan, the Minister of Railways emphasized the Indian government's goal to achieve 'Net Zero' carbon emissions for Indian Railways, with 100% electrification slated for completion in the 2025-26 financial year. The next objective is to maximize renewable energy procurement.

With this vision, Indian Railways has already tied up 1500 MW of renewable energy. Further strengthening this commitment, a significant 170 MW Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) was signed on 24th February, 2025 with the Madhya Pradesh Government. This milestone marks the procurement of India's cheapest solar power at ₹2.15/KWh and the Minister reaffirmed enthusiasm for exploring wind and nuclear energy procurement. The Government of Madhya Pradesh, through Rewa Ultra Mega Solar Power Limited (RUMSL), is supplying solar power to Indian Railways from its largest solar park.

Vaishnaw commended Mohan Yadav, Chief Minister, Madhya Pradesh for his active role in advancing railway development in the state. He reiterated the Indian government's strong commitment to a sustainable and green future for the country's transportation network.

Today's PPA was signed between key stakeholders, including West Central Railway, represented by Dy. CEE/HQ Chetan Gulwani; RUMSL, represented by Executive Engineer Avneesh Shukla and Waree Forever Energies Pvt Ltd, the solar power developer.

The Minister also added that Indian Railways is committed to achieving net-zero emissions and shifting from road to rail transport to promote environmental sustainability, reduce oil imports, and lower overall logistics costs. As part of this vision, it is meeting its energy requirements through non-fossil sources such as solar, wind and nuclear power. The collaboration with RUMSL is a significant step in this direction.

In addition to setting up its own solar systems, Indian Railways is also securing solar power through PPA arrangements with developers. By 2030, Indian Railways' traction power requirement is projected to reach 10,000 MW. So far, it has secured 4260 MW of installed solar capacity and 3427 MW of installed wind capacity to meet its energy needs, the Minister said.

Tied up Solar Installed capacity with Indian Railways

Project	Installed Capacity (in MW)
Rooftop of stations and Railway service building	203
Bhilai	50
MCF	3.13
Diwana	2
Bina	1.7
RUMS (Rewa)	400
BSUL (Bundelkhand)	800
IRCON (Pavagarh, Karnataka)	500
RERTC (SECI) (Rajasthan)	100
900 MW RERTC (Bikaner NTPC, Jaisalmer 450 MW, Fatehgarh 200 MW)	1300
600 MW RERTC (NTPC, Bikaner, TEQ Green Barmer)	901
Total	4260.83

Call for Nationwide Collaboration in Renewable Energy

Ashwini Vaishnaw urged all Indian states to contribute renewable energy—be it solar, wind, hydro, or nuclear power—to Indian Railways, emphasizing a collaborative approach to sustainable energy. He praised the successful partnership model between the Railway Ministry and the Government of Madhya Pradesh, which facilitates direct PPA agreements between the state's energy generators and Indian Railways.

Overview of RUMSL

Parameter	Details
Capacity	1500 MW
Solar Parks Location	Agar, Shajapur and Neemuch districts in Northwest Madhya Pradesh
Quantum to Railway	195 MW equivalent (Total installed 400 MW) (Annual Solar Power Supply is 757 Million Units)
Tariff	₹2.15 /kWh for Neemuch unit (lowest in the country)
CUF (Capacity Utilization Factor)	44.3% under Optimum Scheduling
Joint Venture Partners	Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) and Madhya Pradesh Urja Vikas Nigam Limited (MPUVNL)
PPA Duration	25 years
Nodal Railway	WCR (Power supplied via grid to Indian Railways in six states)
Target Completion Date	December 2025

Historic Budget Allocation for Madhya Pradesh Rail Infrastructure

Highlighting the record-breaking budget of ₹14,745 crore allocated to Madhya Pradesh's railway sector for FY 2025-26, the Minister stated that this is the highest-ever budgetary allocation for the state. Infrastructure development has accelerated significantly, with railway track laying increasing from 29 km per year before 2014 to 230 km per year now—a 7.5x increase.

MoSR Reviewed Ongoing Railway Projects in Tumakuru District



V. Somanna, Minister of State for Railways chaired a review meeting at the Tumakuru District Commissioner's office conference hall on 8th February, 2025 to assess the progress of ongoing railway infrastructure projects in Tumakuru District. The meeting was attended by senior railway officials and State Govt. officials.

Somanna reviewed various railway projects, including construction of road under bridges at D Rampura Gate, Badenahalli Gate, Donnegere, etc. He also reviewed the ROB works of Mydala Gate, Baddihalli gate, Batawadi Gate, Panditanahalli gate, Heggere Gate, Light ROB at Gubbi etc., along with pedestrian facilities like skywalks and underpasses.■

Minister of State for Railways Visited BLW

V. Somanna, Minister of State for Railways, visited the Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) on 24th January 2025.

The Minister inspected the New Loco Frame Shop, Loco Assembly Shop, Traction Assembly Shop, Truck Machine Shop and Loco Test Shop. He examined the electric locomotive and experienced its technical features by sitting in the driver's cab.

In his address, Somanna said, 'BLW's production system is a remarkable example of modern technology and high quality. BLW stands as a key pillar of the Aatmanirbhar Bharat mission. The dedication and hard work of the officers and employees here are bringing global recognition to India.' He appreciated BLW's successful export of locomotives to 11 countries, including Mozambique, Sudan and Malaysia.■



Kind Attention

AUTHORS/WRITERS contributing articles for the magazine are requested to restrict their articles to a reasonable size. Ideally an article should not exceed 1000 WORDS.

In view of the space constraints of the magazine, sometimes it becomes difficult to include longer articles. All are requested to appreciate our problem and co-operate.

editorindianrailways@gmail.com

MoSR Conducted Inspection of Ahmedabad Division



Ravneet Singh, Minister of State for Railways on 24th February, 2025 visited Ahmedabad Division of Western Railway and inspected Ahmedabad, Palanpur and Gandhinagar Capital stations. He reviewed passenger amenities as well as the progress of station redevelopment works.

MoSR took stock of the various ongoing railway infrastructure projects in Ahmedabad Division, including the redevelopment work of Ahmedabad station. He also inspected the progress of Ahmedabad station of National High Speed Rail Corporation Limited (NHSRCL). Thereafter, he visited the Operations Command Center (OCC) of the Western Dedicated Freight Corridor at Sabarmati.■

MoS Visited BLW and RDSO Pavilions at India Industrial Fair

Nimuben Jayantibhai Bambhaniya, Minister of State of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution visited the BLW and RDSO pavillions at the 9th India Industrial Fair 2025 held at Rajkot, Gujarat from 2nd to 5th February, 2025.

BLW exhibited WAP-7 and WAG-9 Electric Locomotives, Export Diesel Locomotive Models – showcasing locomotives exported to Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Mozambique and 11 other countries and Single Vendor Locomotive items.

RDSO exhibited various rolling stock models and advanced technologies such as 'KAVACH' and



Network In Box (NIB) at the stall. RDSO provided comprehensive information about the online vendor registration and approval processes via the 'UVAM' portal.■

The Islamic Republic of Iran Railways' Delegation Visited BLW



Six member high-level delegation from Islamic Republic of Iran Railways visited Banaras Locomotive Works on 17th January, 2025. The delegation was led by Jabbar Ali Zakeri, Deputy Minister & CEO, Iran Railways. He was accompanied by Majid Khan Abadi, Director, Fleet Engineering & Supervision, Alireza Nasr Abadi, Director, Procurement & Support Office, Syed Ibrahim Fazli Zanuz, Deputy Director, International Affairs, Dr. Iraj Elahi, Ambassador of Iran to India and Hussaini, Deputy Ambassador.

The delegation visited various workshops of BLW including Engine Assembly Shop, Light Machine Shop, Engine Testing Shop, Loco Assembly Shop and Turbo Assembly Shop. Naresh Pal Singh, GM said, 'This visit will pave the way for a new and strong partnership between the railway networks of India and Iran.'■

General Manager of N. F. Railway Held Review Meeting with MPs of Alipurduar and Katihar Divisions



Chetan Kumar Shrivastava, GM, N.F. Railway held a review meeting with the MPs on 24th January, 2025. MPs from West Bengal, Bihar, Assam and Sikkim were present in the discussion. The MPs present included MPs of Lok Sabha, Tariq Anwar (Katihar), Rajesh Ranjan (Purnia), Pradeep Kumar Singh (Araria), Dr. Jayanta Kumar Roy (Jalpaiguri), MPs of Rajya Sabha Dorjee Tshering Lepcha (Sikkim) and Nagendra Ray (West Bengal), MPs of Lok Sabha Md. Rakibul Hussain (Dhubri), Manoj Tigga (Alipurduar), Kartick Chandra Paul (Raiganj) and Joyanta Basumatary (Kokrajhar). Senior railway officials from Alipurduar, Katihar divisions were also present in the meeting.

The General Manager highlighted various ongoing developmental, new line and survey works being carried out by the N. F. Railway with specific reference to areas under Alipurduar and Katihar divisions. Suggestions and views from all the public representatives present were welcomed for further betterment of services and amenities. He also informed the members present about the Intrusion Detection System that has been immensely successful in saving lives of many elephants approaching railway track from being hit by trains.

The MPs suggested extension and improvement of railway connectivity, passenger amenities, upgradation of stations, etc. The GM stated that all the requests from the MPs for introduction of new services/stoppages will be looked into with due importance.

Indian Railways Honoured for its Contribution to Special Campaign 4.0



V. Srinivas, Secretary (DoPPW), presented a memento to Satish Kumar, Chairman & CEO, in the presence of Roopa Srinivasan, Member (Finance), Aruna Nayar, Secretary and other senior officials. The recognition was awarded for Indian Railways' significant contributions to the success of Special Campaign 4.0. Indian Railways was appreciated for its extensive efforts in organizing cleanliness drives across stations, railway colonies and production units, as well as for efficient scrap disposal. A key highlight of the campaign was the citizen-centric initiative 'Rail Chaupal', which enhanced public engagement and participation.

Member, Operations & Business Development Inspected Green Line-2 of Metro Railway and also Visited SER



Hitendra Malhotra, Member, Operations & Business Development reviewed the performance of operating and business development of Metro Railway at Fairlie Place on 31st January, 2025. Later, he visited the Esplanade to Howrah stretch of Green Line-2 with the senior officers of the Traffic Department of Metro Railway.

Member Operations & Business Development, also visited South Eastern Railway 30th January, 2025 and held a high level meeting with Anil Kumar Mishra, General manager, SER. Malhotra, also held a review meeting of Operating and Commercial Departments of South Eastern Railway on 30th January, 2025.

Member, Traction & Rolling Stock Visited CLW



Braj Mohan Agrawal, Member, Traction & Rolling Stock visited CLW on 22nd and 23rd January, 2025.

On 22nd January, Agrawal paid floral tributes to Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das and chaired a meeting with Vijay Kumar, General Manager and discussed various issues. On 23rd January, a tree plantation programme was organised wherein Braj Mohan Agrawal planted a sampling. Agrawal also visited various shops inside the workshop covering Shell, Bogie, Traction Motors and Loco Assembly Shops. Later, Agrawal visited the Deshbandhu Heritage Loco Park and also visited the Heritage Museum in the Administrative office premises and appreciated the exhibits preserved.

Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya and Indian Navy Signed MoU

Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya, Vadodara has signed on MoU with the Indian Navy in New Delhi on 16th December, 2024. The MoU aims at enhancing logistics-related education, research and training for the Indian Navy.

The agreement, signed by Vice Admiral Deepak Kapoor (Controller of Logistics, Indian Navy) and Prof. Manoj Choudhary (Vice-Chancellor, Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya), represents a major milestone in bolstering Indiain Navy's logistics capabilities and operational efficiency.



The MoU facilitates the exchange of expertise and case studies in areas such as AI applications, predictive analytics and blockchain technology to elevate logistics practices.

Vande Bharat Sleeper Train

Ushering Soon a New Era of Comfortable Long Distance Travel

Indian Railways is set to revolutionize long-distance travel with the Vande Bharat Sleeper Train Set, a state-of-the-art addition to the country's fastest-growing fleet. The dream of a world-class, high-speed sleeper train is now a reality as the first 16-car Vande Bharat Sleeper Train Set has successfully completed rigorous trials by the Research Designs and Standards Organisation (RDSO) on 15th January 2025 for 540 km distance in Mumbai- Ahmedabad section. Integral Coach Factory, Chennai completed manufacturing of India's first Vande Bharat Sleeper Train set last year on 17th December, 2024. Within a fortnight the train was brought to Kota division and was successfully tested for short distances of 30 to 40 km for three days in a row in the first week of last month, where it achieved comfortable travel experience at a high speed of 180 km/hour.

This achievement marks a significant leap in railway modernization, promising a seamless and luxurious travel experience for passengers. With a focus on comfort, speed and cutting-edge technology, the Vande Bharat Sleeper trains are set to redefine the overnight journeys for masses in the days to come.

Scaling Up Production: The Road Ahead

After the successful trial of the prototype, the production of nine more Vande Bharat Sleeper Train Sets is scheduled between April and December 2025. These trains will set new benchmarks in efficiency and convenience for long-haul travellers.

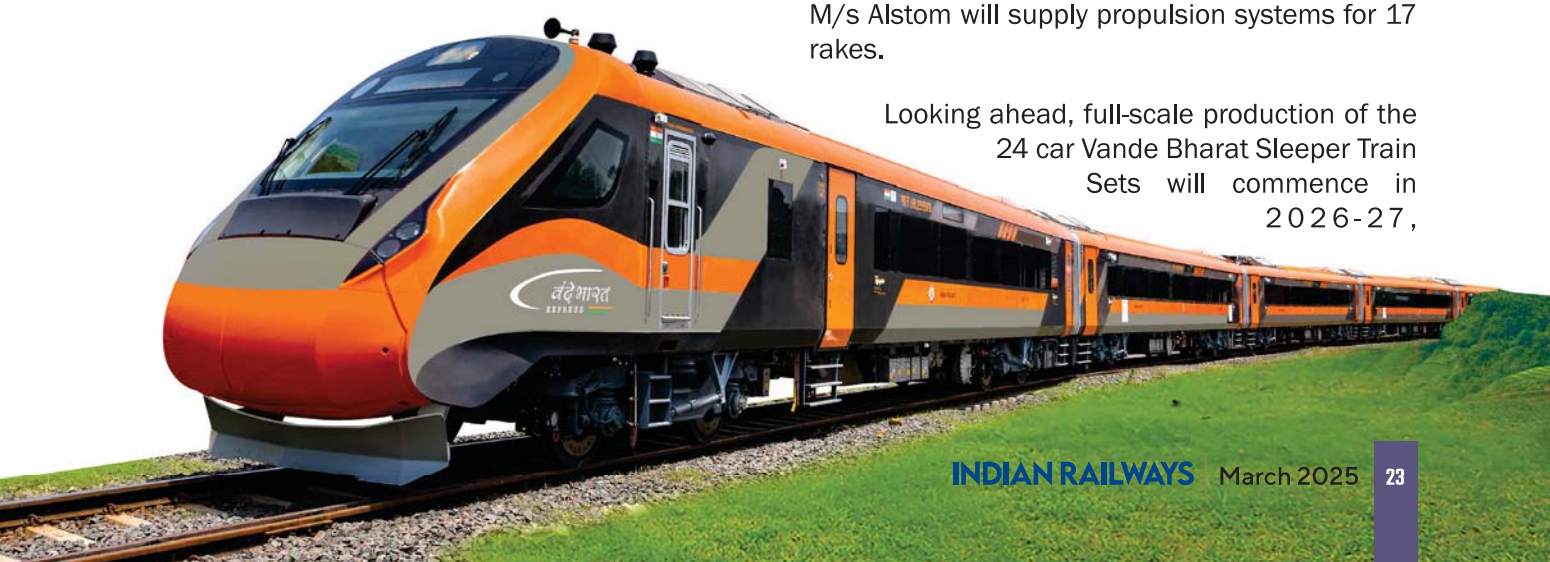
To power this ambitious rollout, Indian Railways has placed a major order for propulsion electrics for 50 rakes of the 24-car Vande Bharat Sleeper Train Sets on 17th December 2024. The order has been awarded to two leading Indian manufacturers, which is likely to be ready in 2 years' time frame.



M/s Medha will supply propulsion systems for 33 rakes.

M/s Alstom will supply propulsion systems for 17 rakes.

Looking ahead, full-scale production of the 24 car Vande Bharat Sleeper Train Sets will commence in 2026-27,



further strengthening India's self-reliance in railway technology.

A New Chapter in Rail Travel with Speed and Luxury

These Vande Bharat sleeper trains are designed with features like automatic doors, ultra comfortable berths, onboard Wi-Fi and an aircraft-like design. Passengers in India are already enjoying reclining seats and world class travel experience through 136 Vande Bharat trains running across the country on the medium and short distances. With the Vande Bharat Sleeper, passengers can expect a quieter, smoother, and more comfortable journey, equipped with world-class amenities and advanced safety features. Designed and built under the Make in India initiative, this train embodies India's engineering excellence and commitment to transforming rail travel.

As Indian Railways move forward with this transformative project, the Vande Bharat Sleeper Train Set stands as a testament to the nation's vision of modern, efficient and passenger-friendly transportation.

Features of the train

- The train has 16 coaches divided into three classes: AC 1st Class, AC 2-Tier and AC 3-Tier.
- The train has a total capacity of 1,128 passengers.
- The train has crash buffers, deformation tubes, and a fire barrier wall.
- The train has automatic doors, cushioned berths, and onboard Wi-Fi.

Before the operationalisation of India's first Vande Bharat sleeper train, the Research Designs and Standards Organisation (RDSO) will issue a final certificate after analyzing the trial runs. The railway safety commissioner will evaluate the train at its maximum speed.



Indian Railways Boost Recruitment

Over 5 Lakh Vacancies Filled in the Last Decade

Annual Calendar Introduced

Occurrence and filling up of vacancies is a continuous process in Indian Railways considering its size, spatial distribution and criticality of operation. Adequate and suitable manpower is provided to cater to the regular operations, changes in technology, mechanization and innovative practices. The vacancies are filled up primarily by placement of indents by Railways with Recruitment agencies as per operational and technological requirements.

After easing of restrictions imposed on account of COVID 19, two major examinations involving more than 2.37 crore candidates had been conducted successfully during 2020 to 2022.

Exam	Candidates	Cities	Centres	Days	Shifts
L2 - L6	1.26 crore	211	726	68	133
L1	1.1 crore	191	551	33	99

Based on these exams, 1,30,581 candidates have been recruited in Railways.

The RRB examinations are quite technical in nature entailing large scale mobilization of men and resources and training of manpower. Railways overcame all these challenges and successfully conducted the recruitment in a transparent manner following all laid down guidelines. No instance of paper leakage or similar malpractice has occurred during the entire process.

Further, as system improvement, the Ministry of Railways has introduced a system of publishing the annual calendar from 2024 for recruitment to various categories of Group 'C' post. The introduction of the annual calendar will benefit the aspirants in the following manner:

- More opportunities for candidates.



- Opportunities to those becoming eligible every year.
- Certainty of exams.
- Faster Recruitment process, Training and Appointments.

Accordingly ten Centralized Employment Notifications (CENs) for 92,116 vacancies have been notified during January to December 2024 for filling up of posts of Assistant Loco Pilots, Technicians, Sub-Inspectors, Constables in Railway Protection Force (RPF), Junior Engineers (JEs)/ Depot Material Superintendent (DMS)/ Chemical & Metallurgical Assistant (CMA), Paramedical Categories, Non-Technical Popular Categories (Graduate) and Non-Technical Popular Categories (Under-Graduate), Ministerial & Isolated Categories and Level-1.

For four notifications, Computer Based Tests (CBTs) have been completed from 25th November

to 30th December, 2024. The details are as under:-

Exam	Candidates	Cities	Centres	Days	Shifts
1st Stage CBT for the post of ALP (18,799 vacancies)	18,40,347	156	346	5	15
CBT for the post of RPF-SI (452 vacancies)	15,35,635	143	306	5	15
1st Stage CBT for the post of JE/DMS/ CMA (7951 vacancies)	11,01,266	146	323	3	9
CBT for the post of Technician (14,298 vacancies)	22,83,812	139	312	9	27



However, sometimes in order to meet exigencies, retired Railway employees are re-engaged against the vacant posts temporarily based on competency; experience etc. to ensure smooth progress of the developmental and other works.

This information was given by Ashwini Vaishnaw, Minister of Railways in a written reply in Rajya Sabha on 7th February, 2025.■

First Full-Fledged Trial Run Conducted on Noapara-Jai Hind Bimanbandar Stretch of Yellow Line

The first full-fledged trial run on both UP and DN lines of the Noapara-Jai Hind Bimanbandar stretch (7.04 km) of the Yellow Line was successfully conducted on 24th January, 2025.

P. Uday Kumar Reddy, General Manager, Metro Railway, Kolkata along with other senior officers and staff, were present during the trial run. Reddy travelled in the Motorman's cab throughout the trial run.

Reddy chaired a high-level meeting with senior Metro Railway officials at Jai Hind Bimanbandar Metro station, instructing them to complete all pending works within the stipulated deadline. The commissioning of this stretch will mark a



revolutionary step in providing a modern and efficient transport system for the people of Kolkata and its suburbs, offering seamless connectivity to the airport and enhancing the city's public transport infrastructure.■

CLW Achieved the Highest Ever Loco Production in January 2025: Produced 66 Locos



Chittaranjan Locomotive Works achieved a remarkable milestone on 31st January, 2025. The Organization produced a record-breaking 66 locomotives in a single month. CLW rolled out its 600th locomotive of FY 2024-25 (figures till 26th February, 2025) surpassing last year's record of 580. Vijay Kumar, General Manager congratulated the workforce, applauding their commitment and expertise, while expressing confidence in their continued pursuit of excellence in locomotive production.■

BLW Sets New Record by Manufacturing 124 Electric Loco Bogies



Banaras Locomotive Works Truck Machine Shop achieved a historic feat by manufacturing the highest ever number of 124 electric loco bogies in January, 2025. Earlier, the maximum number of 104 loco bogies were manufactured in November, 2022.

To commemorate this historic achievement, on 31st January, 2025, Naresh Pal Singh, General Manager dedicated this bogie to the service of the nation.■

Laser Based Wheel Profile Measurement System Introduced





Northeast Frontier Railway has introduced laser based wheel profile management system. There are two types of measurement system, Calipri C42 and Calipri Prime. These systems are non-contact wheel profile measurement sensors which are portable, lightweight and easy to operate. These measuring instruments meet the specific demands of the Railways by delivering accurate and reproducible results, independent of operator influence. These specialised profile measurement devices are widely used for wheel wear inspection, brake disc measurement, wheel back-to-back and diameter measurement and rail wear inspection.■

N.F. Railway Signed MoU with IRCON



Chetan Kumar Shrivastava, General Manager, NFR and H. M. Gupta, Chief Managing Director, IRCON signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on 26th December, 2024 for maintenance of electrification infrastructure including Overhead Equipment's (OHE) and Power Supply Installation (PSI). The MoU will provide maintenance of OHE & PSI in Lumding and Tinsukia divisions.■

Gyaanvaapi Application Launched in NFR

Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has officially launched an educational mobile app named Gyaanvaapi Application. The App was launched by Chetan Kumar Shrivastava, General Manager and senior railway officials from Headquarters and Divisions. The Gyaanvaapi App, is an all-in-one educational platform designed exclusively for Railway professionals. It empower users with knowledge, enhance their professional growth and ensure they stay abreast of operational guidelines and developments.

Gyaanvaapi
a Northeast Frontier Railway(Tinsukia) initiative...

The General Manager while launching the Application, commended the dedicated efforts and innovation that led to the development of the app. The Gyaanvaapi App is developed by Nitish Sharma, Senior Assistant Loco Pilot in coordination with Sunil Kumar, Divisional Mechanical Engineer/ Power/Tinsukia.■

IRITM – Initiatives: Capacity Building through Digital Learning

The Indian Railways Institute of Transport Management (IRITM), Lucknow, a Centralized Training Institute under Ministry of Railways imparts training to Indian Railways Management Service officer trainees and in-service officers of Indian Railways.

The iGOT Karmayogi platform is an online platform to facilitate Civil Service officials for online learning, competency management, career management, discussions and networking. The institute, so far, has uploaded 37 digital training courses on iGOT platform. As on 19th February, 2025 more than 2.40 lakh Central Govt. employees have enrolled for the courses uploaded by the institute out which more than 2.08 lakh enrolled trainees have completed these courses and have received course completion certificates. Most of the subscribers to these courses have appreciated the quality and relevance of digital content.■

BLW is the First Loco Manufacturing Unit of Indian Railways to be Certified with IRIS 'Silver' Grade


IRIS Certification® - QUALITY PERFORMANCE LEVEL 2024

IRIS Certification

QUALITY PERFORMANCE LEVEL STATEMENT

awarded to

BANARAS LOCOMOTIVE WORKS MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS
POST OFFICE-DLW
221004 VARANASI
India

IRIS Certification® confirmed the quality performance level of the above organization as

SILVER

as result of the last audit performed by DQS according IRIS Certification® Conformity assessment:2020.

valid from: 27/09/2024 valid until: 11/12/2025

This quality performance level statement is updated yearly, based on the performance result of the following audit.

Current date: 05/02/2025

Rachid Irbah
IRIS Certification® IRIS General Manager

Organization-ID: 3752
Audit-ID: 25677

Banaras Locomotive Works achieved 'Silver' grade in the International Railway Industry Standard (IRIS) certification. This certification is in conformity with the stringent quality standards prescribed by the European Railway Industry Association (UNIFE) and makes BLW the first loco manufacturing unit of Indian Railways to be internationally competitive.

It has received this prestigious certification under the latest standards of ISO 22163 (IRIS). This certification attests to BLW's rigorous quality control, technical superiority and growing credibility in the global rail industry. BLW had to meet ten different quality parameters for this certification, which was met in record time.■

Mumbai's First Women Only Maintenance Team

The Mumbai Suburban Traction (TRD) department of Western Railway has formed an exclusive all-women maintenance team. This pioneering step not only highlights women's increasing role in technical fields, but also exemplifies the progressive vision of Western Railway.

Maintenance teams are the backbone of reliable train operations, ensuring seamless functioning of power supply installations in the AC Traction system. This women's team has undergone rigorous training to manage and maintain 25 kV and 110 kV equipment at Mahalaxmi Traction Substation. The team has been officially deployed to work independently, adhering to stringent safety protocols.

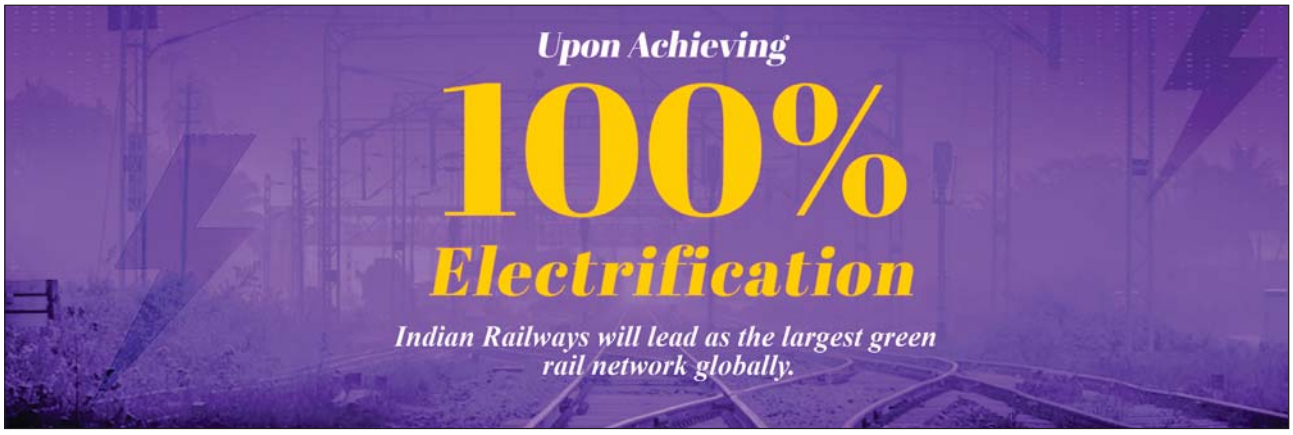


RDSO Organised Screening of Film under Women Empowerment



A programme under women empowerment was organized on 10th January, 2025 by RDSO CSBF in the Officers Club for women employees working in RDSO, their children, other employees working in RDSO and their children, in which a film on women empowerment was screened.

In this programme, Amar Nath Dube, PCPO was present. Women and children of RDSO participated in the programme in large numbers and the programme was successfully completed.



NFR Successfully Conducted 1st Freight Train Trial Run on Shokhuvi-Molvom Section in Nagaland



The Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) successfully conducted the 1st trial run of a freight train with Multi Unit (MU) locomotives in the Shokhuvi - Molvom railway section of the Dhansiri - Zubza New Line Project on 11th February 2025, thereby marking a significant milestone in boosting railway connectivity in Nagaland. The train reached Molvom at around 18:00 hrs, signifying a major step towards the commissioning of this 15.419 km vital railway stretch, which is targeted for completion within next few months.

The successful trial run holds immense significance for the Molvom region and its railway station, which is set to become the third major railway station in Nagaland, following Dimapur and Shokhuvi stations. The enhanced railway connectivity will provide a crucial boost to regional mobility, offering the people of Nagaland seamless access to the broader railway network of the country. Once fully operational, the new rail link will facilitate better movement of passengers and goods, bridging the logistical gap and fostering greater economic development.

This development is expected to immensely benefit local traders, entrepreneurs and business units in the Molvom region by providing them with a reliable and cost-effective transportation option for their goods and materials. With railway freight services becoming operational, local industries and small-scale manufacturers will gain a direct gateway to national markets, enabling them to trade their finished products efficiently across the nation. The improved connectivity will also encourage new business opportunities, attract investments and contribute to the overall socio-economic growth of Nagaland.

First Unloading of Freight Rake at Mendipathar Railway Station

Mendipathar Railway Station in Meghalaya under Rangiya Division of NFR achieved its first ever unloading of freight rake on 4th February, 2025. It is equipped with four lines, and a spacious goods circulating area for handling freight trains. This milestone is an important step for the station in its goal to boost the local economy and facilitate the smooth movement of essential commodities in the region.



Katni-Singrauli Doubling Rail Project

will Give a New Dimension to Regional Development

Katni-Singrauli railway line is one of the important rail routes of Madhya Pradesh, which is important for mineral and industrial transportation. This rail section is an essential route for the transportation of coal, bauxite, and other minerals, the two major railway stations of this route are Katni and Singrauli, out of which Katni Junction is an important railway junction, from where there is passage of five major railway routes, while Singrauli is the energy capital of India known for location of large thermal power plants and coal mines in the area. Hence, Doubling Project for this crucial rail section is introduced as Katni–Singrauli Doubling Project. Doubling of this important rail route will increase the capacity of the network, which will improve the operation of goods trains and passenger trains. Under this project, the total length of Katni-Singrauli railway section is 261 km, currently about 211 km of work has been completed under this project, the remaining work is also being executed at a rapid pace. It is worth mentioning that this project was started in the year 2015 and this challenging task of construction of new railway line in dense forest and hilly areas under doubling work is likely to be completed by the year 2026-27.

Project at a Glance

- Total length of rail section: 261 km.
- Current status of completion of work: 210.5 km of work has been completed.
- Estimated cost: About ₹2,445 crore.
- Expected year of completion of work: 2026-2027.

Challenges

- The railway line passes through dense forests and hilly areas, which creates difficulties in construction work.
- Passenger train operations are affected due to priority given to coal transportation.
- There is a problem of land acquisition in some sections.

Major Benefits of the Project

(a) Improvement in railway operations

- After doubling, more trains will be able to operate easily.
- The capacity of the rail network will increase.

(b) Industrial and business benefits

- Singrauli area is famous for coal mines



and coal, bauxite and other minerals are transported from this area. Doubling will accelerate coal transportation.

- Industrial development will get a boost and the establishment of new factories and production centers will be promoted.
- The trade and logistics sector will also be strengthened.



(c) Benefits to the common citizens

- The number of trains will increase and travel will be smooth.
- Travel time will be reduced.
- Regional connectivity will improve, providing more employment opportunities to the local people.
- Access to tourist destinations will be easy, which will boost the tourism industry.

(d) Environmental benefits

- Fast and convenient rail transport will reduce dependence on road transport, which will reduce pollution.
- Fast transportation of coal and other goods will reduce carbon emissions.

(e) Apart from this, the following benefits will be derived from this project

- Reduction in travel time.
- Improvement in railway operations.
- Promotion of goods transport and industries.
- Increase in tourism and trade.
- Help in environmental protection.
- Increase in revenue.
- Socio-economic development of the region.
- New employment and business opportunities.

Conclusion

The Katni-Singrauli doubling project will promote economic, industrial and social development in the entire region. This project will be convenient for passengers and will make the transportation of coal and other minerals faster. Its completion will not only strengthen the railway network but will also provide new employment and business opportunities for the people of the region.■

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Sports News



Pushpendra Singh won the Silver Medal and Kamal Chawla won the Bronze Medal at the National Billiards & Snooker Championship held at Indore, Madhya Pradesh. Both of them belong to Indian Railways.

Women's U19 team won the ICC U19 Women's T20 World Cup 2025. Indian Railways' Nooshin Al Khadeer (SCR), Head Coach U-19 and Shalini Mantravadi (SCR), Strength & Conditioning Coach U-19 were applauded for their dedication.





Md. Hussain Khan of Indian Railways won the Bronze Medal at the 91st Senior Snooker National Championship held at Indore, Madhya Pradesh from 4th to 10th February, 2025.

47th All India Inter-Railway Women Basketball Championship, 2024-25



The 47th All India Inter-Railway Women Basketball Championship, 2024-25 was held at Secunderabad, organized by the South Central Railway Sports Association from 15th to 19th November, 2024. South Western Railway Women's basketball team, led by captain Anusha I.P and Coach Zarin P.S, secured the Runner-Up position.

66th Ashok RUIA Memorial Winter Nationals Bridge Championship



Three Metromen, Sumit Mukherjee, Debabrata Majumder and Sagnik Roy, as members of Indian Railways' team won the Ashok RUIA Memorial Winter Nationals Bridge Championship in the team category played at Balewadi Stadium, Pune from 8th to 18th December, 2024. In this Championship, 76 teams from all over India participated. At the end of the league format of the team category, Indian Railways team got 120.55 points and emerged as the champion.

NFR upgraded its Cricket Stadium at Maligaon to promote sporting activities of the upcoming generation



The Northeast Frontier Railway has proudly unveiled its newly upgraded cricket ground at the NFRSA Complex located at Maligaon, Guwahati. The inauguration ceremony held on 17th November, 2024 was graced by Chetan Kumar Shrivastava, General Manager of NFR along with other senior officials of the zone.

The NFR stadium is known for hosting 33 first-class cricket matches since its inception in 1976 that has now been renovated to meet BCCI standards.

SWR Athletes Won Medals in the National Road Cycling Championship



SWR athletes Venkappa K, Megha, Kaveri and Chaitra won the Gold Medal in the 60 km Mixed Team Relay event. Also Megha Gugad, won Silver Medal in the 30 km Individual Time Trial at the 29th National Road Cycling Championship held in Puri, Odisha from 7th to 10th December, 2024.

Metro's Basketball Team Won the 43rd Senior State Basketball Championship



Metro Railway's Basketball team won the 43rd Senior State Basketball Championship, held at Kolkata from 19th January to 25th January, 2025. Total 19 teams participated in this tournament. P. Uday Kumar Reddy, General Manager, Metro Railway congratulated all the team members for winning this tournament.■

59th National Cross-Country Championship



Outstanding Performance by South East Central Railway Players in 59th National Cross-Country Championship 2025 Two players from SECR represented Indian Railways in Championship held at Meerut, Uttar Pradesh, on 12th January, 2025. Ravi of the men's team and Munni Devi of the women's team have brought laurels to Indian Railways as well as South East Central Railway. The men's team of Indian Railways was the runner-up, and the women's team was the winner. Munni Devi secured the third position in the individual category.■

72nd All India Railway Kabaddi Championship - 2025



The 72nd All India Rail Kabaddi Championship (Men) 2025 was held from 17th to 20th January, 2025 at South East Central Railway, Nagpur Division. Total 16 Zonal Railways teams participated in the competition. A total of 300 participants took part in the competition.

Central Railway-Mumbai won by 4 points (44-40) against Integral Coach Factory-Chennai. Tarun Prakash, General Manager, South East Central Railway, was the chief guest. The following awards were presented:

Best Raider of the Tournament - Ajinkya Pawar, Central Railway Mumbai.

Best Catcher of the Tournament - Abhinesh Natarajan, Chennai Integral Coach Factory.

Best Player of the Tournament - Pankaj Mohite, Central Railway Mumbai.■

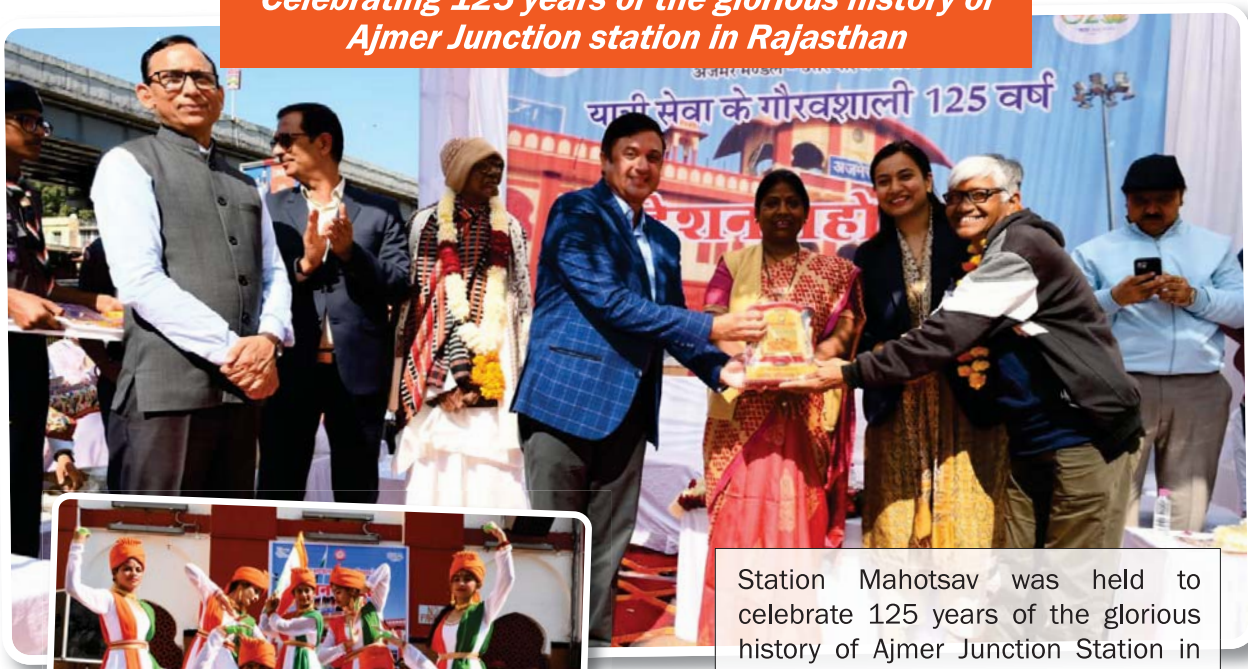
Abu Road Railway station in Rajasthan completed of 145 years of its glorious journey



On the occasion of the completion of 145 years of glorious journey, Station Mahotsav was celebrated at Abu Road Railway station in Rajasthan with fanfare in the presence of dignitaries. Cultural performances on the occasion made the rich heritage of the station more vibrant.

30th January, 2025

Celebrating 125 years of the glorious history of Ajmer Junction station in Rajasthan



Station Mahotsav was held to celebrate 125 years of the glorious history of Ajmer Junction Station in Rajasthan on 24th January, 2025. A colourful cultural programme was presented on this occasion by the school children.

24th January, 2025

Progress Report

Mathura-Jhansi 3rd Line Project (274 km)



Length Commissioned: 247.5 km

Benefits

- Increase traffic capacity on the north-south corridor.
- Optimise freight movement, crucial for industrial growth.
- Strengthen rail connectivity in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan.

18th February, 2025

Jiribam–Imphal New Line Project (110.625 km)



Length Commissioned: 55.36 km

Benefits

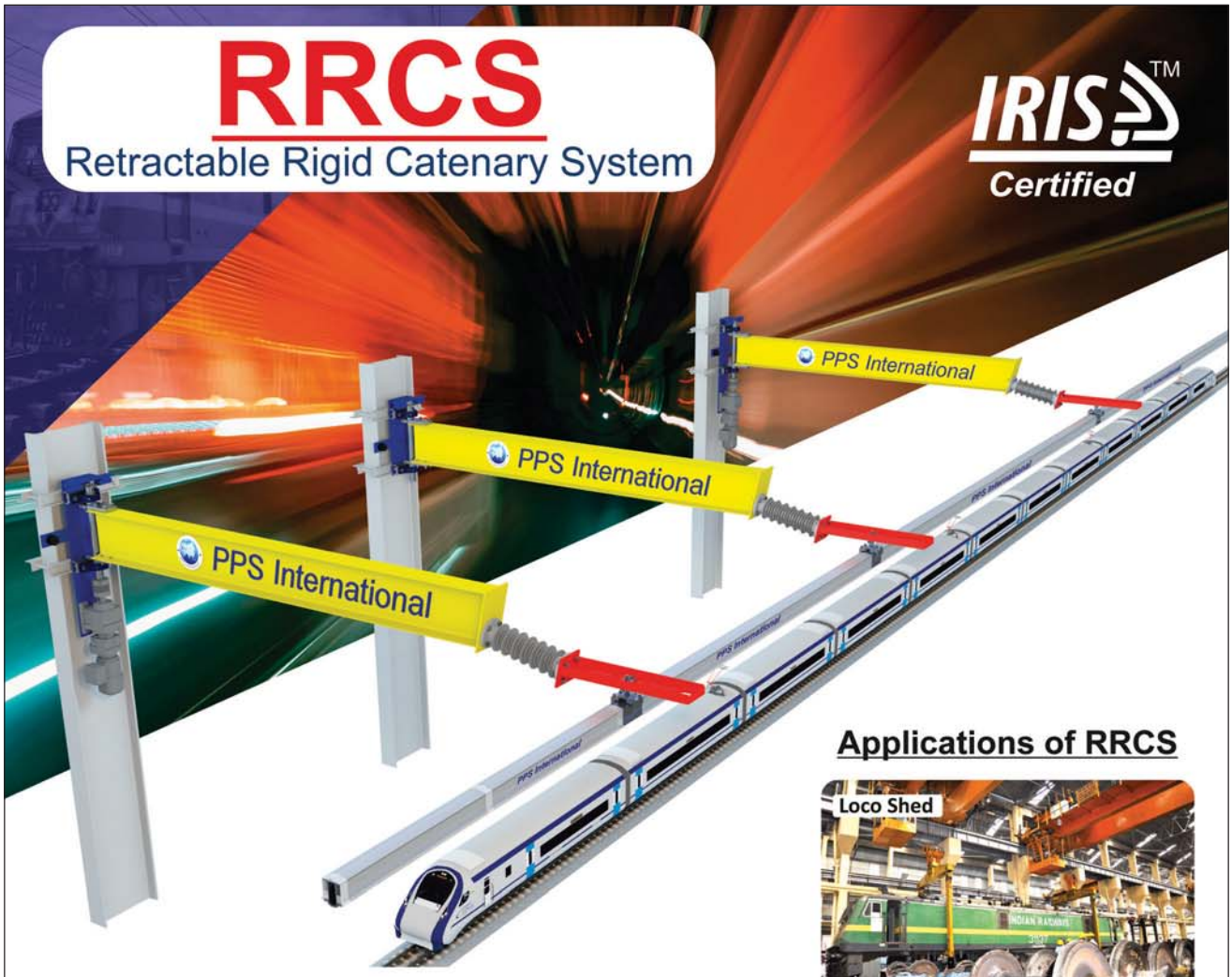
- Provide connectivity to Imphal, capital of Manipur.
- Boosts export potential for horticulture and agricultural products from Manipur.
- Promote tourism in Manipur.

20th February, 2025

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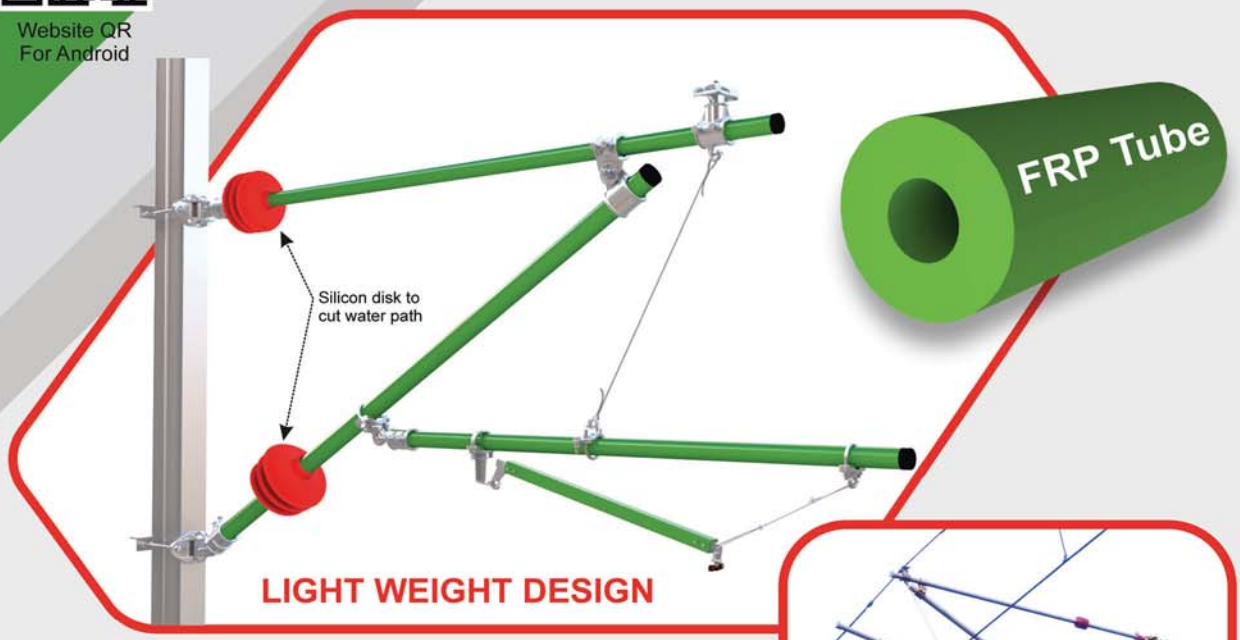
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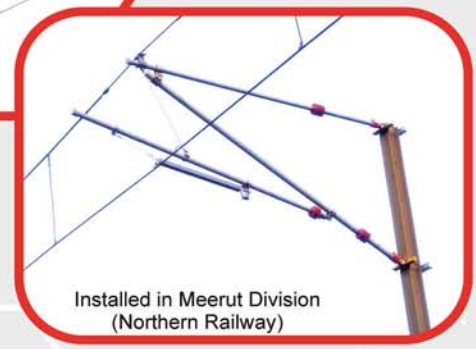
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Araria-Galgalia New BG Rail Line Project (110.75 km)



Benefits

- Strengthens cross-border connectivity with Nepal.
- Enhances freight and passenger train movement.
- Boosts overall development of West Bengal and Bihar.

27th December, 2024

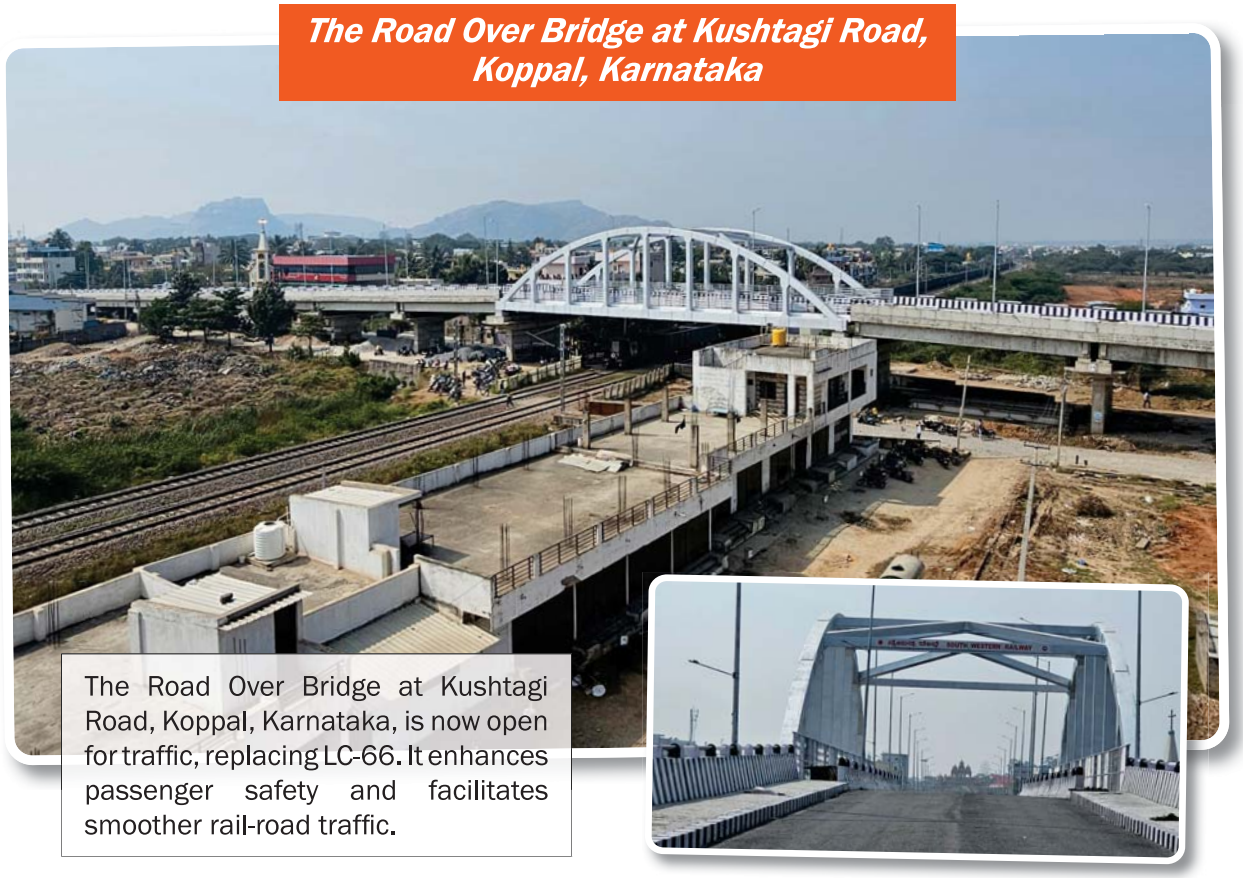
Full Span Launching Gantry (FSLG) in Surat, Gujarat



A towering symbol of engineering excellence for the Bullet Train project as progress advances with the Full Span Launching Gantry (FSLG) in Surat, Gujarat, towards unmatched precision and efficiency.

3rd March, 2025

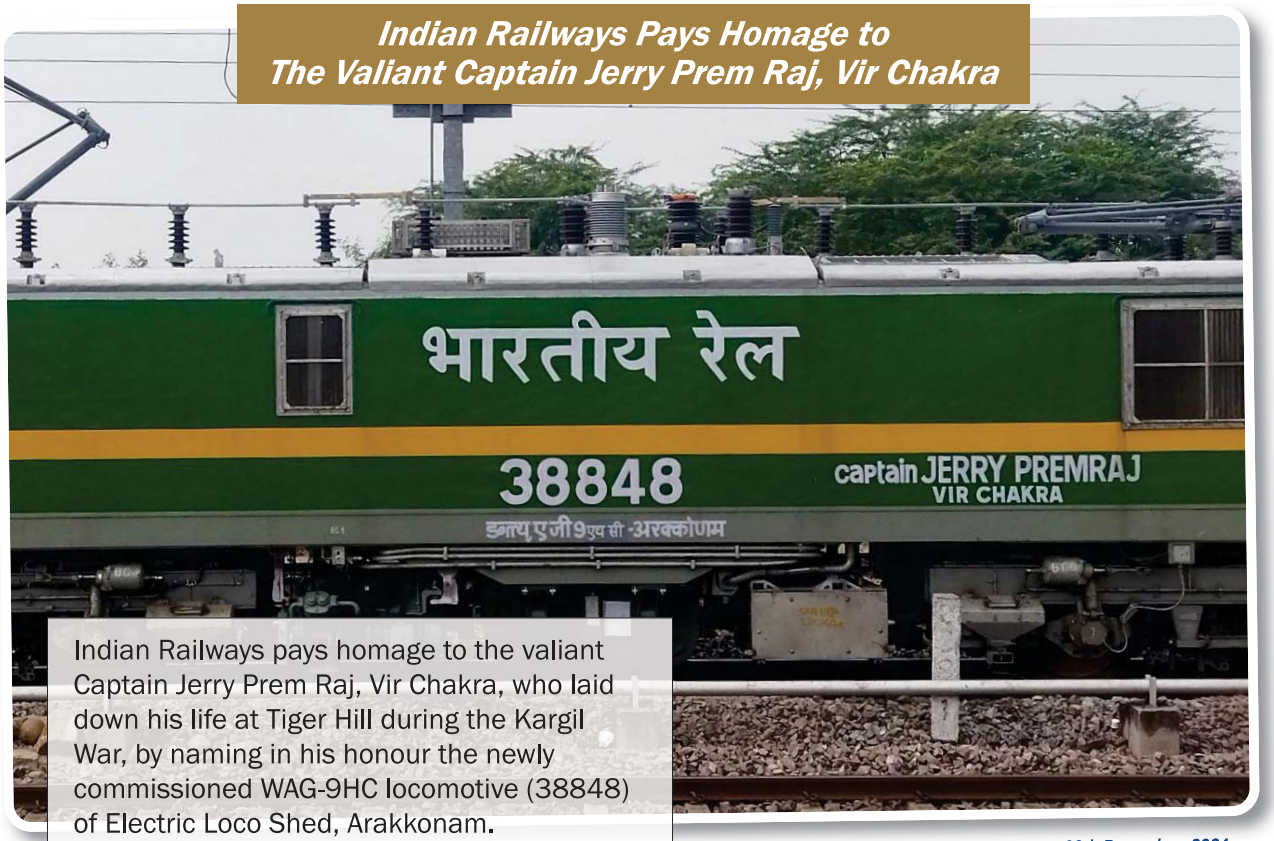
The Road Over Bridge at Kushtagi Road, Koppal, Karnataka



The Road Over Bridge at Kushtagi Road, Koppal, Karnataka, is now open for traffic, replacing LC-66. It enhances passenger safety and facilitates smoother rail-road traffic.

27th January, 2025

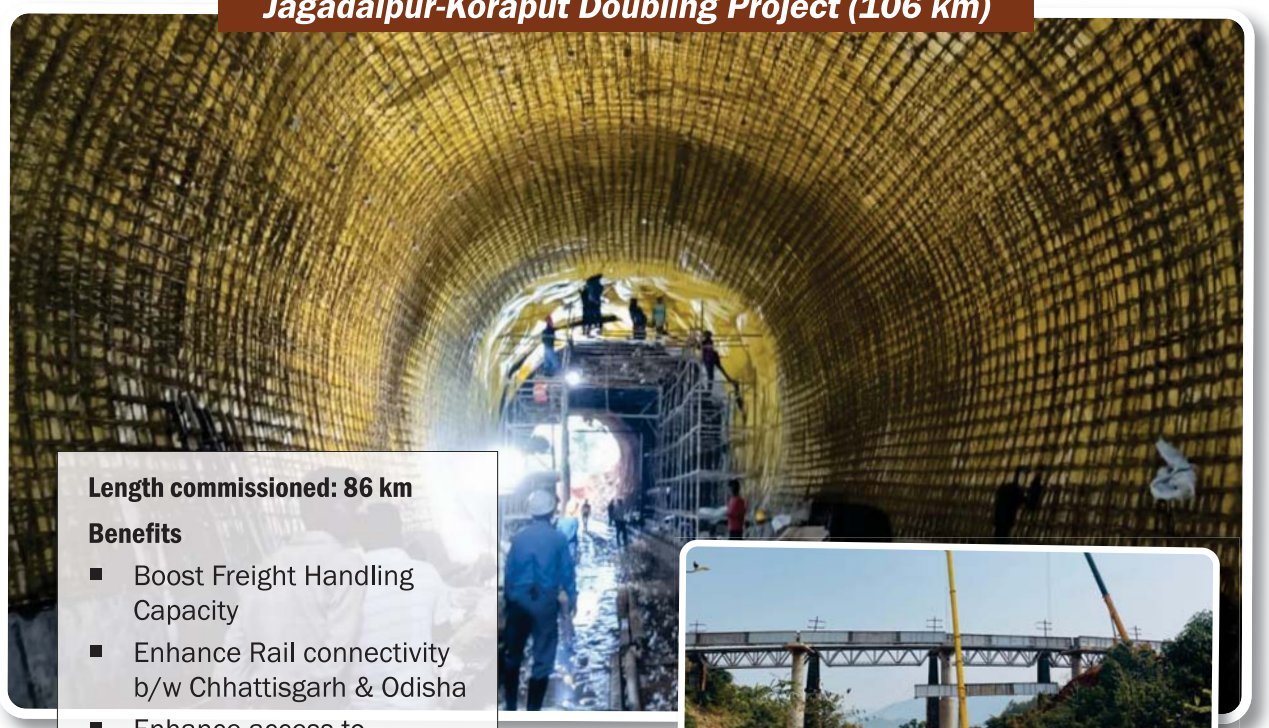
Indian Railways Pays Homage to The Valiant Captain Jerry Prem Raj, Vir Chakra



Indian Railways pays homage to the valiant Captain Jerry Prem Raj, Vir Chakra, who laid down his life at Tiger Hill during the Kargil War, by naming in his honour the newly commissioned WAG-9HC locomotive (38848) of Electric Loco Shed, Arakkonam.

29th December, 2024

Jagadalpur-Koraput Doubling Project (106 km)



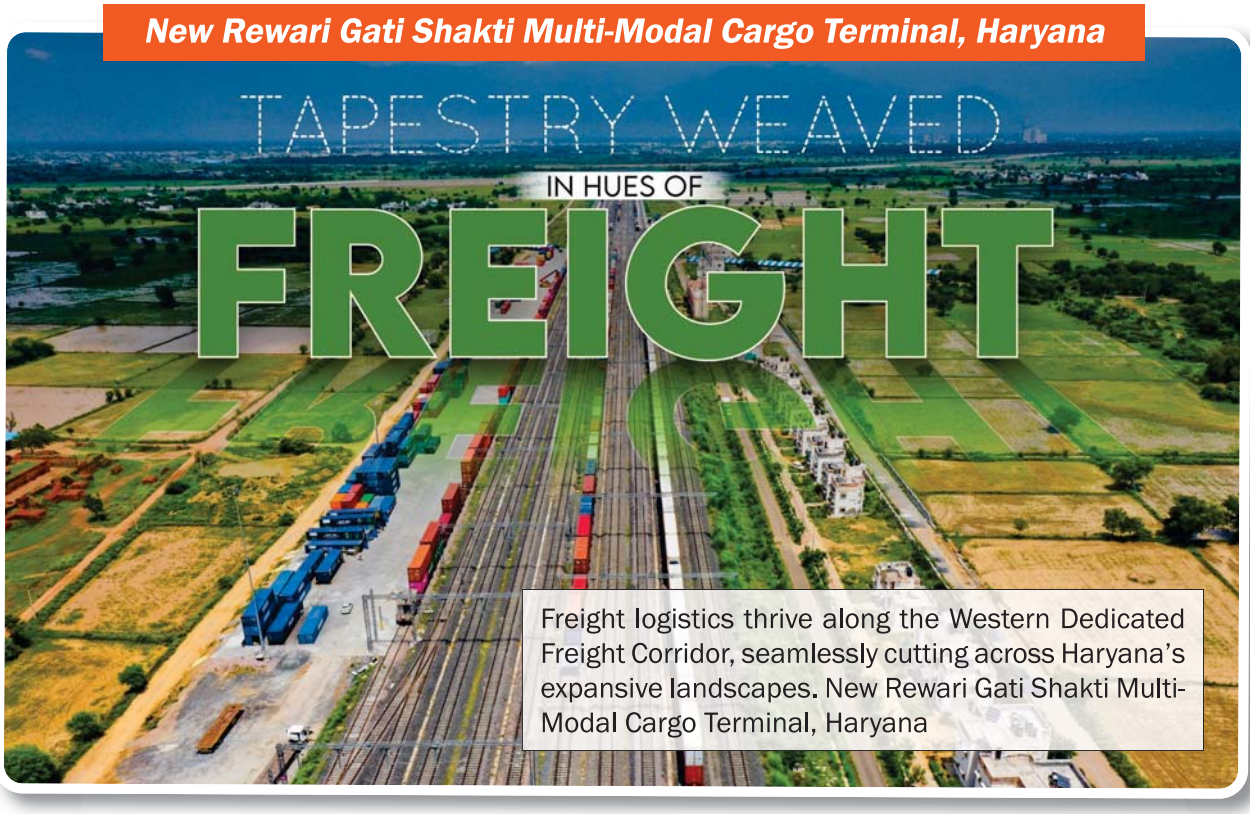
Length commissioned: 86 km

Benefits

- Boost Freight Handling Capacity
- Enhance Rail connectivity b/w Chhattisgarh & Odisha
- Enhance access to education and healthcare
- Fillip to local products

3rd March, 2025

New Rewari Gati Shakti Multi-Modal Cargo Terminal, Haryana



Freight logistics thrive along the Western Dedicated Freight Corridor, seamlessly cutting across Haryana's expansive landscapes. New Rewari Gati Shakti Multi-Modal Cargo Terminal, Haryana

2nd March, 2025

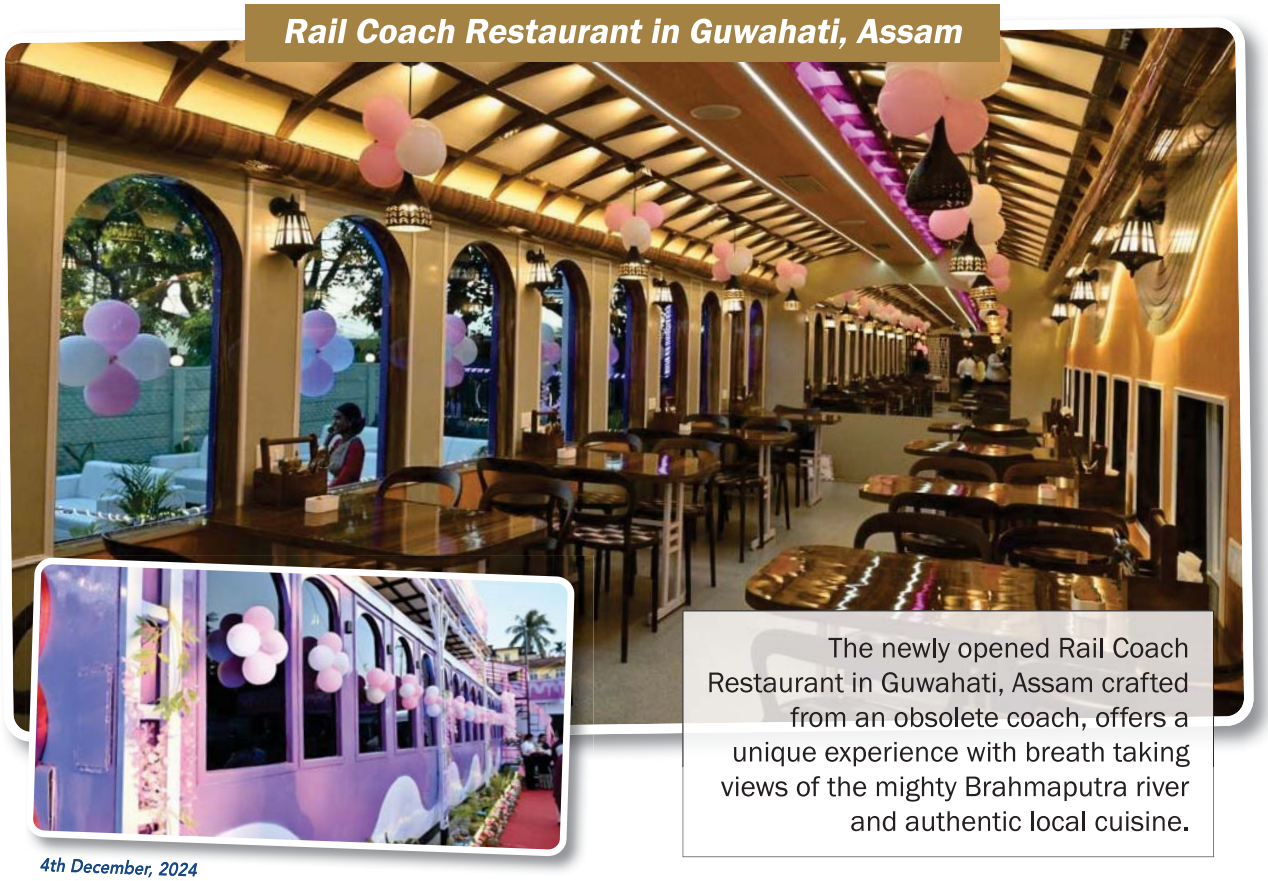
Rail Coach Restaurant in Cooch Behar, West Bengal



Step aboard the newly inaugurated Rail Coach Restaurant in Cooch Behar, West Bengal and savour the unique culinary journey offering authentic regional flavours in a uniquely transformed coach, designed with elegance and charm.

31st December, 2024

Rail Coach Restaurant in Guwahati, Assam



The newly opened Rail Coach Restaurant in Guwahati, Assam crafted from an obsolete coach, offers a unique experience with breath taking views of the mighty Brahmaputra river and authentic local cuisine.

4th December, 2024

Amrit Bharat Station Scheme

Renovation work at Vijayanagar station in full swing

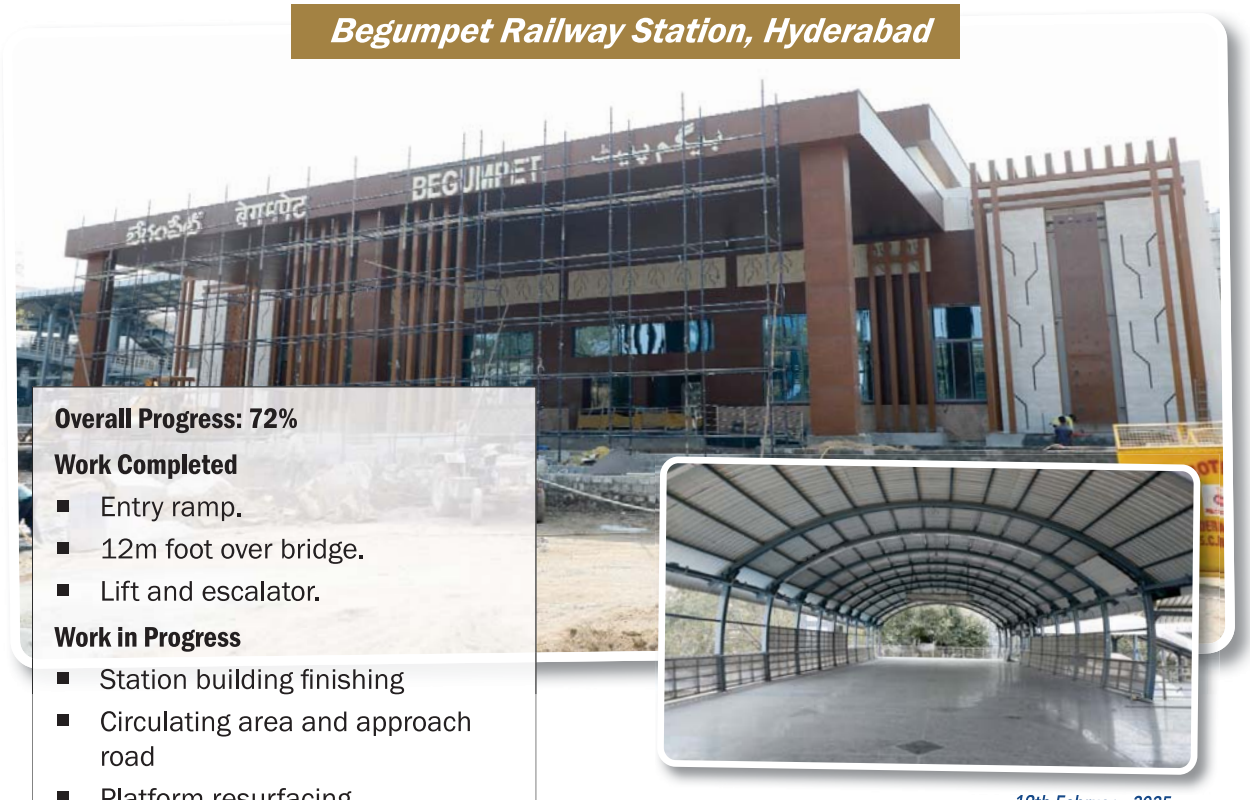


The redevelopment work of stations is being carried out by the Railways under the 'Amrit Station Yojana' to enhance passenger amenities at stations and give a facelift to station buildings. On North Western Railway, 77 stations, including the Bijoynagar station of Ajmer division, are being redeveloped under the Amrit station scheme at a cost of about ₹4000 crore. Under the Amrit station scheme, redevelopment work at Vijayanagar station for ₹15-40 crore is in the final stages.

The passenger amenities that have been developed at Vijayanagar station include construction of new station building, development of circulating area with separate entry and exit gates, separate parking for auto, two-wheeler and four-wheelers, porches for alighting and boarding of passengers, entry hall, improved separate waiting rooms for men and women, lifts, improvement of façade of station building, new platform shelters, new toilet blocks and water booths with facilities for Divyangjan, improved signage, coach indication boards on platform, improved furniture and 12 meter wide FOB.

The Amrit station redevelopment plan will boost tourism and facilitate the movement of people clean and modern railway stations will increase employment opportunities and lead to the economic and social development of the region.

Begumpet Railway Station, Hyderabad



Overall Progress: 72%

Work Completed

- Entry ramp.
- 12m foot over bridge.
- Lift and escalator.

Work in Progress

- Station building finishing
- Circulating area and approach road
- Platform resurfacing

19th February, 2025

Madurai Junction, Tamil Nadu



Work Completed

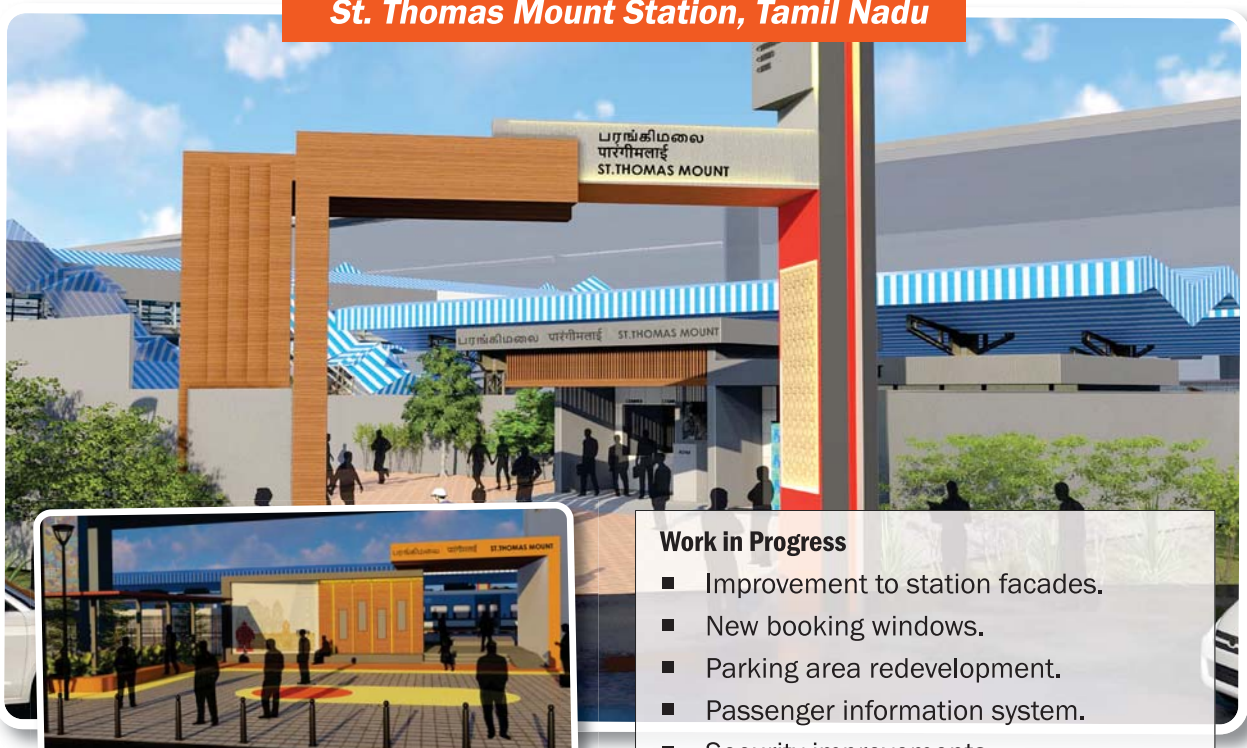
- Substation building
- East Terminal Building Segment-1 groundwork and structure

Work in Progress

- RPF Canteen
- Concrete and steel FOBs
- Air concourse
- Multi-level parking

1st January, 2025

St. Thomas Mount Station, Tamil Nadu

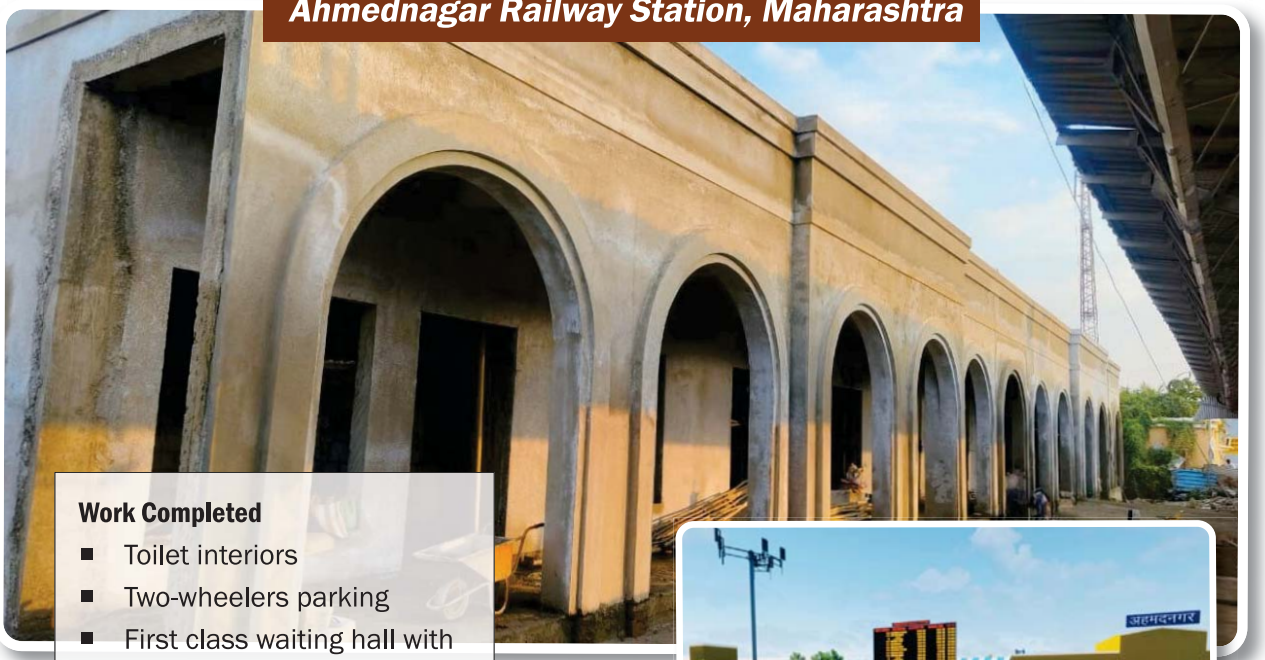


Work in Progress

- Improvement to station facades.
- New booking windows.
- Parking area redevelopment.
- Passenger information system.
- Security improvements.

20th February, 2025

Ahmednagar Railway Station, Maharashtra



Work Completed

- Toilet interiors
- Two-wheelers parking
- First class waiting hall with Divyangjan toilet on PF-1

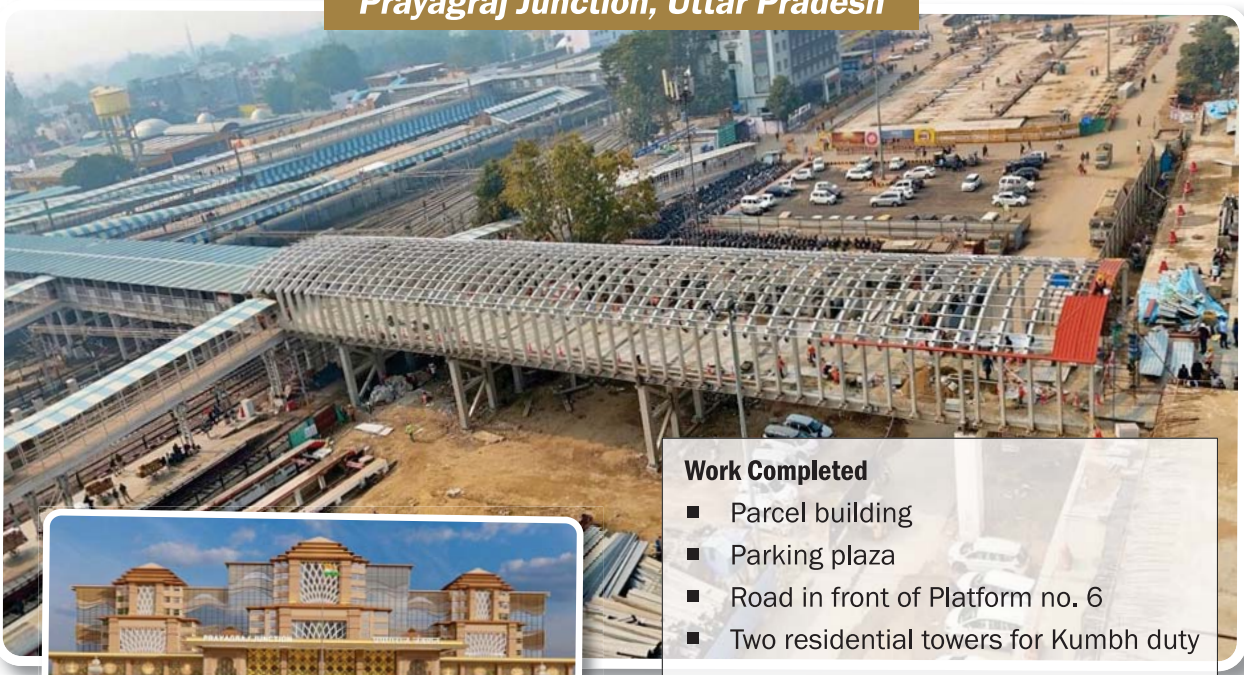
Work in Progress

- Service buildings A and B
- General waiting hall



20th February, 2025

Prayagraj Junction, Uttar Pradesh



Work Completed

- Parcel building
- Parking plaza
- Road in front of Platform no. 6
- Two residential towers for Kumbh duty

Work in Progress

- Third and fourth floors of the station building
- FOB roof shed work

7th January, 2025

Indian Railways GARLANDING ASHTALAKSHMI



Sachin Budhauliya

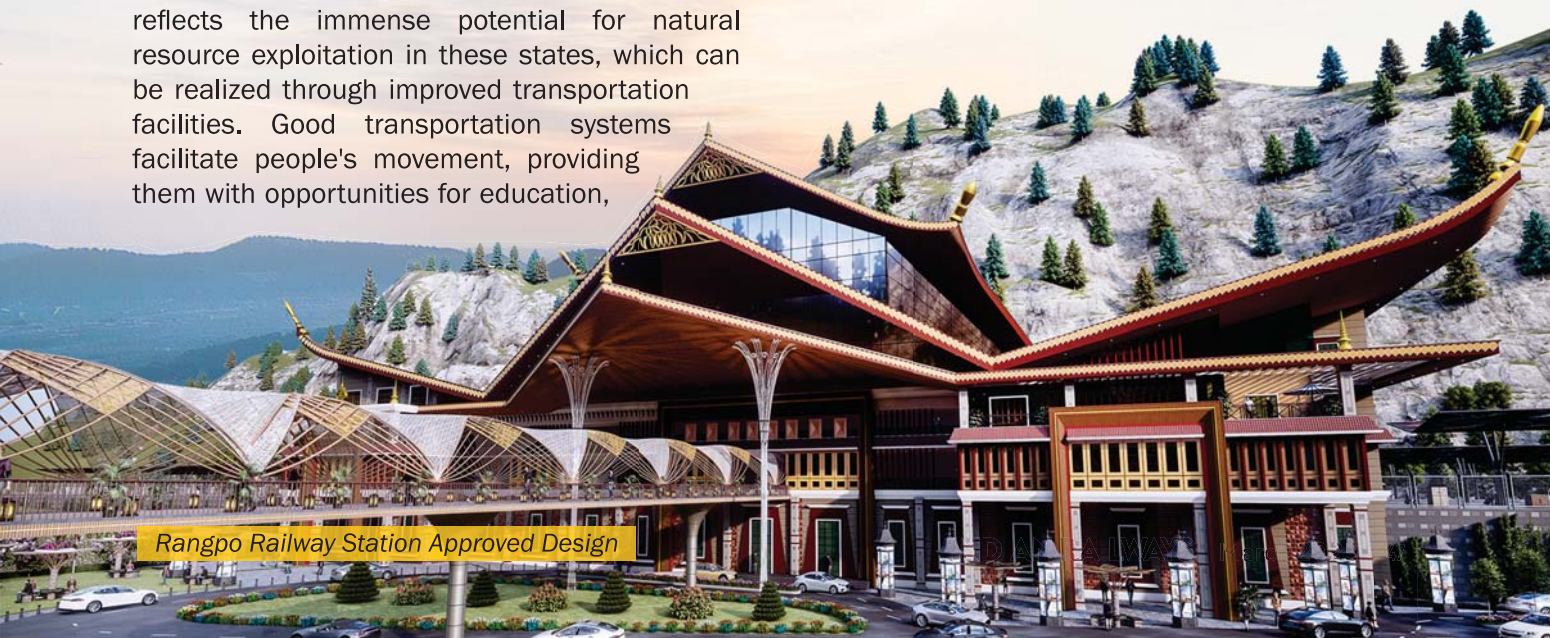
Facing the challenging mountainous terrain of India's remote northeastern region, Indian Railways is rapidly connecting and electrifying all eight states by breaking through rocks, cutting through mountains and crossing rivers. This effort is writing a new steel-clad chapter in the socio-economic development of this area.

Railways is not only contributing to regional socio-economic development but also playing a crucial role in national security. Two strategically important points on the Tibet border, Nathu La and Tawang, are set to be connected by railway lines.

Narendra Modi, Prime Minister has referred to the eight northeastern states—Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura—as 'Ashtalakshmi.' This term reflects the immense potential for natural resource exploitation in these states, which can be realized through improved transportation facilities. Good transportation systems facilitate people's movement, providing them with opportunities for education, employment and trade, thereby promoting regional socio-economic development. For local industries, there is no better means of transportation than Railways to improve infrastructure and establish easy market access for products.

In the past 10 years, the pace of railway development in the northeastern region has increased two and a half times

The Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) of Indian Railways is implementing railway infrastructure projects in the northeastern region. Looking at the progress of Railways in the 21st century, it is



Rangpo Railway Station Approved Design

evident that during FY 2009-14, an average of ₹2,122 crore was allocated per year and the network expanded at a rate of 66.6 km per year, totaling 333 km. By FY 2024-25, the annual allocation increased nearly fivefold to ₹10,376 crore, and 1728 km of new lines were laid at a rate of 172.8 km per year. Thus, since 2014, the allocation and work in the northeastern region have increased two and a half times.

As of 1st April, 2024, a total of 1368 km of projects costing ₹74,972 crore (13 new lines and five doubling projects) are in the approval/construction phase. Of these, 313 km of projects have been commissioned by March 2024, with an expenditure of ₹40,549 crore.

The Governments of the northeastern states are fully cooperating in the development of Railways, which has accelerated the pace of development. The completion of any railway project depends on various factors such as prompt land acquisition by the State Government, forest clearance by forest department officials, cost-sharing by the State Government in cost-sharing projects, project prioritization, unit transfers, statutory approvals from various authorities, geological and topographical conditions of the area, law and order situation in the project area and the number of working months in a year due to climatic conditions. The State Governments have met all these criteria.

Recent progress in major projects in the northeastern region includes the Agthori-Dekargaon (155 km) new rail line project passing through Assam's Darrang district. The final location survey for this project has been approved. Similarly, the Bhairabi-Sairang rail project is nearing completion, providing seamless rail connectivity to Mizoram. Agartala has received broad gauge connectivity, and a cross-border line from Agartala to Akhaura in Bangladesh has also been completed, although the current political situation in the neighbouring country offers little hope. Nagaland has built its second broad gauge railway station after 100 years. The railway line has already reached Khongsang in Manipur and Naharlagun in Arunachal Pradesh.

The work to connect Rangpo in Sikkim with Sivok in West Bengal is progressing rapidly. The


Sivok-Rangpo New Rail Line

approximately 45 km long Sivok-Rangpo line will pass through Sikkim and West Bengal. This project will include 22 bridges and 14 tunnels. The line is being constructed through the foothills of the Kanchenjunga mountain range and the Teesta River valley. The Government has approved a rail line project to Nathu La, the gateway to the ancient Silk Route on the Tibet border. Work on the line from Rangpo to Gangtok is expected to start soon. The survey for the approximately 160 km line from Gangtok to Nathu La has begun. This line is being designed to allow trains to run at a speed of 100 km per hour. Senior officials associated with the project believe that once the rail line to Gangtok is completed, the travel time between Gangtok and Siliguri will be reduced to one and a half to two hours, compared to the current three and a half to four hours by road. The country's first underground railway station, Teesta Bazaar Station, has also been completed on this line. The main tunnel here is over 3000 mtr long, while the railway station is 650 mtr long, and the platform is 620 mtr long. There is a single platform where one train can comfortably stand. This station is designed to ensure the safety and comfort of rail passengers. It will be the first underground railway station in the broad gauge network in the country. There is also a connection from Teesta Bazaar to Darjeeling, allowing travel to Darjeeling in just two hours. The design for Sikkim's first Rangpo railway station, which follows traditional Sikkimese Buddhist architecture, has also been completed. This station will resemble a pagoda from a distance.

In 2019, the present Government greenlit three railway projects in Arunachal Pradesh: the 378 km Bhalukpong-Tawang line (which will connect the Indo-Tibet border and is of strategic importance), the 248 km North Lakhimpur-Silapathar line and the 227 km Pasighat-Rupai line. The Murkongselek-Pasighat line will connect Murkongselek in Assam's Dhemaji district with Pasighat in Arunachal Pradesh. This line is 26.15 km long and will have four stations. The project is expected to be completed by May 2025.

The 51.38 km long new line between Bhairavi and Sairang is divided into four sections: Bhairabi-Hortoki, Hortoki-Kawnpui, Kawnpui-Mualkhang, and Mualkhang-Sairang. There will be four stations in this project: Hortoki, Kawnpui, Mualkhang and Sairang. The 17.38 km long Bhairabi-Hortoki section was completed and commissioned in July 2024, and rail service has been operational since August 2024. Once the entire project is completed, it will be a transformative project for Mizoram in terms of communication and commerce. Affordable and environmentally friendly rail services will positively impact almost all development activities in the state. The Bhairabi-Sairang rail project involves the construction of several tunnels and bridges in difficult terrains. The total length of tunnels in this project is 12.853 km, of which 12.807 km have been completed. The project includes 55 major bridges and 89 minor bridges. The construction of pillar P-4 of bridge number 196 at the approach to Sairang station has also been completed, which is the tallest pillar of the project, standing at 104 meters, 42 meters taller than the Qutub Minar.



Jiribam-Imphal new broad gauge line

The project also includes five road over bridges and six road under bridges.

Rail Connectivity in Northeast at a Glance

Arunachal Pradesh : Naharlagun (near Itanagar capital) got broad gauge line in 2015.

Assam : Rangiya-Morkongselek with Linked Fingers (510.3 km) was commissioned in May, 2015.

Mizoram : Katakhal-Bhairabi (84 km) was commissioned in March, 2016.

Capital Connectivity : Bhairabi-Sairang new line project (51.38 km, ₹6527 crore) is in progress (Sairang is 21 km short of Aizawl).

Tripura : Lamding-Badarpur-Silchar and Badarpur-Kumarghat with Linked Fingers (412 km) was inaugurated.

Capital Agartala : Broad gauge line was commissioned in May, 2016.

Manipur : Jiribam-Imphal new broad gauge line's Jiribam-Vangaichungpao section (commissioned in March, 2017).

Capital Connectivity : Jiribam-Imphal new line project (110.6 km, ₹14,522 crore) is in progress.

Meghalaya : Dudhnoi-Mendipathar new broad gauge line (commissioned in August, 2014) - Meghalaya railway line.

Tetelia-Byrnihat new line : (21.50 km, ₹1229 crore) and Byrnihat-Shillong (108 km) new line.

Nagaland : Second station with broad gauge line after 100 years, Sukhovi (2021).

Capital Connectivity : Dimapur (Dhansiri) - Zubza (Kohima) new line (82.50 km, ₹6663 crore) in progress (Dhansiri-Sukhovi (16.50 km) was commissioned on October, 2021).

Sikkim Connectivity : Sivok-Rangpo new line (44.96 km, ₹8135 crore) is in progress (Rangpo is 38 km before Gangtok).

With these ambitious projects, Indian Railways is not only bridging distances but also strengthening national security, fostering economic growth and enhancing the lives of people in the northeastern states.

Expressing Gratitude to the Exceptional Efforts of Rail Karmayogis at Mahakumbh



Indian Railways' Unprecedented Scale of Operations and Services

Sanjay Singh

Indian Railways has demonstrated exceptional commitment and operational excellence in facilitating the smooth travel of millions of pilgrims during Mahakumbh 2025, held from 13th January to 26th February. Ashwini Vaishnaw, Minister of Railways personally visited Prayagraj on 27th February to assess the arrangements made for the grand religious gathering. He inspected various railway stations under North Central Railway (NCR), North Eastern Railway (NER), and Northern Railway (NR) to evaluate the on-ground operations. Vaishnaw lauded the seamless coordination between different departments and reaffirmed Indian Railways' dedication to ensuring safe, efficient and comfortable travel for all pilgrims. He also expressed his gratitude to Narendra Modi, Prime Minister for his continuous guidance, as well as to Amit Shah, Home Minister, Yogi Adityanath, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister, Mohan Yadav, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister and neighbouring State Governments for their cooperation in managing the unprecedented influx of devotees.

Acknowledging the Railway workforce's tireless efforts during his visit, the Minister of Railways personally met and extended his appreciation to the railway workforce involved in handling an event of such magnitude. From frontline staff assisting passengers to security personnel, engineers, cleanliness workers and medical teams, each individual's contribution was recognized. The Minister extended gratitude to Travelling Ticket Examiners (TTEs), loco pilots, assistant loco pilots, signal and telecom personnel, traction distribution (TRD) teams, Assistant Station Masters (ASMs), control officials, track maintainers and railway administrators who worked tirelessly around the clock to ensure the success of Mahakumbh 2025. Vaishnaw emphasized that although no significant maintenance issues arose, a detailed review of arrangements would be conducted to improve future large-scale events.



Unprecedented rail operations for Mahakumbh 2025 : Indian Railways significantly exceeded its operational plans for Mahakumbh 2025, running a total of 17,152 trains against the initially planned 13,000 trains—four times more than the last Kumbh. This included 7667 special trains

and 9485 regular trains, ensuring the smooth travel of pilgrims. To enhance efficiency, all goods trains were diverted to Dedicated Freight Corridors and over 200 rakes were deployed in the Mahakumbh area with train sets or engines on both sides to avoid shunting operations. Special Mela trains were introduced based on demand and extra halts were provided for regular mail/ express trains. Parcel traffic was restricted to facilitate free passenger movement.

Enhanced Passenger Facilities in Prayagraj Region : A total of 66 crore pilgrims attended Mahakumbh, with 4.24 crore passengers handled at nine railway stations in Prayagraj. Indian Railways undertook extensive infrastructural enhancements, adding second entry points, 48 platforms and 21 Foot Over Bridges (FoBs) to streamline movement. Passenger shelters were expanded, with additional shelters at Prayagraj Junction, Prayagraj Chheoki, Subedarganj, Phaphamau and Prayagraj Rambagh. These shelters were equipped with public toilets, food stalls, public address systems, and inquiry display boards. 'May I Help You' kiosks assisted passengers with luggage trolley bookings, wheelchair services and taxi and hotel reservations.

To manage congestion, 23 permanent holding areas were set up, while multilingual announcements and leaflets in 23 languages facilitated better communication. Ticketing services were expanded with fixed and mobile counters, and 21 Road Over/Under Bridges (ROBs/RUBs) ensured seamless connectivity. Catering services were also enhanced at stations.



Digital and Ticketing Innovations : A total of 554 ticket counters, including 151 mobile Unreserved Ticketing System (UTS) counters, were set up in Prayagraj, supporting the issuance of approximately 9.76 lakh tickets per day. QR-based ticketing was introduced, enabling pilgrims to scan QR codes from railway staff jackets to access the UTS mobile app, eliminating long queues and promoting Digital India. A colour - coded ticketing system was implemented for better passenger segregation: red for Lucknow and Ayodhya, blue for DDU, Sasaram and Patna, yellow for Jhansi and MP, and green for Kanpur, Agra and Delhi.



Comprehensive Information Dissemination : A multilingual digital information system was established, featuring a dedicated Kumbh Rail Seva web portal and a helpline (1800-4199-139). The Kumbh Rail Seva 2025 App provided real-time updates. Announcements in 12 languages were made at major stations and information leaflets in 23 languages were distributed. A 360-degree publicity approach ensured no cross-movement occurred at Prayagraj stations, contributing to a hassle-free experience for pilgrims.

Strengthened Medical and Emergency Services: To ensure passenger safety, Indian Railways deployed centralized help desks, medical facilities, ambulances, fire brigades and mobile toilets in coordination with district authorities. Medical stations at all nine railway stations featured ten bed observation rooms equipped with defibrillators, oxygen concentrators and

glucometers, staffed by 15 nurses, 12 pharmacists, 12 attendants and 151 housekeeping assistants. Over 3 lakh pilgrims received medical assistance. Special crowd management arrangements were in place for Mahashivratri snan, including stationed ambulances, fire brigades and mobile toilets.

Round-the-clock monitoring and security Mahakumbh preparations were monitored through a five-tier system from station-level to the Railway Board war room. Ashwini Vaishnaw, Minster of Railways and Satish Kumar, Chairman & CEO oversaw operations, ensuring real-time responsiveness. Jaya Verma Sinha, former Chairman & CEO also played a key role in early-stage monitoring.

Security was heightened with 29 battalions of Railway Protection Force (RPF), two battalions of Railway Protection Special Force (RPSF) women wing, 22 dog squads and two bomb disposal squads. A network of 1186 CCTV cameras, including facial recognition-equipped units, was deployed alongside drone surveillance. Emergency contingency plans were executed effectively, including the successful crowd management plan at Prayagraj Junction on Mahashivratri.



Massive Deployment of staff : A total of 13,000 extra railway staff were deployed, including 1500 TTEs, 3000 running staff and over 1000 sanitation workers. Scouts and guides assisted in crowd management and an app-based system optimized workforce deployment. Extra manpower was allocated for the rapid track linking of the last 34 km in the Varanasi-Prayagraj section.

State Administration Coordination and Infrastructure Investment : Seamless coordination with state authorities was maintained through Whatsapp groups and real-time monitoring of crowd movements. Indian Railways invested ₹5000 crore in Mahakumbh related infrastructure projects over three years, including the Banaras-Prayagraj doubling project, Phaphamau-Janghai doubling, construction of 21 ROBs/RUBs and additional platforms and footbridges.

Three years of dedicated Preparations Preparations for Mahakumbh 2025 commenced three years in advance under top-level monitoring. Narendra Modi, Prime Minister visited Prayagraj on 13th December, 2024, inaugurating 167 projects worth Rs. 5500 crore, including ₹1600 crore for railway-specific projects. Prior to this, Minister of Railways inspected preparations on 8th December, 2024.



Through unparalleled planning, seamless execution, and extraordinary dedication, Indian Railways ensured a world-class pilgrimage experience for millions during Mahakumbh 2025. This massive operational success stands as a testament to the resilience, teamwork and unwavering commitment of the Rail Karmayogis at Prayagraj.■

Vande Bharat Express

Bridging Culture, Faith and Heritage

Dilip Kumar

Now, devotees can witness the Mangala Aarti at Kashi Vishwanath in the morning and attend the Shringar Puja at Baba Baidyanath in the evening—on the same day.

As the morning sun casts its golden glow over the Ganges, the high-speed Vande Bharat train departs from Varanasi Junction, heading towards Deoghar, home to the revered Baba Baidyanath temple. This service allows travellers to experience the Mangala Aarti and Maha Rudra Puja at Kashi Vishwanath Temple in the morning and partake in the Shringar Puja at Baidyanath Temple by evening. With its speed, cleanliness, and modern facilities, this train has become the preferred choice for travellers.

Connecting Two Jyotirlingas

Vande Bharat Express is the first train in India to directly link two of the twelve Jyotirlingas—Kashi Vishwanath and Baidyanath Dham. Previously, devotees had to switch trains to travel between these sacred sites, but this direct connection has removed that hassle. In today's fast-paced world, where time is precious, this service has proven to be a blessing.

A Journey of Comfort and Convenience

Vande Bharat Express offers a seamless blend of speed and comfort. The train's exceptional cleanliness and passenger-friendly features make the journey pleasant. Seats, floors, and washrooms are maintained with high standards of hygiene. The plush, ergonomic seating enhances the travel experience for all.



Onboard Wi-Fi ensures uninterrupted internet access, particularly beneficial for business travellers. Touch-screen monitors provide real-time updates on train location, speed, and upcoming stations, making travel more convenient.

Security features include CCTV surveillance, an automatic door system, and emergency panic buttons. The train's modern interiors are designed to maximize comfort, making it an ideal option for families and professionals alike.

Additionally, high-quality meals are served onboard, offering a restaurant-like dining experience. As the train traverses rivers, lush fields, and picturesque landscapes, passengers can soak in the scenic beauty, making the journey enjoyable and relaxing.



Pilgrimage Made Easier: Two Jyotirlingas in 7 Hours

The Vande Bharat Express (22500) departs from Varanasi at 6:20 AM (except Tuesdays) and reaches Deoghar at 1:40 PM. The return train (22499) leaves Deoghar at 3:15 PM and arrives in Varanasi at 10:30 PM, running six days a week.

The train halts at six key stations—Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay, Sasaram, Gaya, Nawada, Kiul and Jasidih—covering 456 km in just over seven hours. Each stop is historically and religiously significant.

One notable stop is Gaya in Bihar, where the train halts at 9:25 AM while heading to Deoghar and at 7:10 PM on the return trip. Gaya is a revered site for ancestral rites (Pind Daan), believed to have been performed here by Lord Rama for his father, King Dasharatha. Additionally, Gaya is where Lord Buddha attained enlightenment, further cementing its spiritual significance.

India's Spiritual and Cultural Legacy

India's religious sites are not just places of worship but also reflect the country's rich cultural heritage. The Jyotirlingas, including those in Banaras and Deoghar, are deeply intertwined with history and tradition.

Both cities also hold significance in Buddhism. Near Banaras lies Sarnath, one of Buddhism's four major pilgrimage sites. Deoghar, too, has historical evidence of Buddhist monks visiting the region. Interestingly, one of Lord Buddha's names is Baidyanath.

Banaras – A Center of Culture and Tradition

Banaras, or Varanasi, is among India's oldest cities and a pivotal religious hub. Situated on the banks of the Ganges, it is home to the Vishwaroop Mahadev Jyotirlinga, an important manifestation of Lord Shiva. Pilgrims believe that visiting Banaras purifies the soul.


Photo Source: UP Tourism

Beyond religion, the city is a melting pot of literature, music, and arts. The renowned Sankatmochan Music Festival, held in April-May, draws musicians from across India. With its diverse traditions and communities, Banaras is often called 'Mini India.'



Deoghar – A Sacred Abode

Deoghar, meaning 'Abode of Gods,' is located in Jharkhand and houses the Baidyanath Jyotirlinga. Baba Dham is approximately 3.5 km from Deoghar railway station and 7 km from Jasidih railway station on the Patna-Howrah route.

Believed to remove obstacles and bestow blessings, Deoghar attracts countless devotees year-round. Its tranquil surroundings, lush greenery, and spiritual atmosphere make it an ideal pilgrimage destination.

During Shravan, the city hosts Asia's longest religious fair. Devotees carry holy water from Sultanganj, walking 110 km to offer it to Baba Baidyanath. The city transforms into a sea of saffron as chants of 'Bol Bam' fill the air.

Culturally, Deoghar is influenced by neighbouring Bengal, reflected in its music and art. The traditional Jharkhand folk dance, Jhumar, remains a vital part of the region's artistic heritage.

A New Era of Pilgrimage Travel

By connecting Banaras and Deoghar, Vande Bharat Express not only simplifies travel for pilgrims but also strengthens India's cultural and spiritual fabric. This high-speed journey is more than just a train ride—it's an experience that seamlessly blends devotion, heritage and modernity.■

भारतीय रेल / Indian Railways

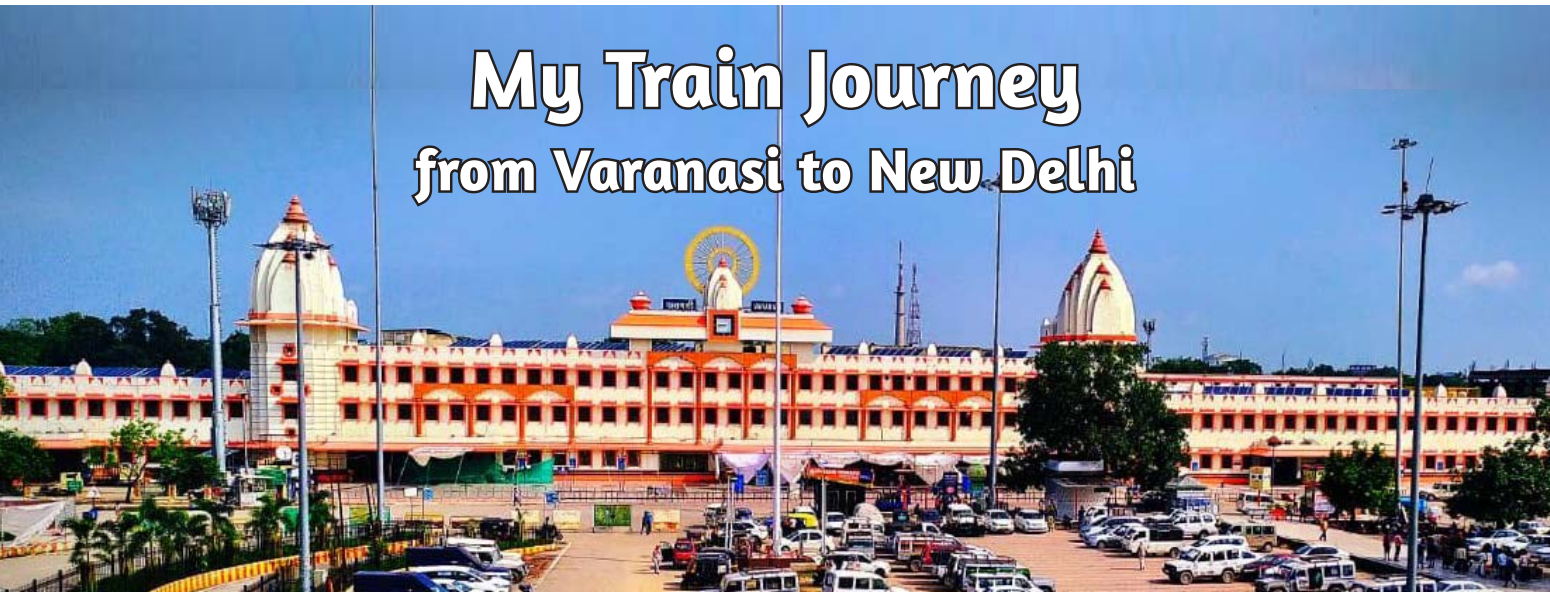
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My Train Journey
from Varanasi to New Delhi

Dr. Bharat Kumar

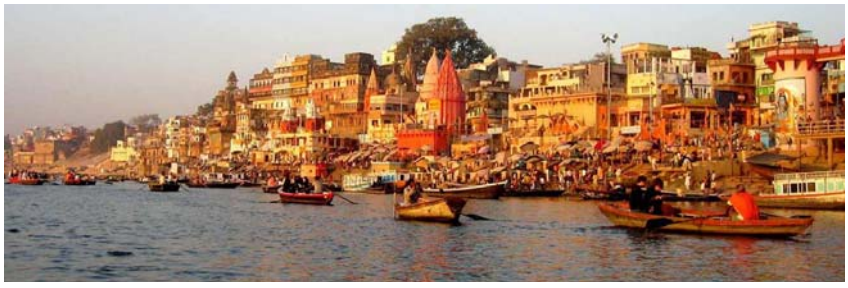
'Time passes, feelings and hearts change, people grow apart, but memories never fade from the mind.'

This phrase perfectly describes my recent journey from the holy city of Varanasi, also known as Kashi, to New Delhi. I travelled from Varanasi Junction to New Delhi aboard the Neelanchal Express, one of 13 trains currently operating on this route. As I sat by the window on a lower RAC seat, I observed the changing landscape—bustling stations, sprawling farmlands, and small villages flashing past. Vendors from the pantry car moved about, offering a variety of snacks and meals. The experience took me back to my childhood when I first travelled on the Janta Express from Varanasi to Lucknow, a journey filled with simple joys like my father buying samosas and tea in a kulhad at small stations.

Indian Railways has undergone a remarkable transformation over the decades. In the late 1960s, when I travelled with my parents on the coal-engine-driven Upper India Express, the journey from Varanasi to Delhi was a slow and arduous one. There was no direct train from Varanasi to Delhi then, and this train originated from West Bengal, making a lengthy journey to the capital.

Today, advancements in railway infrastructure and technology have dramatically reduced travel time. The Vande Bharat Express now completes the journey from Varanasi to Delhi in just 8 hours, while superfast trains like the Shiv Ganga Express and the Banaras–Delhi Superfast take around 10 hours. In contrast, earlier trains took nearly 18 hours. The doubling of railway tracks between Varanasi and Prayagraj (formerly Allahabad) and the shift to full electrification have significantly enhanced operational efficiency and punctuality. The Varanasi–Prayagraj section now integrates seamlessly with the broader Howrah–Delhi electric train network.

Indian Railways, particularly under the efforts of Northern Railway, has played a crucial role in modernizing this route.



Travelling through Amethi, Raebareli, Lucknow and Kanpur, I noticed the renovation of small stations, equipped with modern facilities. The recent laying of double tracks on the Varanasi–Lucknow route via Sultanpur has also ensured smoother and more reliable train operations, reducing delays that passengers frequently faced in the past.

The history of train connectivity between Varanasi and Delhi is significant. The first direct train, the Kashi Vishwanath Express, was introduced in the 1970s under the tenure of Pandit Kamalapati Tripathi, Minister of Railways. Later, the Shiv Ganga Express was launched, offering another vital connection. In recent years, especially under the NDA government, several high-speed and premium trains, including the prestigious Vande Bharat train, have been introduced, further strengthening Varanasi's rail connectivity.

Varanasi cantt. railway station has been beautified comprehensively through the 3D paintings/scenaries exhibiting the richest socio-cultural-religious heritage of Kashi.

Beautifully painted water tanks, unipole mast showing the greatness of Kashi.





Today, Varanasi is well-linked to all major Indian cities, attracting millions of pilgrims, domestic travelers and international tourists. The transformation of railway stations has also been a remarkable aspect of this modernization. I recall my childhood visits to Varanasi Junction, which was then a simple structure with a cemented shed and an aging footbridge. Now, the station is a hub of modern amenities, illuminated by pink lights in the evening, featuring a well-decorated circulating area, a comfortable lounge for tourists and even English-speaking tourist police officers ready to assist passengers. The installation of escalators and elevators on every platform has further enhanced passenger convenience.

Another major development has been the transformation of Manduadih station, now renamed Banaras. This station has emerged as a state-of-the-art facility, rivaling airport terminals in appearance and functionality. Just a decade ago, Manduadih saw limited train operations, but after extensive renovations, it now serves as the starting point for key superfast trains like the Shiv Ganga Express and the Delhi Superfast. The presence of modern food plazas at both Varanasi Junction and Banaras station has further improved passenger experience, leaving NRIs and long-time visitors amazed by the progress.

Experience luxury and comfort at the Executive Lounge in Varanasi Junction Railway Station. The spacious lounge is equipped with plush seating, a generous waiting area, a delectable food court and much more!

One of the standout features of Banaras station is its artistic ambiance. The entrance at platform number 8 resembles an airport terminal, with an expansive portico and a spacious hall adorned with marble flooring. Inside, portraits of renowned Banaras Gharana musicians, including Padma Shri awardees Pandit Rajan and Sajan Mishra, showcase the city's rich cultural heritage. The station's boundary walls have been transformed into artistic masterpieces, painted by Fine



Arts students from Banaras Hindu University as part of the Smart City initiative.

The renovation of Banaras station was strategically aimed at reducing congestion at Varanasi Junction and easing the city's notorious traffic snarls. This transformation has significantly benefited both the local population and railway operations. The improved infrastructure, efficient train services, and modernized stations reflect the Indian Railways' commitment to offering world-class travel experiences.

Railway journeys are more than just physical travel—they carry emotions, memories and the essence of changing times. My recent trip from Varanasi to Delhi was not just about covering the distance; it was a journey through time, tracing the evolution of Indian Railways. While the nostalgia of simpler train journeys remains, the progress and modernization of the railway system offer hope for even better travel experiences in the future. The fusion of tradition and innovation in Varanasi's railway infrastructure is a testament to India's journey toward development, ensuring that memories of train travel continue to to be cherished for generations to come.■

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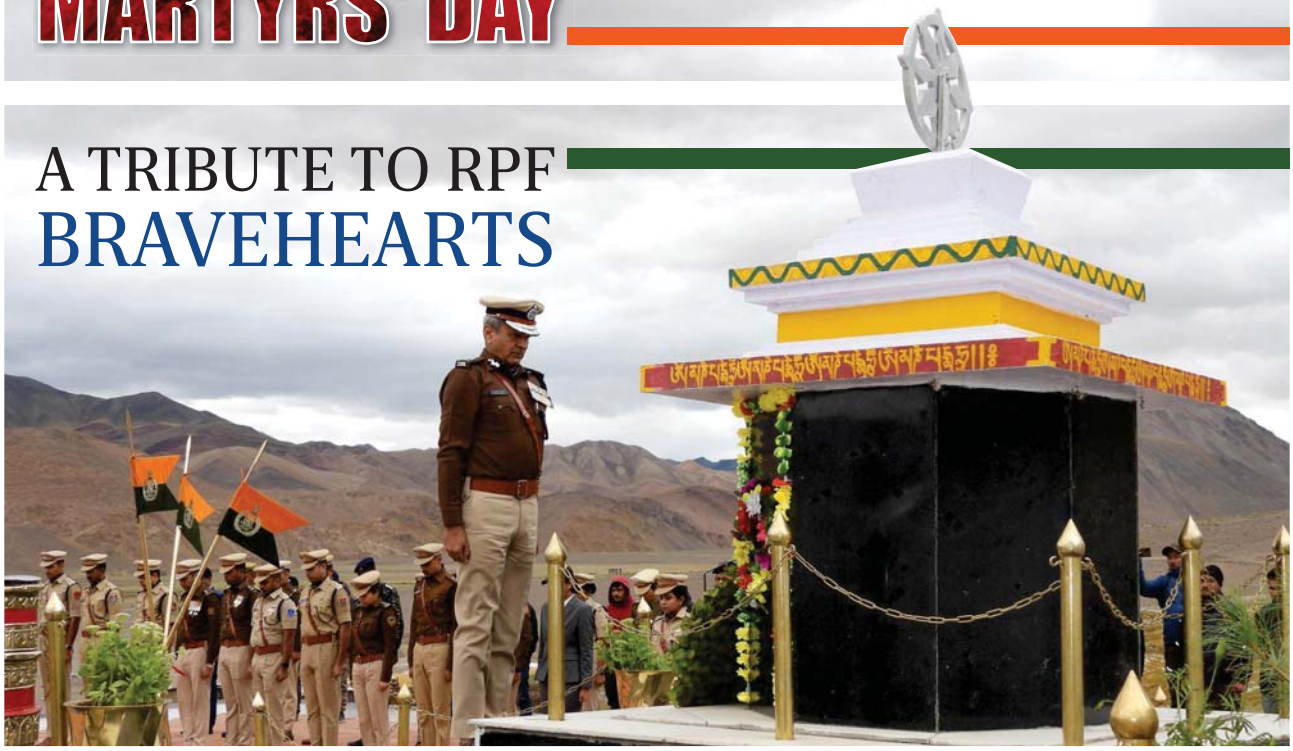
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MARTYRS' DAY

A TRIBUTE TO RPF BRAVEHEARTS



Hemant Kumar
DIG/RPF/Central Railway

Martyrs' Day holds a profound significance in India, serving as a solemn occasion to honour those who have laid down their lives in the line of duty. Among the many forces that safeguard the nation, the Railway Protection Force (RPF) stands out as a vital entity committed to the safety and security of Indian Railways, often referred to as the lifeline of the nation. The RPF's contributions extend beyond routine policing to acts of extraordinary courage, valour and sacrifice.

RPF plays a crucial role in ensuring passenger security on Indian Railways by patrolling on railway tracks, escorting trains, preventing crimes against passengers and their belongings and responding to incidents within the railway premises, essentially acting as the primary security agency for passengers and the passenger area on trains and stations. RPF protects Rail infrastructure and assets like bridges, tracks, stations and other vital installations which may be damaged by terrorist, naxals, anti social elements and during disasters. During communal riots or political unrest, Railways become target of vandalism and arson. RPF personnel maintain law and order, prevent damage and ensure passenger safety. Rail accidents, whether caused by human error, sabotage, or natural factors, demand immediate response to minimize casualties and restore normalcy. The RPF Assists in evacuating injured passengers and providing first aid, protects passengers' belongings and railway property from theft, coordinates with local authorities, medical teams and disaster management units. During national emergencies

As a National Force RPF Breavehearts are working day and night across the Country to ensure their duties up to Supreme Sacrifice.

like wars or border conflicts, the Railways play a critical role in transporting troops, ammunition, and other strategic materials. The RPF ensures protection of military goods trains from sabotage or theft. Safe and timely movement of armed forces and equipment to strategic locations. RPF plays a crucial role in fostering national integration in India. As a security force responsible for safeguarding the lifeline of the nation—Indian Railways—the RPF not only ensures safety but also helps unite diverse communities by facilitating connectivity, harmony and inclusivity. During public health emergencies such as pandemics like COVID, RPF ensures the smooth functioning of railway services while maintaining safety protocols. RPF frequently intercepts human traffickers, including the smuggling of minors, often risking their own lives. RPF deploy special squads like Mahila Shakti teams to protect women against incidents of sexual harassment, molestation, and other abuses. RPF plays vital role in dealing with overcrowded platforms and trains during events like Kumbh Mela or Durga Puja and maintains order by deploying additional manpower.

As a National Force RPF Breavehearts are working day and night across the Country to ensure their duties up to Supreme Sacrifice. More than one thousand RPF Officers and staff sacrifice their lives in service to the Nation. They are role models for serving RPF and their families. On Martyr's Day, we feel pride by remembering them and their Glorious Act.

Fighting with Kashmir Terrorism

On 23rd April, 2022, Dev Raj, ASI and Surendra Sing Head Constable were on duty in Kakapora area of south Kashmir's Pulwama District. Militants shot them from point blank range. They were treated for injuries but lost the battle of life.



Dev Raj
Sub-Inspector, RPSF

Surendra Sing
Head Constable, Northern Railway

Fighting with Punjab Militancy

On the 14th of May, 1984 Constable Ramtirath Mourya while courageously fulfilling his duties at Rayya Railway Station situated on the Jalandhar-Amritsar railway section of Punjab faced a sudden and ruthless attack by terrorists. In an act of supreme bravery, he stood alongside his colleague, Kale Khan, Head Constable to protect the station and its passengers. Tragically, the terrorists shot and killed Constable Ramtirath Mourya and Head Constable Kale Khan during the attack.

Fighting with Mumbai Terrorist Attack

On 26/27 November, 2008, Muralidhar Laxman Chaudhary, Head Constable was on duty in Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus Station, Mumbai. At about 21.56 hrs, two terrorists entered the station premises and began firing indiscriminately at passengers with AK-47 rifles while also throwing grenades. To save the railway passengers and the staff working at the station, he shouted to direct them towards safety. He encouraged them to seek cover and made every possible attempt to distract the assailants. Noticing his actions, the terrorists fired on him with AK47 which proved fatal and led to his Martyrdom.



Murlidhar Laxman Chaudhary
Head Constable, Central Railway

Fighting with North East Terrorism

On 6th October, 2006 Constable Mahavir Prasad Yadav along with other RPSF staff were deployed for escorting and protection duty of Engineering staff working at Mandirdisha-Hathikali station of North Frontier Railway. While they were performing duty, suddenly



Mahavir P. Yadav
Constable, RPSF

a group of armed extremists ambushed them. Constable Mahavir Prasad Yadav and fellow RPSF staff displayed extraordinary courage and engaged them in counter firing. During the encounter, Constable Mahavir Prasad Yadav sustained fatal bullet injuries and attained martyrdom on the spot.

Fighting with Naxalite Threats

On 8th November, 2017, P. Sambasiva, Constable of Waltair Division, East Coast Railway, was on patrolling duty at Bacheli Railway Station Yard area. Around midnight, a group of heavily armed Maoists entered the Yard and attempted to rob the valuable goods from the train placed in the Yard. To tackle the situation, Sambasiva challenged them bravely. On being intercepted, Maoists assaulted him, due to which P. Sambasiva, Constable attained Martyrdom, while fighting with the naxals.



P. Sambasiva
Constable,
East Coast Railway

Supreme scarifies in protection of Railway Property

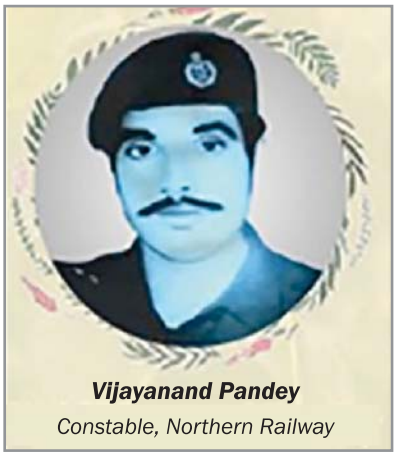
On 14th January, 1997 Bhivaji Parihar, Constable was deployed for cash escorting duty in Nagpur Division of Central Railway, when he was attacked by criminals with the intention of looting railway cash and arms. He confronted and fought off the criminals bravely without caring for his life and while protecting the railway cash, arms and bullets. However, he sustained fatal injuries and attained martyrdom.



Bhivaji Parihar
Constable, Central Railway

Supreme Scarifies in Protection of Railway Passengers

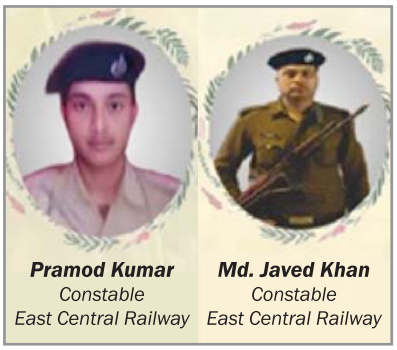
On 11th June, 1993, Constable Vijayanand Pandey was on train escorting duty at Magdah Express between Kanpur and Allahabad Railway station. During the duty, some miscreants attacked on Railway passengers and started looting their personal belongings. Displaying extraordinary courage, Vijayanand Pandey faced and held off the miscreants with zeal and courage. Battling with miscreants, he sustained serious injuries and attained Martyrdom.



Vijayanand Pandey
Constable, Northern Railway

Fighting with Smugglers

On 20th August, 2024 Constable Pramod Kumar and Constable Javed Khan of East Central Railway were on duty in Badmer-Guhati express. During their duty, they resisted liquor smugglers in between Pandit Dindayal Upadhyaya station and Danapur station. They were severely assaulted by liquor smugglers incised by their objection. After the assault, the criminals throw them out of the running train due to which they attained Martyrdom.



Pramod Kumar
Constable
East Central Railway

Md. Javed Khan
Constable
East Central Railway

Life Sacrifice during Election Bandobast duty

On 25th February, 2018, Mukesh Chand Tyagi Assistant Commandant, 6th Battalion, Railway Protection Special Force was deployed for duty for the



Mukesh Chand Tyagi
Asstt. Commandant, RPSF

State Assembly Elections at Mawkyrwat town in East Khasi Hill District of Meghalaya State. While he was at camp site preparing to proceed for polling booths, he was attacked, in which he sustained fatal bullet injuries and attained Martyrdom on the spot.

Life Sacrifice during Bhopal Gas Tragedy

On 3rd January, 1985 Constable Ram Prakash was deployed at Bhopal Railway station, at about 00.50 hrs, barely 1.5 km away, the world's worst industrial disaster occurred. The toxic gas MIC (Methyl Isocynate) that had leaked from the Union Carbide Chemical plant quickly engulfed everyone in the vicinity. This situation triggered sudden panic at the station and people started complaining of severe health issues. Despite knowing that the gas was highly poisonous, in the wake of this extraordinary crisis and emergency situation, he put his life at risk and with the help of the on-duty Station Master, made every possible effort to successfully rescue hundreds of passengers, before himself falling unconscious. Unfortunately, prolonged exposure to MIC gas during discharge of duty turned deadly for him and in the line of duty, he attained Martyrdom.

Fighting with Fire in Railway Coaches

On 22nd April, 2024 Constable Vinod Yadav was deployed for duty at Muzaffarpur Railway station. During his duty, he noticed smoke billowing out from a coach of the empty Valsad-Muzaffarpur train at Muzaffarpur Railway station at around 7 am. He immediately picked up a fire extinguisher and tried to open the extinguisher but the extinguisher burst out. He succumbed to his injuries while undergoing treatment, he attained Martyrdom.



Binod Kumar
Head Constable, East Central Railway

Fighting with Fire in Railway Office

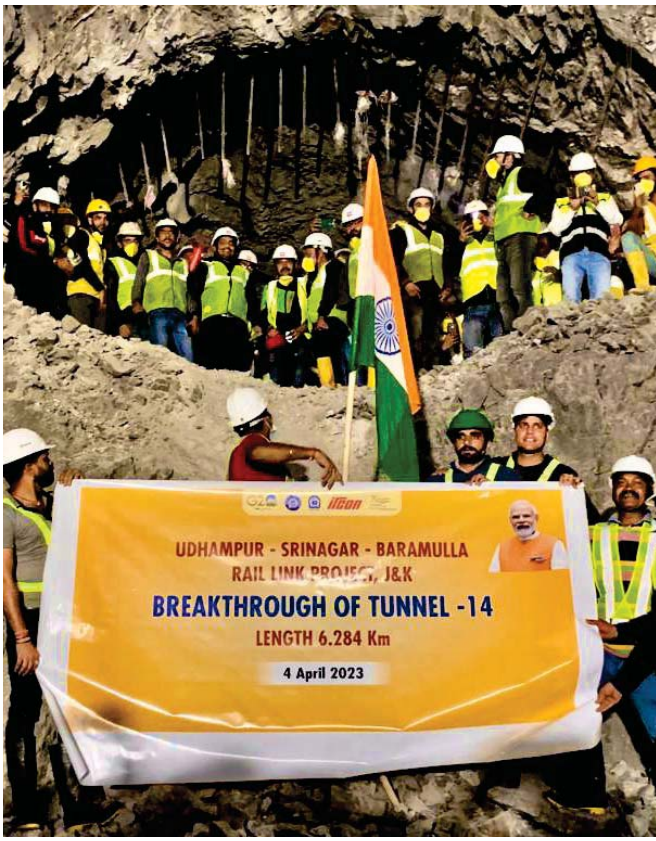
On 8th March, 2021, Sanjay Sahani was on duty at New Koilaghat Building, Eastern Railway Head Quarter Kolkata. A devastating fire broke out on the 13th floor of the building, he went there to combat the blaze and save lives, while helping others he succumbed to his injuries and attained martyrdom.



Sanjay Sahani
Constable, Eastern Railway

These bravehearts and many others sacrifices are a testament to their unwavering commitment to national service. RPF remembers these Martyrs and observe Commemoration Day with solemnity and respect to honour the brave personnel who have sacrificed their lives in the line of duty. The day serves as a tribute to their valour, dedication, and service to the nation. RPF organizes wreath-laying ceremonies at memorials dedicated to fallen heroes across the country. All senior officials, including the Director-General of RPF and other dignitaries, participate in paying homage to martyrs. A ceremonial parade and Guard of Honour are conducted as a mark of respect. A two-minute silence is observed to remember the sacrifices of RPF personnel. The names of RPF martyrs, along with their acts of bravery, are read aloud during the ceremonies to honour their legacy. The RPF invites the families of martyrs to participate in the ceremonies, recognizing their sacrifices. Families are felicitated with mementos, financial assistance, and tokens of appreciation. Welfare programmes are announced to provide continued support to the dependents of martyrs. Awareness programmes are organized to inform the public about the sacrifices made by RPF personnel. Posters, banners and short films showcasing the bravery of martyrs are displayed at railway stations and public areas. Blood donation camps, medical camps and tree plantation drives are organized as part of the commemoration activities. Railway stations across the country observe special tributes, including displaying photographs and stories of RPF martyrs.

Railway Over Clouds
Connecting the Valley



Abhishek Jagawat
Director, Gati Shakti, Railway Board

In the railway community it is often quoted that national integration culminates with connecting the last frontiers with the permanent way (a name given to railway tracks due to its sturdy nature). The statement is true in a sense because how can we expect integration of a nation, if not by 'the lifeline of the nation'.

The British laid a vast railway network throughout the country from Darjeeling Himalayan Railways to the Southern tip of India, but they never ventured into Kashmir Valley. The reasons for their apathy towards Jammu and Kashmir emanated from, inter alia the mighty and formidable Pir Panjal mountains and its passes. The snow-clad rugged Pir Panjal posed a big challenge even to the British engineers who were at the top of their game. The other reason being, the British didn't see connectivity to Kashmir as economically beneficial as it didn't have coal or iron, which could be exploited and transported back to England. For almost 120 years, when the rest of India was enjoying the train journeys from one corner of the country to other, people of Kashmir were bereft of it.

History of USBRL project

The maiden attempt to expand the network into Jammu and Kashmir was taken as early as 1981 when foundation stone of Jammu-Udhampur Rail Line was laid, but its construction work could only be started in 1995.



The connectivity to Kashmir was envisaged in 1995 when 'in principle approval' was granted for a rail line in Jammu and Kashmir. But little progress could be made from 1995 to 2002 because of militancy and Pak sponsored terrorism which was causing instability in Jammu and Kashmir. Worth of this rail link was felt more than ever after the Kargil War during which infiltrators (Pak army) targeted the National Highway, an important strategic link in the border region. The necessity of transportation networks in border areas and their strategic importance was brought to the table for discussion at the apex level.

Finally in the year 2002, the government took two important decisions. Firstly, the Jammu and Kashmir rail connectivity project was declared as 'The National Project'. Earlier the railway network in Kashmir valley was to be developed separately, disconnected from the rest of the country, reason being the challenging terrain between Kashmir Valley and Jammu region. But, this plan was dumped and it was decided in 2002 that the valley should get connected to the rest of the rail network in India. The massive challenge was accepted by Indian engineers to conquer the Pir Panjal mountains and show the world the might of India.

The project, which is popularly known as USBRL (Udhampur Srinagar Baramulla Rail Link) has following progressions spread across several decades:

The 53 km long Jammu -Udhampur section was completed in 2005 and its extension up to Mata Vaishno Devi Katra in 2014.



Coaches loaded on road trawlers near Udhampur

Qazigund to Baramulla (118 km) which connects Srinagar was opened in 2009 and its extension up to Banihal (18 km) in 2013. It is on this stretch the fabled Pir Panjal tunnel, the gateway of Kashmir lies, which was the longest transportation tunnel until recently when it was dwarfed by another sister tunnel (T-50) in the same project.

To highlight an intriguing fact, the Qazigund-Baramulla section was isolated from the rest of the Indian rail network and transportation of train coaches to this section located in Kashmir valley was a tedious task. This task was carried out using specially designed trawlers which carried rail coaches by road negotiating the sharp curves in hills.

The most critical and challenging stretch of the USBRL project has been the Katra to Banihal (111 km) section which majorly passes through long tunnels and bridges, one among them being the celebrated Chenab Bridge. This stretch was opened last year and this year.

It has been the most critical leg of the project from the execution point of view because it has either tunnels or bridges. This is also the reason why this section is the last one to be commissioned. Out of 111 km length, 97 km (87%) is in tunnels and 7 km on bridges. Even the stations in this stretch are either falling inside tunnels or on bridges or both.

The Anji bridge, first ever cable-stayed railway bridge of India is a brave leap taken by engineers and designers.

After getting the go ahead for the project, when the USBRL team started planning, they came across a peculiar problem. Almost all the sites of tunnels and bridges could neither be accessed by vehicle nor on foot. So before starting the rail project, the first task taken in

hand was to build approach roads, serving the project sites along the whole alignment. To deploy the machinery to these isolated locations, trucks, earth movers and other construction machinery were airlifted to sites by defence helicopters. These roads played a big role in improving road connectivity in the districts especially in Reasi and Ramban districts.

Landmarks

Beyond the challenges of the USBRL were the technological feats awaiting the Indian Engineers. The celebrated Chenab bridge of India could only be possible when the boundaries of past experience were pushed further. From the design of steel arch to enormous scale of steel and concrete, not just broke Indian Railways records but created new ones for the world. Cable crane assembly used for erection of Steel members of Bridge has a span of 915 meters, one of the longest in the world. Its highest pier (172 m high) is more than double the height of Qutub Minar. For continuous health monitoring and warning State of Art Instrumentation has been provided along with power operated cars for inspection and maintenance of the bridge. The bridge, which is higher than the Eiffel tower, can sustain an earthquake of magnitude 8.0 Richter scale (deadliest earthquake J&K endured had magnitude 7.6 Richter scale in 2005), wind with speed more than 266 kmph and a high intensity blast.

Another icon, the Anji bridge, first ever cable-stayed railway bridge of India is a brave leap taken by engineers and designers. The cable-stayed bridges are not the preferred choice due to complexity of design and inherent construction obstacles. The bridge stretching over the Anji river, is located on a very fragile and complex geological strata. The central pylon has cables anchored to it measuring 650 km (longer than the distance between Jammu and Delhi) and foundation as deep as a 13 storey building. Beyond the common awareness, the bridge has been designed to withstand winds, earthquakes and blast akin to Chenab bridge.



A truck rolling off from the defence helicopter

The Himalayas are heaven for tourists and naturalists but it's an adverse worksite for engineers due to its treacherous, fragile and unpredictable geology. The young fold mountains are also seismically active, prone to landslides, flash floods etc. Tunnelling which in itself is a daunting task, gets more unforgiving when such geology is encountered that too in places which are inaccessible. The tunnel (T-33) piercing through Trikuta hills between Katra and Reasi passes through MBT (Main Boundary Thrust). MBT is a 400 to 500 m wide belt in the Himalayas located at the collision boundary between Eurasian and Indian plate, and is highly seismically active. The zone of MBT is very unstable where a cocktail of fractured rocks, saturated clay, silt, dolomite etc. mixed with water flows and often floods the entire tunnel giving practically no opportunity to act.

Tough Gets Going

The construction of the tunnels in USBRL were carried out using NATM (New Austrian Tunnel Method) which relies primarily on the natural load bearing capacity of strata and is carried out in sequential manner and any deformation in the tunnel is monitored in real time using instrumentation. However, the geology of the Himalayas taught some tough lessons and the methodology was tweaked by modifying the tunnel cross section to suit Himalayan geology and the Indian methodology has been given a new name of Himalayan Tunneling Method (HTM).



Any project has its own risks and challenges in its inception, planning and execution stages, but USBRL had more to that, it offered severe hazards and very high stake decision making. While tunnelling through different strata, gases such as Methane and H2S were released. Methane, a highly flammable, colourless and odourless gas, is very difficult to detect hence sophisticated gas detection and monitoring equipment were utilized. At times perched aquifers were punctured during tunnel excavation causing massive flooding inside the tunnels and work was held up for months together. Many times unstable strata collapsed inside the tunnel posing threat to workers life and their morale. But when the challenges grew, determination and resolve grew bigger. With every setback the labour and engineers reverted with a stronger grit, learning lessons from every snag.

The stations on the project too have been challenging tasks which otherwise would have been cakewalk for railway engineers, because some of these stations are extending into tunnels and others on the bridges.

The rolling stock too had its own set of challenges, the trains which ply on the rest of the Indian Railways network cannot operate in Kashmir valley where minimum temperature drops to -100C and below. In sub-zero temperature conditions the freezing of water can cause bursting of pipes in washrooms and toilets. Specialised on-train heating arrangements have been provided in coaches to prevent water from freezing and to maintain a steady supply of hot water. The windscreen in the pilot cabin has been designed using a triple layer system with a prefitted heating filament to maintain visibility during snowfall. The temperature controlled compartments will prevent frost formation even when the temperature outside falls to -30^0 and will keep the passengers in a warm and cosy environment. For clearing of tracks during snowfall, snow cutting machines have been deployed in the section.

Modern Technologies for Operations and Safety

The Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link project has already become a case study in itself. Engineers and students are already learning from each of its defining features such as Chenab Bridge, Anji bridge, T-50 (Bharat's longest transportation tunnel - 12.8 km), innovative slope stabilisation techniques, first ever Rigid overhead traction line (ROCS) in India, Ballastless tracks, advanced tunnel communication system and state of the art safety measures. Keeping in mind the security of vital installations and passenger safety the tunnels will have Emergency call (SOS) phones every 200m, surveillance cameras every 100m, passenger announcements systems every 100m apart from the tunnel control room and service telephones. A 67 km long network of escape tunnels has been constructed parallel to the route to respond to any emergency situation and safe evacuation of passengers. The AI (Artificial Intelligence)

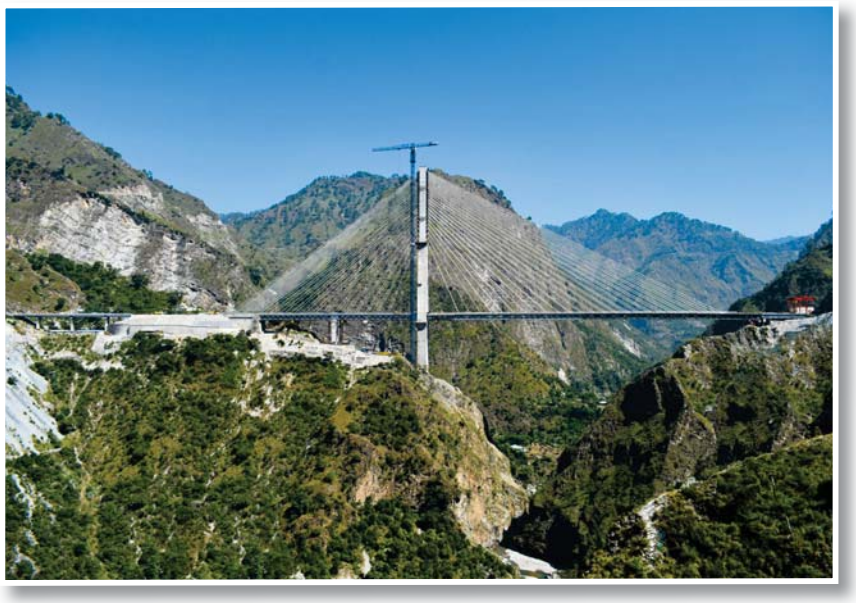


enabled video analytics software installed in the systems will detect any human intrusion in restricted areas and generate alarm.

Collateral Gains

People of Jammu and Kashmir had a huge role in making this a reality. To mention a specific one, during the construction of T-50 tunnel, people of Sumber Valley and Arpinchala village were given a variety of jobs at site. What can be a better way to engage local population in infrastructure creation than giving them employment and uplifting their socio-economic status. Their involvement had a positive spillover effect, people of the region identified the infrastructure created as their own. They take pride in being associated with its creation. The dedication with which they protect and preserve it, is something that goes beyond duty. The villagers who didn't have access to roads to reach the nearest city have now got massive railway stations and can travel to anywhere in the country. The transformation of such remote areas and villages in the region opened new avenues of employment and gradually the youth which were earlier misguided, could come out of the shadow of terrorism.

As train operations are starting numerous opportunities are opening up for the local populace. A girl from Bakkal village can go and study in Mumbai or can take a job in Delhi. A weaver in Srinagar can take his weaves and sell it in markets located anywhere in the country. An apple orchard



owner of Baramulla can send a wagon full of apples to Mandis across India without worrying about their storage and risk of spoiling. For the collateral benefits of the project, a first hand account shared by an officer posted near Reasi is worth mentioning, 'an unpaved road was constructed in the Reasi district, to reach the tunnel site.

I regularly travelled on that road. For a month or so, I saw no vehicle except mine, the road was completely deserted. After a month, one day I noticed a Maruti 800 driving uphill. After 6 months, the impact of providing connectivity was visible when school van, bikes and mini trucks were travelling on the road.' Seeing the utility of these roads, Indian Railways took the decision to upgrade all of them into bituminous paved roads. As a result, presently USBRL has more than 200 km of approach road network constructed in the project area, shared by project employees and locals alike.

Light at the End of Tunnel

For the generations to come, USBRL will not just remain as a means of reaching the Kashmir valley, it will emerge as a destination in itself. It will bring paradigm change in the state of Jammu and Kashmir by creating employment and business opportunities, boosting tourism and improving mobility, which will reap its fruits in the decades ahead. Our security forces who earlier used to spend days travelling, will find a faster, safer and seamless mode of transportation through this strategic asset of our country. Tourists and adventure enthusiasts are reaching once formidable sites, not just to travel but to get a glimpse of technological masterpieces and to listen to the thrilling tales of challenges faced. The lores of the project will be taught to the coming generations as an epitome of odds defying Bhartiya engineering, meticulous planning, boundary pushing thinking and sheer determination for national integration.■

Test Your Knowledge

1. **How many passengers travelled from nine stations of Prayagraj in Mahakumbh 2025?**

(a) 2 crore ☐ (b) 4.24 crore ☐
(c) 5.25 crore ☐ (d) 6 crore ☐

2. **How many trains were operated for the pilgrims during Mahakumbh?**

(a) 17,152 ☐ (b) 27,152 ☐
(c) 10,500 ☐ (d) 25,120 ☐

3. **How much worth of projects has been approved in Bihar by Narendra Modi, Prime Minister recently?**

(a) ₹200 crore ☐ (b) ₹1050 crore ☐
(c) ₹526 crore ☐ (d) ₹1526 crore ☐

4. **In the Budget for FY 2025-26, how much amount was allocated to Indian Railways?**

(a) ₹4 lakh crore ☐ (b) ₹2.52 lakh crore ☐
(c) ₹3 lakh crore ☐ (d) ₹5 lakh crore ☐

5. **Which is the first vertical lift sea-bridge of Indian Railways?**

(a) Pamban Bridge ☐ (b) Howrah Bridge ☐
(c) Chenab Bridge ☐ (d) None of these ☐

6. **Which IIT is doing the research work of Hyperloop train?**

(a) Kanpur ☐ (b) Delhi ☐
(c) Kharagpur ☐ (d) Madras ☐

7. **India's first Vande Bharat sleeper train set was manufactured in which city?**

(a) Bengaluru ☐ (b) Patiala ☐
(c) Chennai ☐ (d) Varanasi ☐

8. **At what speed trains are considered to be high speed?**

(a) 130 km. ☐ (b) 150 km. ☐
(c) 200 km. ☐ (d) 250 km. ☐

9. **125 years was completed by which station of North Western Railway?**

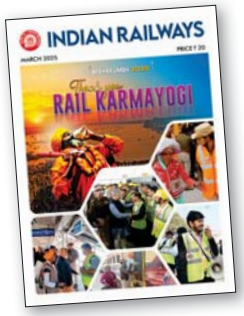
(a) Jodhpur ☐ (b) Bikaner ☐
(c) Jaipur ☐ (d) Ajmer Jn. ☐

10. **The Educational Mobile App. named 'Gyanvapi' was launched by which Railway?**

(a) Western Railway ☐ (b) Northeast Railway ☐
(c) Northern Railway ☐ (d) Eastern Railway ☐

Right Answers

1- (b) 2- (a) 3- (c) 4- (b) 5- (a) 6- (d) 7- (c) 8- (a) 9- (d) 10- (b)



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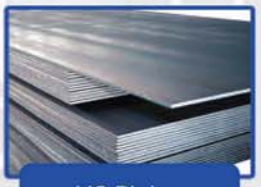

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