



# भारत भाग्य विधाता

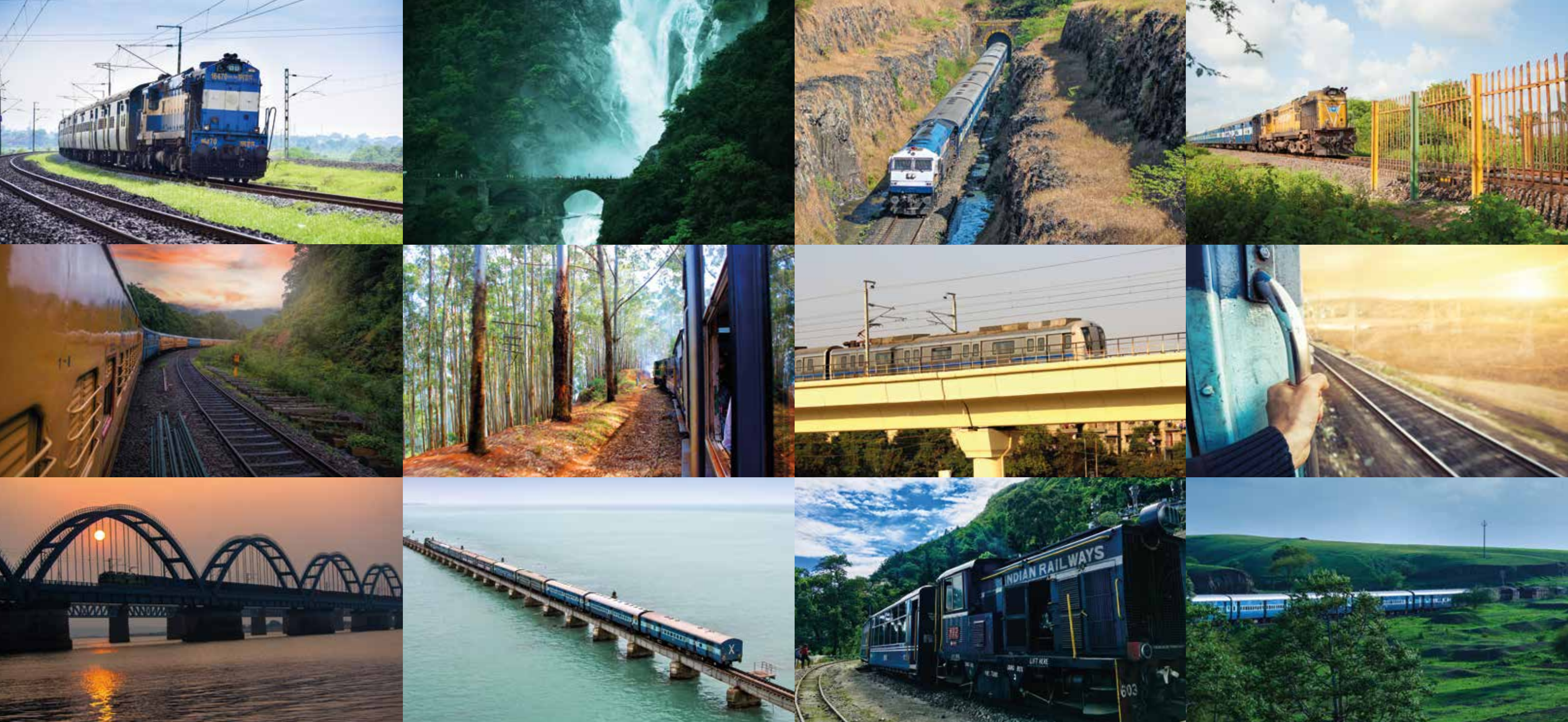
*Indian Railways  
The Creator of Destinies*



Confederation of Indian Industry

SIEMENS





# Bharat Bhagya Vidhata

Indian Railways is a testament to human ingenuity and determination. They are a symbol of unity and progress, connecting people from different backgrounds and bringing places closer.

As an enabler of development and connectivity, Indian Railways have today become an invaluable infrastructure link in the lives of 1.4 billion Indians, and the growth engine of the nation's Vikas Yatra.

Indian Railways provide a chance to reflect and rejuvenate, and are the gateway to adventurous paths. It creates destinies of millions of people who depend on it for their daily commute, tourism and transportation.



# What's inside the book

|                                                                                                                                                                             |       |                                                                                |       |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| ● <b>Acknowledgements</b>                                                                                                                                                   | 03    | ● <b>Travelers of Trains</b>                                                   | 32-67 |
| ● <b>Foreword</b>                                                                                                                                                           | 04-09 | ◦ Growing up with Indian Railways                                              |       |
| ● <b>Introduction</b><br>Indian Railways – The Creator of Destinies                                                                                                         | 10-13 | ◦ City diaries                                                                 |       |
| ● <b>History of Indian Railways</b><br>The story of Transformation, Innovation and Growth                                                                                   | 14-17 | ◦ Travelling on Legends<br>(Stories of Travelling in Rajdhani or Vande Bharat) |       |
| ● <b>The future of Indian Railways</b>                                                                                                                                      | 18-21 | ◦ My First Train Journey                                                       |       |
| ● <b>India on the Move: Partners in Progress</b>                                                                                                                            | 22-25 | ◦ Lifelong bond                                                                |       |
| ● <b>Crossing Paths. Intertwining Stories.</b><br>◦ Every motion, evokes endless emotions<br>◦ Nostalgia<br>◦ Pride of the people<br>◦ Weaving Railways into cinema's magic | 26-31 | ● <b>Summing up</b>                                                            | 68-71 |
|                                                                                                                                                                             |       | ◦ A future ready rail system                                                   |       |
|                                                                                                                                                                             |       | ◦ Creating destinies                                                           |       |
|                                                                                                                                                                             |       | ◦ Towards sustainability                                                       |       |

# Acknowledgements

Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) and Siemens India takes great pride to present this illustrative Coffee Table Book '***Bharat Bhagya Vidhata***' to the Indian Railways.

Published as an ode to Indian Railways, CII and Siemens pays homage to the quintessential role played by Indian Railways in the nations development and in being the true creator of destinies.

We also acknowledge the unflinching support we received from our story contributors from Siemens India and CII for sharing some of their personal memories and experiences of

train travel. These tales, presented along with awe-inspiring photography, will be of immense interest as they enliven the experience of reading this book. As you flip through the pages, the book promises to take you through a full range of emotions and evoke nostalgia due to the stories of their own train travel experiences.

So, hop on and allow the contributors to steer you through “Bharat Bhagya Vidhata”.



# Foreword



*Indian Railways is a testament to the nation's rich history, cultural diversity and economic development. With a vast network connecting the length and breadth of the country, Indian Railways constitutes the world's fourth largest rail network and plays a crucial role in supporting economic growth, trade and commerce, and a prime source of employment – directly and indirectly.*



## A growth engine for the economy

The economic implications of Railways in India are multi-faceted. It plays a critical role in the Indian economy by providing the infrastructure for transportation, creating jobs, and trade – contributing to the nation's overall economic development.

With an extensive network of over 67,000 kms and connecting nearly 7,000 stations, Railways transport massive volume of goods and carry approximately 1.40 billion tonnes of freight. This efficient movement of goods contributes significantly to industrial growth, efficiency in supply chain and fosters regional development.



## Filled with the Rhythm of Life

It gives us immense pleasure to present to you Bharat Bhagya Vidhata – our coffee table book that depicts the story of modernisation and electrification. The Book weaves a fabric full of memories connecting different generations of travellers in India and depicting the excitement that train travel brings to us.

The history of Indian Railways dates back to 170 years. Talking about the early days of Railways in India, the first train journey in India was made on the historic day on 16th April, 1853, as the first passenger train ran between Bori Bunder (Mumbai) and Thane, covering 34 kilometres. Operated by three steam locomotive engines – Sahib, Sultan and Sindh – this train had 13 carriages. Since then, the Railways have embraced India and enriched people's nostalgia on a daily basis.

The Book acknowledges the force multiplier that Indian Railways have come to represent on this forward-looking journey. This is an ode to the Railways and its partners who develop its technology, network and services with the aim of enhancing mobility in people's lives.

## Connecting the world. Expanding horizons.

The Book focuses not only on the history of Indian Railways and its legacy, but also carries soul-stirring stories of encounters of varied generations of people and their experiences while travelling in trains. It also covers the key achievements of Indian Railways and its commitment to keep innovating and serve the nation more.

Every chapter in the Book depicts the unfolding story of Indian Railways since its evolutionary days to its completion of 170 glorious years in 2023.

The Book also captures its evolution as an eco-friendly and energy efficient mode of transportation, and discusses the remarkable achievement of 100% electrification of rail networks. It discusses how electrification is set to reduce India's dependency on petroleum-based energy and enhance India's energy security. The Book also moves onto what the future holds for Indian Railways.

This is a definite read to enjoy the joyful ride covering important historical moments, stories of nostalgia, and the longstanding collaboration between Indian Railways and Siemens.



**Chandrajit Banerjee,**  
Director General,  
Confederation of Indian Industry

“Railways have played a pivotal role in shaping the socio-economic landscape of India for over a century. It serves as the lifeline of the nation, connecting distant corners and facilitating the movement of people and goods. Recent developments including introduction of Vande Bharat high speed trains, dedicated freight corridors and advent of digital technology, among others, have transformed the railway experience.

CII, which has an extensive industry membership across India representing railway infrastructure developers to equipment manufacturers & technology providers, works closely with all stakeholders to build a world-class Railways in the country. CII Green Business Centre in partnership with Railways has also taken several initiatives to contribute towards making Railways green. Under the initiative, 39 Railways Stations have been certified as Green Railway Stations and 63 Railway Stations are underway to becoming, 45 Railway Buildings have been certified as Green Buildings.

On the occasion of IREE 2023, CII is happy to partner with Siemens India to come out with this unique Coffee Table Book “Bharat Bhagya Vidhata”, capturing the rich tapestry of memories and experiences of rail travels. I am hopeful that as you turn the pages, you will find the journeys on Indian Railways compelling and interesting.”



**Dipankar Ghosh,**  
Chairman, CII Railway  
Transport & Equipment Division

“The Indian Railways’ has ensured that India connects to the remotest corners of the length and breadth of the nation. It is this ingenuity that makes it the heartbeat of the nation and has truly been a champion in fostering unity, national integration, and economic prosperity. We Indians have a special emotion that gets transported across generations and a nostalgia that runs deep in our veins. For this very reason, Railways is seen as the lifeline and the growth engine of the country. Be it moving people, or moving freight, railways has been and will continue to be the most cost-effective, sustainable, and speediest mode of transport.”



**Sunil Mathur,**  
Managing Director and Chief Executive  
Officer, Siemens Limited

“The Indian Railways has truly been the ‘Bharat Bhagya Vidhata’ for our nation, creating destinies and transforming people’s lives for the last 170 years. Its legacy has been magnificent, and we take great pride in partnering the Indian Railways as a technology partner contributing to this socio-economic development. Their future-ready plans anticipate the evolving infrastructure needs of India. I wish the Indian Railways all the best in all its endeavors of Mobilizing India. We stand firmly committed in the growth story of Indian Railways that spreads across the sprawling landscape of the country, touching the life of every Indian.”



**Gunjan Vakharia,**  
Head of Mobility Business,  
Siemens Limited

“At the heart of Indian Railways lies the profound vision of ‘Nation Building,’ similar to what we at Siemens resonate with. Today, this vision is a collective force coursing through the veins of our nation, thanks to Indian Railways, our lifeline. The true torchbearers of this shared vision are the masses, who fuel India's dynamic economy. As our economy thrives, so do its demands for mobility. In response, one of the world's largest railway systems, stands ready to efficiently meet the growing needs of our nation.”





# Introduction

## Indian Railways The Creator of Destinies



*The Indian Railways has been the nation's social and economic lifeline since 1853 with its first train journey. Since then, the Indian Railways have recorded a glorious journey. Railways have played a significant role in uplifting India's economy and making India an economic powerhouse with industrial development. Accessibility and convenience make trains a sustainable, low-cost mode of transportation.*

*With tens of thousands of kilometres of total track connecting the country, the Indian Railways contributes to the lives of Indian citizens and India in numerous ways. No wonder, this means of transport is referred to as “Bharat Bhagya Vidhata”, the creator of destiny for India.*

*As Bharat Bhagya Vidhata, the creator of destinies, Railways enable an undeterred flow of life, energy, and progress to people. Railways are a strong medium of national integration, helping in removing isolation between cities and in disseminating innovations and new ideas.*



Indian Railways cover a distance equivalent to circumventing the Earth five times a day, carrying 24 million passengers daily.

More than 22,500 trains operate daily, carrying passengers and 1.4+ billion metric tons of freight annually across the country.

Indian Railways is one of the largest employers across the world – directly employing 1.3 million people.

## Connecting India - Miles with Smiles

Indian Railways serve the nation's households and workplaces by ensuring their day-to-day supplies reach them efficiently and lending a helping hand to overall prosperity. Introduction of superfast services ensures quick movement of people and distribution of essential resources from one place to another. It plays a vital role in transporting goods and connecting the sprawling landscape of India.

The key role played by the Indian Railways in logistics has turned it into a crucial contributor to the nation's economic development. This movement enabled by Railways harnesses regional strengths and helps link and diversify different regional cultures, rural art forms, crafts, and folklore across the country.

Train travel also fosters unity. The aspiration for inter-connectedness made Indian Railways one of the world's largest rail networks and developed a lifelong bond. It has also defined personal freedom for the masses by connecting India with smiles through its remotest corners.

## From Vande Bharat to Dedicated Freight Corridors

The Indian Railways Dedicated Freight Corridors are specialised rail lines used exclusively for freight transportation. These are designed to reduce transit time and enhance capacity, and providing faster and more reliable transportation options to benefit industries.

Indian Railways have undergone a complete metamorphosis with introduction of high-speed trains, expansion of railway network, introduction of modern amenities, upgrading of railway stations automatic signalling, implementation of the dedicated freight corridor and prioritising passenger comfort.





# History of Indian Railways

A Story of Transformation,  
Innovation and Growth

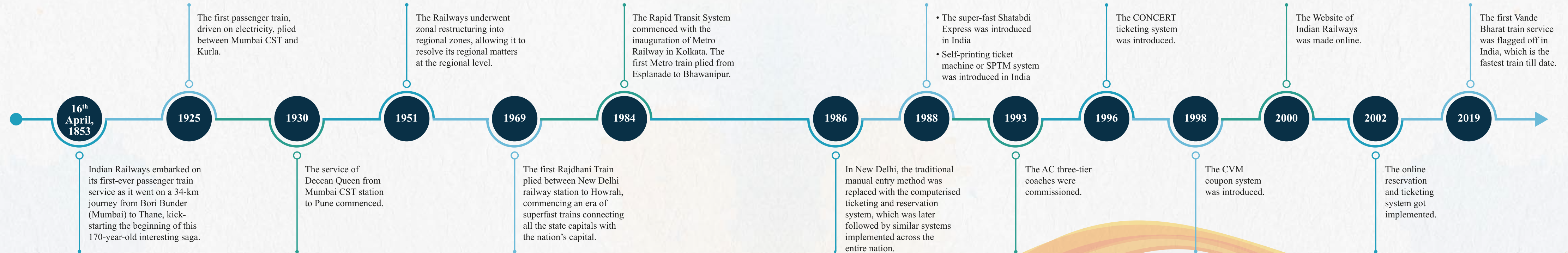


*The Indian Railways have stood by the nation for the past 170 years in times of duress such as floods, famines and wars and its operations have grown manifold. Since it first started in 1853, the network has grown to emerge as the fourth-largest national railway system in the world.*



The evolutionary journey has been one of selfless service in connecting and embracing an entire nation and the key ingredients in contributing towards its transformation and making them as the '**Bharat Bhagya Vidhata**' of people.

*Indian Railways have witnessed commendable and unprecedented progress with development of infrastructure, innovation, capacity expansion and freight diversification. Spread across 67,956 kms, it has one of the world's largest railway networks in the world with 13,169 passenger trains and 8,479 freight trains, plying 23 million travellers and transporting 3 million tonnes (MT) of freight daily from 7,349 stations.*





# The Future of Indian Railways

---



*Significant and strategic initiatives are being taken by the Government to boost the railway industry and shore up infrastructure development, strengthen the economy and create a wealth of employment opportunities.*



## Rail Ki Gati, Desh Ki Pragati

A recent report by the International Energy Efficiency (IEA) states that Indian Railways will account for nearly 40% of the total global rail activity by 2050. The Indian Railways is taking several measures to improve infrastructure and the quality of services.

By 2030, it aims to set in motion 100% electrification of railways, developing a large high-speed train network connecting major cities in India, developing various freight corridors within the country, upgrading existing lines with more advanced facilities and also upgrading railway stations. It is being planned to increase the potential to carry goods at higher speed and at shorter turnaround time with enhanced efficiency.

## Leveraging technology and potential of Artificial Intelligence

The Ministry of Railways is committed to make use of new and emerging technologies to transform Indian Railways. It aims to deploy artificial intelligence, quantum computing and data analytics to improve management of railway assets, enhance efficiency of train schedules and reduce operational costs. By analysing data, it can predict the demand for trains and provide adequate resources, reducing congestion and minimising delays.

India's first bullet train slated to run at the speed of 350 kms per hour is set to start in August 2026. It will run on a 508-km route between Ahmedabad and Mumbai. Identifying new Dedicated Freight Corridors and High-Speed Rail Corridors is being undertaken with constant advancements in technology and inter-connectedness of the railway network.

## The National Railway Plan

The National Railway Plan (NRP) has been unveiled to create a 'future ready' rail system by 2030. It is aimed at transforming Indian Railways by creating capacity ahead of demand and catering to future demand growth up to 2050. The future-ready plan visualises the nation's infrastructure requirements by 2030. It includes a detailed demand projection with capacity utilisation plan based on the needs of people and goods movement in the future.

The primary objective of NRP is to pull up the modal share of railways in freight to an impressive 45%. This requires certain critical projects to be brought on fast track, including 100% electrification of railways, multi-tracking of congested routes and the overall promotion of green energy across Indian Railways.





# India on the Move: Partners in Progress

---



*Siemens has been supporting Indian Railways with its latest technologies by making rail assets smart, sustainable attractive and provide rail transportation solutions that are reliable, safe, sustainable, efficient and cost-effective for social well-being and economic development.*



## A Glorious Legacy

Siemens offers a full range of intelligent and efficient technologies and solutions for passenger and freight transportation, including rail infrastructure and rolling stock. It has its own local state-of-the-art manufacturing facilities, research-based solid engineering know-how and innovative technology solutions.



## Enabling the Wheels of Progress

The Book focuses not only on the history of Indian Railways and its legacy, but also carries soul-stirring stories of encounters of varied generations of people and their experiences while travelling in trains. It also covers the key achievements of Indian Railways and its commitment to keep innovating and serve the nation more.

Every chapter in the Book depicts the unfolding story of Indian Railways since its evolutionary days to its completion of 170 glorious years in 2023.

The Book also captures its evolution as an eco-friendly and energy efficient mode of transportation, and discusses the remarkable achievement of 100% electrification of rail networks as on 31st March, 2023. It discusses how electrification is set to reduce India's dependency on petroleum-based energy and enhance India's energy security. The Book also moves onto what the future holds for Indian Railways.

This is a definite read to enjoy the joyful ride covering important historical moments, stories of nostalgia, and the longstanding collaboration between Indian Railways and Siemens.

## Transforming the Everyday

The locomotive is Indian Railways' response to high growth demand in rail freight transportation, heavy haulage, decarbonisation, energy and resource efficiency. As the inventor of the very first locomotive in 1879, Siemens will bring its 143-year expertise and best-in-class technologies to manufacture the state-of-the-art high horse power locomotives in India. It will be engaged in designing, manufacturing and commissioning the locomotives to carry freight on the rail network across the country. With a total order value of Rs 26,000 crore, the scope of work of the project also includes 35 years of full-service maintenance.





# Crossing Paths. Intertwining Stories.

---



*Every train ride is also an inner journey for travellers. As the **Bharat Bhagya Vidhata**, Indian Railways will continue to connect the musings of people's hearts and the observations of their minds and become the weaver of dreams that evoke millions of stories and creative leaps of innovation.*



## Every motion, evokes endless emotions

Indian Railways is not just a rail network – it is an emotion, a passion. For the sheer joy it brings when you listen to the music of the train running on the metal tracks. When it hustles through the hill ranges and enchantingly passes through the remotest of villages. When you see the faces lightening up when they see the train pulling into the station and waving. When you drink the sweetest Chai you’ve ever had. When it binds together the hope of travellers.



## Nostalgia

A mere mention of the Railways unlocks a chain of thoughts that takes one back to a time when train journeys were an integral part of our lives, whether it was family-related or work-related travel, marriage parties, vacations, pilgrimages, educational trips or sports-related requiring entire teams to travel together.

Indian Railways evoke nostalgia for anyone who has travelled at least once on a train in India. It is like a secure fortress for those out there watching the passing silhouettes of the night through the windows as the train pierces the darkness.

Inside the well-lit compartments, travellers spend quality time with their friends and family. enjoying the hot meals and great camaraderie. Memories of bouncing along those tracks while sipping tea or coffee, enjoying hot meals, catching up on those unfinished novels, or playing games or chatting with strangers evoke nostalgia and a shared bond.

## Pride of the People

The pride that people feel for Indian Railways is undeniable. There is love, devotion and a sense of attachment, feelings that only flow naturally. Just as it satisfies its customers' needs, it also emanates a high level of pride amongst its 1.4 million employees. This profound sense of pride for Indian Railways epitomises the nation's progress and the role played by connectivity in making this achievable.

Time and again, it reinforces public's faith in our ***Bharat Bhagya Vidhata***, the true creator and preserver of the nation's destiny. As an organisation, Indian Railways has pulled off superhuman feats of execution smoothly, repeatedly and on a scalable basis. India bears testimony to the fact that Railways have played a stellar role during any national crisis, including floods, famines, pandemics or wars.



## Weaving Railways into cinema's magic

There is no better example of the magic of Indian Railways adorning stardom than the story of Mahendra Singh Dhoni, the swashbuckling ex-Cricket Captain of India. The movie M. S. Dhoni: The Untold Story shows Dhoni's humble beginnings in the eastern city of Ranchi as he began as a ticket collector in Indian Railways in Kharagpur, West Bengal. He went on to become the incredible Captain Cool and specialised in keeping his calm under pressure. Perhaps he picked up some of his tenacity from Indian Railways, the first organisation he worked for.



The Indian Railways and Indian cinema share a deep and inseparable bond. Trains symbolise the passage of time, serving as a canvas for storytelling, offering a range of human experiences – from love and separation to joy and sorrow. Through its portrayal in cinema, Indian Railways becomes more than just a mode of transport - it becomes a powerful metaphor for life's journey.

Indian Railways has been the subject of many literary, cultural and cinematic representations. Many cultural, political, and socially relevant events have been widely depicted in Indian cinema. Movies on nationalism, independence and partition have used Railways as a source of symbolism.



Indian Railways are also often seen as a backdrop for song-and-dance sequences, capturing the vibrancy and diversity of India. The unique bond between the Railways and Indian Cinema has further strengthened the former's cultural significance and transformed into memories and anecdotes narrated by millions of cinema-goers and train travellers.





# Travellers of Trains

---



*Amidst the rhythmic clatter of wheels on tracks, Indian Railways carries the stories of a nation's past, present, and future, a timeless journey etched in the collective memory. The wheels of Indian Railways weave together the fabric of a nation's history, connecting hearts and homes across the vast landscape.*

Through the haze of nostalgia, the whistle's haunting echo resonates, reminding us of shared journeys, dreams, and the enduring spirit of a nation that has travelled its tracks, carving profound tales of unity and progress in the tapestry of time.

India's extensive rail network connects its vast landscapes and weaves a mosaic of stories, cultures, and experiences. Join us on this remarkable railway adventure as we traverse the sub-continent through passengers' eyes and as they tell their unique and interesting stories on train travel.





## Growing up with Indian Railways

*Indian Railways, with its ubiquitous presence among many childhoods in India, carries with it a treasure trove of nostalgic moments.*

*We take an effort to revisit the cherished experiences and heartwarming stories defining several interesting stories of railway journeys experienced by the younger generation in India.*

## Magical and Captivating Childhood Train Journeys

Railway journeys were a regular feature in my childhood. Each year, I boarded the Amritsar Mail from Howrah to Lucknow, where my Dadaji and Dadiji lived. It was an overnight journey, loaded with interesting experiences. We invariably made friends with our co-travellers. Meal times became a treat for the senses with interesting aromas wafting within the train compartment.

Typically, the food that came out of the multi-layered lunch boxes from the railway pantry represented a fair mix of communities across the nation. The constant chatter of our co-travellers could be heard in different languages and dialects, while we feasted on Aloo Dum with Luchis, Parathas and Thheplas, with pickles in mouth-watering flavours.

The upper and lower berths became our playground. They resembled bunk beds as we climbed up and down these berths endlessly. The squeals of laughter that accompanied our acrobatics often came to an abrupt halt with the sudden arrival of the uniformed Ticket Checker.

The train halted at regular intervals. We looked forward to the arrival of each railway station, which was associated with something specific in our minds. For example, Howrah station was linked to the Wheeler Bookstore, as we would get to buy a book for the journey from this store. At Bardhaman station, we always purchased sweets. At Buxar station, which arrived in the morning, we got Omlettes for breakfast. At Mughalsarai Junction, the Banarasi Langda mangoes became our favourite.

Upon reaching Lucknow railway station, we had to literally contain our excitement in the anticipation of meeting our Grandparents. My Dadaji worked with Indian Railways his entire work life. And he would always ask us about our train journey. It felt as if we were his “customers” and he was somehow personally responsible for our train journey to be impeccable. He was attentive to every detail of our travel experience that we shared with him.

The romance with the Railways continued at our Grandparents’ house as well. The house was filled with miniature locomotives and wagon models that my Dadaji had collected during his entire career with Railways. He would often play with us, with me becoming a budding engineer with Indian Railways in the game. Those train journeys became an integral part of my growing up years, similar to magical and captivating bookends for each of my vacations.

**- Shiv Siddhant Kaul**  
**Chairman, CII Eastern Region**





## Taking Train Journeys from Mumbai to Udupi

Some of my earliest memories of train journeys go back to my summer vacations. We visited our native place at Udupi in Karnataka. Our large and extended family of uncles, aunts and cousins always took the annual train journey together from Mumbai to Udupi. All the youngsters dreamt about this trip well in advance and also made exciting plans. The Hindi movie song, *"Gaadi bula rahi hai, Seeti baja rahi hai,"* captures the mood.

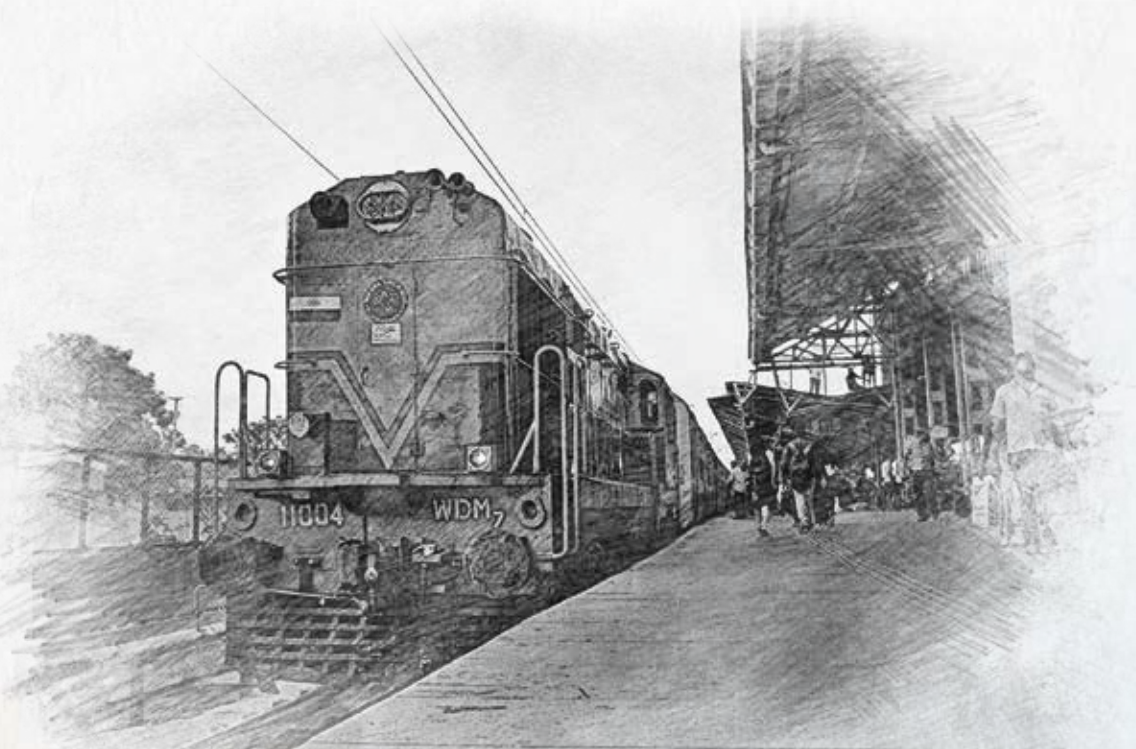
And sure enough, our journeys were as memorable as the excitement leading up to it. We chatted, played Antakshari or cards till late in the night. The laughter and the camaraderie of us all was truly infectious. Our co-travellers and their families also joined in at times. And while we were busy creating cherished memories, we also made new friends on these journeys. Our childhood train journeys hugely memorable and we still talk about them even now as our extended family gets together during family reunions.

Our train journeys fostered a warm and friendly atmosphere. Our Moms and Aunts continued the tradition of packing home-cooked lunch or dinner for these journeys. We shared the delicious food within the group and also with our fellow travellers.

The long journey from Mumbai to Udupi offered a breathtaking scenery of tunnels, rivers, beaches and forests. Reaching Murudeshwar station and catching a glimpse of the grand statue of Lord Shiva was an awe-inspiring experience during each journey.

As we are currently planning another trip to Udupi with my cousins next month, I'm truly excited to relive those beautiful times of the past. Bittersweet feelings greet the memories of a time gone by. But we realise that Indian Railways is standing by as usual, and now stronger than ever, to enable us to relive our beautiful memories.

*- Roshan Hegde*



## Proud of having Contributed to a Railway Project

During my childhood, nothing was quite as interesting as our train journeys. Mostly, these journeys were about watching through the window the scenery that passed by. Each time I travelled by train, I felt sad when the trip ended.

In December 2012, I went on a Railways project as a Project Manager, which required me to stay on the train for an entire month. Our journey began in Lucknow and we went all the way till Mumbai, visiting places like Kanpur, Delhi, Ratlam, Kota, Surat, and Vadodara, and then circled back to Lucknow.

The inside of the train was built in the form of a comfortable home setting and we were served exquisite food prepared by a cook. As part of this project, we conducted an in-depth analysis of the railway track conditions on these routes to evaluate the ride performance of bogies. We also used advanced technologies such as lasers, cameras, and ultrasonic sensors to gather detailed data on the tracks.

This special train on which we travelled during the day was parked during night time. We got used to the sound of wheels, engine whistling, and the passing of landscape's panoramic views. Sometimes, as there were delays in permission for movement of this train, we spent 2-3 days at a particular location. As we progressed along the track, we continued to gather data, which was to be analysed later to determine the track's overall condition.

The journey was long and, at times it was tedious, but we knew the importance of work to be done for the project. We are immensely proud to be able to contribute our efforts to the running of Indian Railways, which serves millions of people travelling on these tracks all year round.

*- Shahwaz Ahmed Khan*

## Pride in the world's Fourth-Largest Railway System

As an Automobile Engineer, I wasn't a big railway fan until I joined the Rolling Stock industry. I knew India was a large automobile market, but I was surprised and also proud to learn that India also had the 4th largest railway system globally.

Despite not being a rail enthusiast initially, I've travelled extensively on Indian Railways due to its affordability and convenience. Some incidents stand out, like arguing with a ticket conductor, bonding with strangers over food and shared thoughts, and facing challenges like fighting for luggage space or experiencing theft during a journey.

One such memorable journey was on Rajdhani Express from Delhi to Bangalore with my college batch of 60 students for an industry tour. We had a blast during this journey playing cards and with some students playing the guitar. Even the college professor joined in the fun during this journey.

Another exciting journey was on the historic Pamban Bridge, India's first sea bridge enroute to Rameswaram from Madurai. Today, I am really proud to be a part of the Rolling Stock industry and cherish all the memories of my rail adventures.

*- Saurabh Kumar Garg*





## Connecting People and Emotions

Trains don't just connect places, it connects people and emotions as well. They become the cause of joy when loved ones meet. Trains evoke excitement among travellers as they explore new places or convey relief as travellers safely reach their homes, especially during the times of COVID-19. In its 170 years of existence, the Indian Railways have undoubtedly witnessed countless emotions.

I remember one such memorable trip to Himachal Pradesh with my college friends. It was our first long trip with friends in a very long time, hence the excitement was palpable. We boarded the train from Panvel. But as our exams were round the corner, nervousness had to be warded off occasionally. Yet, our enthusiasm soared as we all decided to make the 24-hour journey unforgettable.

There was not even a single moment during our journey which was dull. Our co-passengers were very sporting and indulged with us affectionately. We conversed with them and also played board games and dumb charades, and sang songs. We all friends walked through the various compartments from one end of the train to the other. Getting off at different railway stations to click photos and to savour different varieties of food added to our railway adventure. It was indeed a train journey that we will always cherish.

**- Omkar Shinde**



## Annual Train Trips to visit Grandparents

Indian Railways has a special place in my heart, evoking nostalgic memories of childhood vacations as we visited our grandmother every year. The excitement before we took this train journey was truly magical and train travel had a magical effect.

Let me share some experiences of my journey. As we arrived at our small-town railway station, the distant train whistle heightened the anticipation. I boarded the coach and aimed to get a window seat to enjoy the picturesque views during the journey.

Train journeys and snacks are inseparable. Peanuts were our mandatory train snack. We enjoyed a delicious homemade meal from the lunch box packed by my mother always during the long halt at Bareilly.

During a maintenance stop, my father who was an Engineer introduced me to the workings of the railway engine, igniting my curiosity about engineering at a young age. The complexities of an engine filled me with huge wonder.

The train whistle marked the final stretch to our grandmother's house, adding to the mix of excitement and sadness as the train journey neared its end.

**- Shivam Shrivastav**

## Trapped on the Journey

In my college days, during semester breaks, I used to take a train from Delhi to my home city, Bhopal. On one such occasion, the journey was quite an adventure. I boarded the train with my bag, hoping for a peaceful ride to my destination. Boy, was I wrong!

As soon as the train started moving, a group entered my compartment and played their musical instruments. At first, I was impressed by their skills, but soon, I realised they would not stop anytime soon.

To make matters worse, a man beside me started sharing his life story. He told me everything from his childhood to his current job, and I just couldn't find a way to escape. He would speak continuously for 5-10 minutes and then pause to ask me something. After 10-15 seconds of my reply, he would interrupt me again to repeat the cycle.

Those were the most testing 12 hours of all my journeys. Sometimes, I can still hear the concoction of that music and that gentleman's persistent autobiographical monologues in my head.

**- Rahul Nayak**





## A Kanya having Boarded Konkan Kanya

‘Rail-Gaadi...Zuk-zuk-zuk-zuk Rail-Gadi.’

My childhood memories included singing such rail-based songs, with me as the railway engine and my friends playing the train carts, and running like a train with all of them in tow. Many of these childhood memories and train songs make me smile even today.

As a Mumbai girl, I was acquainted with local trains. But as a kid, the first long-distance train journey I experienced was the one on Konkan Kanya. The monsoon had set in. I looked forward to this journey to my hometown near Chiplun. The tracks wound their way through the green mountains of the Western Ghats. The scenery seemed as perfect as a painting, which made me a devoted fan of the window seat.

As the train halted at Ratnagiri station, my father got off and stood outside my window on the platform. I started panicking that the train would soon start and he would be left behind. My fears came true as the train actually started moving, with him still outside on the platform and I was in tears. He took a few hurried steps and boarded the train. I heaved a sigh of relief when he came and sat next to me on the berth, and asked him how he managed to board a moving train.

As the train halted at Ratnagiri station, my father got off and stood outside my window on the platform. I started panicking that the train would soon start and he would be left behind. My fears came true as the train actually started moving, with him still outside on the platform and I was in tears. He took a few hurried steps and boarded the train. I heaved a sigh of relief when he came and sat next to me on the berth, and asked him how he managed to board a moving train.

For the little girl in me, the train’s interconnected carts were also thrilling. It made the Konkan Kanya experience even more memorable. Gradually,

as I grew older, the mesmerising natural beauty on this journey increased my interest in the art of photography.

To me, a train journey resembles life. As the railway stations pass by one after the other, so does life, and both keep moving and motivating themselves and those around.

*- Akshaya Patade*



## An Adventurous, yet Enjoyable, Journey

Driving around any railway station in India evokes many bitter and sweet memories for me. During my college days, we frequently travelled from Mumbai to Pune by train. One such evening, we missed our usual Deccan Queen train and were stuck at Kalyan Railway Station, waiting for the next train to Pune.

We finally managed to squeeze into a crowded train and somehow reached Lonavala. While the train was still at the station, we spotted a slower and less-crowded train for Pune at on the adjoining platform. We thought of boarding the other train as we will at least get to sit. We decided to jump onto the tracks, cross them, climb onto the next platform, and board the other train.

This sounded easy, right?

Well, as it turned out, it wasn't that easy. We had failed to account for several things. One, it was close to midnight, the station was barely lit, and the tracks even less so. Secondly, there was a gutter between the two tracks, which we realised when one of us jumped right into it!

Not only were his trousers soiled, he also lost one of his footwear. Finally, we managed to pull him out onto the platform and he boarded the waiting train barefoot. Somehow, he managed to clean his clothes a little, and we finally reached Pune well after 1 a.m.

This was a train journey to remember surely. When I decided to write about my train experiences, this particular memory came rushing back to me.

*- Sameer Chivate*







## City Diaries

*Indian Railways serves as a lifeline connecting bustling cities, towns and villages, often unveiling the daily dramas, diverse lives and vibrant cultures that thrive along the rail tracks, painting a vivid and vibrant portrait of India's railway cities.*

## A Big Lesson learnt for Life

On a lazy August afternoon in 1997, as I was returning from Mumbai CST to Vashi, I dozed off after securing a seat on the train.

As the train gathered speed after it halted at Vashi, I woke up with a start. As warning bell rang in my head that I was supposed to get off at Vashi, the train was already pulling away from the station.

On a sudden reflex, I picked up my belongings and disembarked the running train, but in the opposite direction to its movement. As soon as I had done this, I realised my mistake, but thankfully, people on the platform held me and helped me break my fall and stay on my feet.

What followed after this were angry voices of bystanders on the platform. They shouted at me for taking the stupid decision of getting off on a running train. And there I was, embarrassed and shocked, not knowing what to do.

I realised my rash and sudden action of getting off from a moving train, that too facing the opposite direction to the train's movement, could have literally cost me my life. I broke into a sweat as I walked towards the overbridge still in shock.

Since then, every time I cross Vashi station, I am instantly reminded of this episode, which could easily have turned into a big disaster, but for the grace of God and quickness of the bystanders.

*- Manjula Nair*

## Small Things Matter - Thank You, Delhi Metro!

In 2012, once as I was travelling on the Delhi Metro with my wife and daughter, we were waiting with our shopping bags at the Lajpat Nagar Metro station. That day, we had purchased a new pair of sandals for our little daughter. While boarding the Metro, the new sandals fell through the gap between the train and the platform onto the rail tracks.

We then approached the Delhi Metro authorities and they helped us retrieve the sandals from the tracks. On another occasion, I contacted the Delhi Metro about my lunch box, which I had left on the train. The authorities found the box and got me to pick it up.

The patient and smiling faces of Railway officials motivates us further to care for our fellow citizens.

*- Ashish Khandelwal*





## Getting Nostalgic and sharing Unbreakable Bonds

There is something quite nostalgic about Indian Railways as they take me back to some of the best times of my daily commute during my 20-year work life. The train journeys were truly the fun part. Mobile phones hadn't yet become a distraction back then. I enjoyed making friends on trains and bonding with them. Many of those instances and interactions reinforced my faith in the goodness of human nature.

I still remember the first time I boarded a local train. The massive crowds inside were unnerving initially. But the Indian Railways embrace everyone. People come together, even in crowded compartments, and find space to stand and breathe. They commute to work on a daily basis and use the train back home to live their daily lives and to raise their families.

Gradually, my fear disappeared. I often managed to secure the prized window seat in the local train. I also made friends with fellow commuters, and we all

bonded over birthdays, festivals, chaat parties. We sang songs, shared jokes and supported each other through life's ups and downs. Although I don't travel as often now, when I see ladies giggling and talking on the train it leads to nostalgia and brings back those special memories. I miss those good old times and the unbreakable bonds formed during my journeys. I do occasionally meet some of my train friends, and we all laugh together as we reminisce about the beautiful memories created during our daily commute.

I am truly proud and feel privileged to be working with Siemens, a company that constantly improves train journeys for travellers, and helps create lasting memories for future generations. For me, Indian Railways will always be the best mode of transport. After all, this is where I found my second family.

*- Deepa Dias*

## Mumbai's Trains evoke Navrasa and Spiritual Journeys

For over 12 years, the legendary Mumbai local trains were my frequent companion as I took several journeys which were rich in spiritual experience, and also helped in immense learning and growth. Among other nuances of spirituality and meditation, Railways also represented Navarasa, the nine emotions, deeply connected to these memories.

- Shringara (Beauty): Truly a sight to behold, I remember the breathtaking view of the misty hills on the horizon on rainy days.
- Hasya (Laughter): The laughter and jokes I shared with my friends on Mumbai's local trains shall remain etched in my heart forever.
- Karuna (Sorrow): I have witnessed some unfortunate accidents on rail tracks, and I can recall those images even today when I think of the incidents.
- Rudra (Anger): An announcement on the public address system that a train scheduled to arrive on Platform No. 1 will now arrive on Platform No. 8 can trigger annoyance and anger in some people.
- Veera (Courage): Senior citizens and even pregnant women boarding a local train during rush hours is sheer courage in action.

- Bhaya (Fear): I have witnessed panic and fear in the eyes of a boy who got separated from his mother in a crowded train. A co-traveller lifted the wailing boy above other passengers' heads for his mother to be able to spot him. Before the next station arrived, the two were united with the help of others.
- Vibhatsa (Disgust): During a journey, foul odour permeated when a drunk man vomited inside the compartment. It tested people's tolerance as we all cringed in disgust.
- Ashcharya (Wonder): Getting a window seat during the morning rush hour was terrific, but a near impossibility. Each time I managed to get a window seat, it made my day magical.
- Shanti (Peace): Peace descends as one boards the last local train of the day. It is an indirect signal that in the end, when it is time to rest, there is only peace.

I am immensely proud of the Indian Railways and its immense significant contribution to my life.

*- Jitesh Gaikawad*



## Reliving Childhood Memories on India's Toy Trains

The Indian Railways is not merely a mode of transportation for travellers. On a much larger canvas, it is a feeling of cohesion, a sentimental attachment to one's childhood memories of trains and a form of oneness that brings India together—celebrating the remarkable 170 years of Indian Railways. There are five "Toy Train Services," and I have been lucky to have experienced 3 of them!

Going down the memory lane, I remember the post-college trip on the Kalka-Shimla train. We created beautiful memories on the heartwarming journey continued with the Kalka-Shimla Toy Train, a UNESCO World Heritage. The sights on this journey were nothing short of heavenly.

The magical Darjeeling Toy Train took us from Kurseong to Darjeeling, bringing our childhood alive. The train passed through local markets and residential neighbourhoods, cutting across little treelined streets and eventually reaching one of India's highest railway stations, Ghoom. The railway station is surrounded by fog and clouds, depicting a scene from a fairytale.

During my Ooty trip, the Nilgiri Mountain Railway enabled me to witness Mother Nature's mesmerising beauty as we witnessed the mountains, the Nilgiri tree line, and the 16 tunnels.

I look forward to soon taking the journey on the other two toy trains, the Kangra Valley and the Matheran Hill Railway.

**- Ashwani Kumar Gupta**



## When Mumbai Local came to my Rescue

As is rightly said, one hasn't experienced the real Mumbai and its flavour unless you have travelled on its local trains.

Once, during my college examination, I boarded a Mumbai local train to reach the centre. I reached there well in time, but when I looked for my admit card to enter the examination building, to my ultimate horror, I realised it wasn't there. I looked for it frantically, and then realised I may have left it back home.

I felt the pinpricks of panic all over my body. After it subsided, I motioned to the invigilator and told her about my plight. I was granted 45 minutes to produce the admit card, and was told I would get 30 minutes extra time to complete my exam once I come back with the card.

I called home immediately and informed my mother where she would find my admit card. A friend of mine agreed to take the next local train and bring me the admit card. And sure enough, thanks to our beloved "Mumbai local", I had the admit card in my hand in 35 minutes flat. I was not only allowed to sit for the exam, but also passed to the next level.

Whenever I board a local train, I wonder about the millions of such stories that may have accumulated in people's hearts all these years.

At Siemens, we partner with the Indian Railways to provide millions of passengers with a safe and comfortable journey year on year and help them create and cherish such beautiful stories full of hope.

**- Irfan Poonawala**





# Discovering Humanity in Mumbaikars in Local Trains

Daily commuters on Mumbai's local trains end up making commute buddies. Such groups of friends are loyal to one another and share an unbreakable bond. They not only secure seats for each other on crowded trains, but also support each other in arguments or maintain a sense of rivalry with other groups of travellers. When seats are a prized possession, commuters believe rivalries can be a survival strategy.

On a rainy July morning in 2004, I was boarding my regular train at the last minute. My train friends waved at me as I boarded, and one of my friends pointed at the seat next to hers that she had reserved for me. Our rival group was seated at the other end of the compartment, and some of them turned to watch me non-committally as I entered.

As the train bounced along toward Mumbai, the downpour intensified. We eyed our rival group from time to time. By the time we approached Ghatkopar, the train was crawling very slowly. Soon afterwards, as the tracks were further waterlogged, the train stopped plying.

We spent nearly three hours in that stuffy environment playing a game of Antakshari and doing other things. A scream from the other side of the compartment broke the silence in the compartment. One of the girls from the rival group became unconscious and needed medical help. My friend, who is also a medical student friend, rushed to help the girl, and she was made to recline on a seat. My friend checked her medically and we all arranged water and chocolates for her to restore her rising sugar levels. Our only goal and objective at that point in time was to help the girl regain consciousness.

Gradually, the barrier between the two rival groups tore apart, and we were all smiles and greeted each other in relief. As co-travellers in the Indian Railway system, we had the feeling of being united. We soon became lifelong friends and gelled together to celebrate a monsoon picnic every July since that year.

*- Mitali Chitnis*

# Slippers in River Chambal and River Mej

Well, this incident happened more than 50 years ago. When my Papa and my Tauji (my father's elder brother) were in their teens, they travelled an hour's journey from Kota to Lakheri by a local train pulled by a steam engine. They both settled near the door and also removed their slippers to get comfortable. There were two rivers to be crossed on the journey. The first was Chambal, which came as soon as the train left Kota Junction. The second river Mej came just before Lakheri station.

As the train was about to cross Chambal, Papa noticed that one of his slippers was missing. They both searched for it under the seat and also near the door, but couldn't find it. Tauji said, "What will you do with only one slipper now?" My Papa, on an impulse, threw the second slipper into the Chambal as the train crossed the river. With a heavy heart, Papa realised he will have to go home barefoot. Soon, their conversation moved to other subjects.

As the train was about to reach its Lakheri station, they got up to alight and also picked up their luggage. Just then, Papa exclaimed, "There it is!" pointing to his slipper, a part of which could be seen stuck behind the door. Tauji said, "What are you going to do with only one slipper now?" At that time, the train was crossing River Mej. it was like history repeating itself as the recently found slipper flew out of the door and fell into the river.

Meanwhile, Tauji looked for his pair of slippers and wore them.

As they disembarked from the train, Papa laughed uncontrollably pointing at Tauji's slippers.

'What is it?' Tauji asked.

'Your slippers are of different colours!' exclaimed Papa.

*- Ajit Kumar Sharma*

# Treasuring Heartfelt Memories in Kolkata Metro

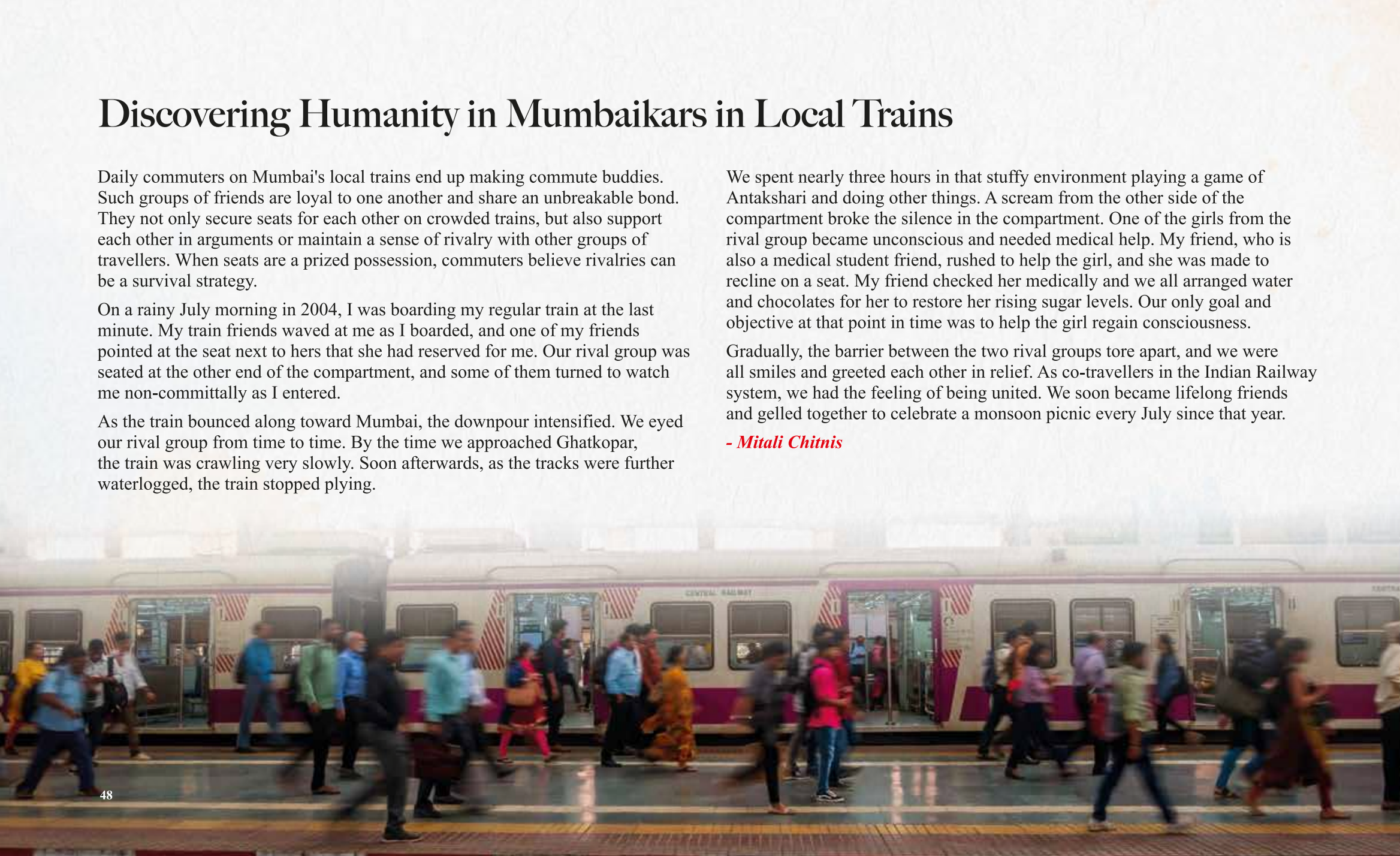
Reliving the precious memories of my father and I travelling together on Kolkata Metro is close to my heart. Growing up in Kolkata, I always associated the Metro with the beloved character 'Thomas the Train.'

The launch of the Kolkata Metro was an event to remember in the history of Indian Railways. Over the years, it has become an integral of people's lives, including my family. Though I lost my dad over two decades ago, I treasure the fond memories of our family trips on the Metro. The weekend joyrides in those air-conditioned coaches always felt like a special treat, bonding us closer as we explored the city and savoured street food together.

Even today, the Kolkata Metro brings back cherished moments and helps me keep my Dad alive in my heart. It's incredible how the Metro is woven into the fabric of the city's growth, dating back to the 1920s when it was first planned.

Being closely involved with the Kolkata Metro, Siemens contributes to transforming the everyday lives of the ordinary people in India, and I am very proud to be a part of it.

*- Marina Patrao*







## Travelling on Legends

*Stories of Travelling in Rajdhani  
or Vande Bharat*

*Trains like Rajdhani Express and  
Vande Bharat are iconic symbols of  
speed, luxury, and efficiency in  
Indian rail travel. Step aboard as we  
unveil captivating narratives and  
memorable adventures that unfold  
within the confines of these  
celebrated locomotives.*

## My Fan Moment with the Indian Railways

I am a big fan of the Indian Railways. However, compared to other train services, I am somewhat biased towards Rajdhani Express. I remember my journeys from Mumbai to Vadodara by the Rajdhani Express with great fondness. Now that I have been transferred to a different work location, I miss those journeys dearly.

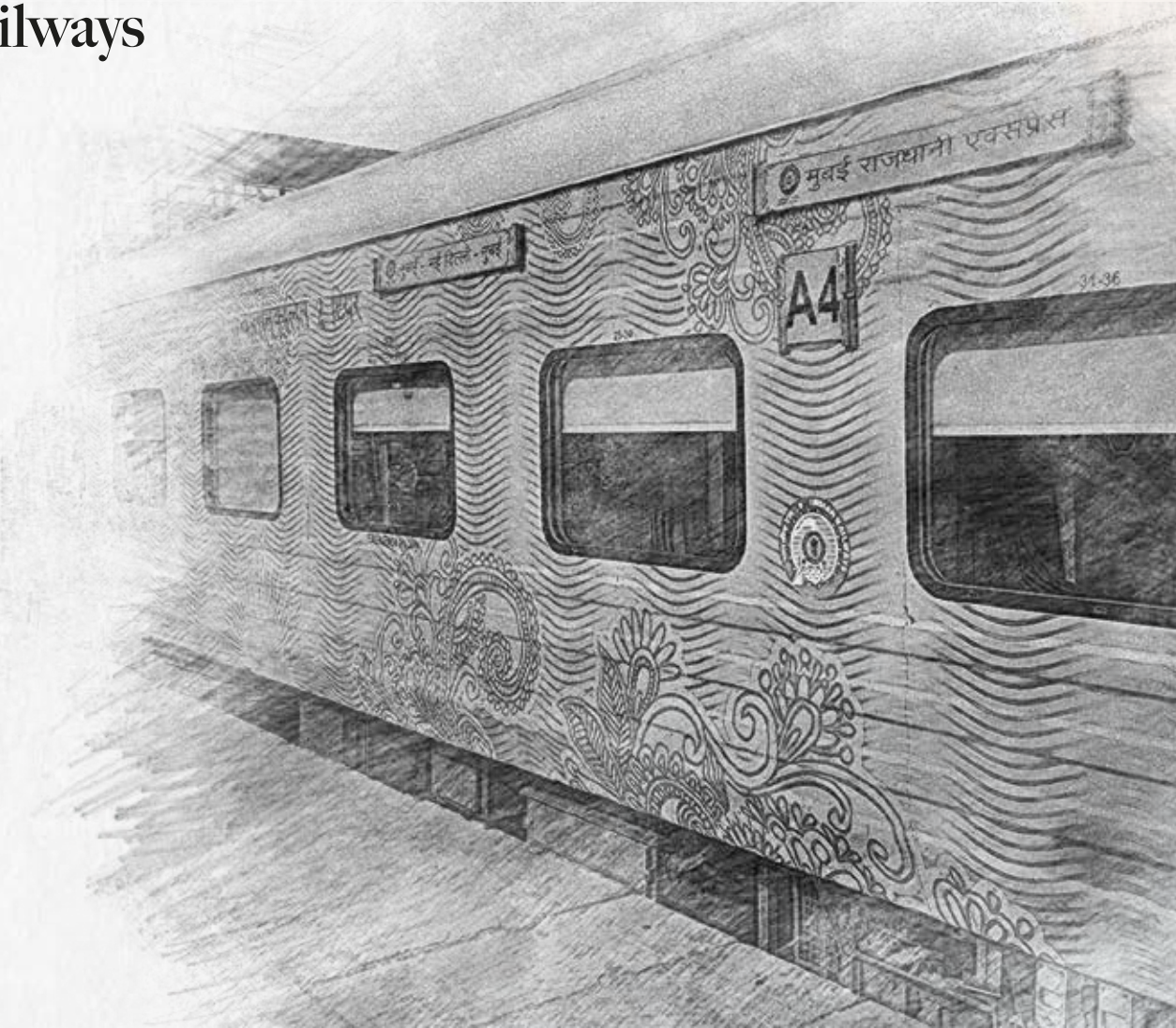
When I was young, I was always curious to see the WAP-7 electric engine used for Rajdhani Express trains from Howrah or Mumbai. Once when I travelled from Mumbai Central to Vadodara by Rajdhani Express, I walked to the front of the train to check the engine. It was a long walk from my compartment, but I went nonetheless.

As I walked, I watched the heavy metallic wheels on the rails. They looked rugged and ready. I noticed the thickness of the coloured glass windowpanes on each car. I could faintly make out the faces of travellers that peered through them.

When I reached the front, I witnessed what I had been longing to lay my eyes on. It was the powerful engine of a Rajdhani Express. It was purring like a fabulous young beast, restless to start its journey. I noticed that WAP-7s had replaced WAP-4s and the diesels before them.

I returned to my compartment, invigorated from the experience of seeing the locomotive. I then noticed the linen in Rajdhani was sparkling clean and the staff was very courteous. That is what is expected of this premium category train service by the Indian Railways. It's a long-distance, super-comfortable train with limited stops and runs at a maximum speed of 130-140 kilometres per hour. Currently, 24 pairs of Rajdhani trains are operated by Indian Railways all over Mumbai.

*- Rajagopalan, Ranganathan*





## A Vande Bharat journey that I still cherish

It was a special moment for me as I travelled in the driver's cabin of Vande Bharat. Since childhood, I have always travelled on Indian Railways with my family and friends. I have a storehouse of great railway memories that I truly cherish. These memories are triggered as I sometimes spot trains passing before me. But the journey I will narrate to you is the most remarkable.

The Vande Bharat from Mumbai to Gandhinagar had its inaugural run on 30th September, 2022. My family was equally excited as we planned our journey on 8th October and planned to return on 10th October.

On the day of our journey, we reached Mumbai Central Station at 5:30 a.m. in the morning. The atmosphere was electrifying as people flocked around the Vande Bharat train parked on the central platform. They clicked photos of the train and selfies with Vande Bharat in the background. There was a buzz of anticipation in the air.

The unique design of the Vande Bharat train is such that passengers can go right up to the driver's cabin. The railway authorities even permitted some passengers to go to the driver's cabin and click photos. That's when my son and I went there too and clicked pictures to our heart's content.

As the departure time approached, we returned back to our coach and took our designated seats. After a fabulous journey, we got off at Ahmedabad. I decided that during our return journey, I will try to enter the driver's cabin while the train was in motion.

On 10th of October, we boarded the executive coach of Vande Baharat at Ahmedabad to return back to Mumbai. When the train reached Baroda, I approached the driver's cab. Other engineers were on board and monitoring the train's technical parameters on the display panel.

I started conversing with the engineers on technical matters. They seemed suitably impressed. After a while, I requested them to allow me to travel in the driver's cab for some time. The request was passed on to the train manager.

The next 40 minutes of my life were among the most memorable ever. I travelled the 90-kilometre stretch from Baroda to Surat in the driver's cab. I was also allowed to do a video shoot on my phone. The train was running at a speed of around 120 kilometres per hour. Crossing the long Narmada Bridge was an experience that I especially cherished during that journey. I returned to my seat at Surat.

The time I spent on Vande Bharat will always remain fresh with me in my mind. It is a memory that I'll truly cherish for the rest of my life.

**- N. Manoj Katira**







## My First Train Journey

*The inaugural train ride is a cherished milestone for several people, offering a blend of excitement, awe and anticipation.*

*Join us as we recount the vivid memories and transformative experiences of the unforgettable maiden voyages on India's extensive rail network. We take an effort to revisit the cherished experiences and heartwarming stories defining several interesting stories of railway journeys experienced by the younger generation in India.*

## Pilgrimage to Mata Vaishno Devi

This is the story of an unforgettable experience in my life. It was my first pilgrimage with my parents and other relatives. We travelled from Ahmedabad to Katra in Jammu for our onward journey to the shrine of Mata Vaishno Devi.

The trip taught me several valuable lessons. The journey took around 56 hours, a time filled with a sense of divine wonder. My kids were travelling by train for the first time. Their enthusiasm added an extra sparkle to the trip.

All through the journey, we experimented with food and food photography. We also clicked photos of the natural beauty we passed on our way. Our lively travel group members also frequently posed for our camera. We knew the memories we were creating would be cherished by us forever.

I can't express enough how grateful I am even today for this incredible journey. The trip has left an indelible mark in my mind.

And I feel blessed to have experienced this special journey and trip with my loved ones. It was a journey filled with affection, faith and lots of discovery, which will always be treasured.

*- Maharshi Upadhyay*





## A Special Encounter with a Special Kind of Passenger

It was 1 a.m. on a July night in Mumbai, and I was still waiting for my train. This was the first time I was travelling to my hometown alone. Anxiety and excitement overwhelmed me on that uncharacteristically chilly night. The constant rain amidst gusty winds hadn't relented for a few days.

The train finally pulled into the station, and I boarded my second AC compartment. It looked unusually vacant.

Someone was sleeping in my cabin. As I stowed my luggage under the lower berth, I accidentally toppled my water bottle. It fell with a thud, prompting my co-traveller to come out from under the sheets she had covered herself with.

She looked to be in her mid-twenties. She was wearing black jeans and a green top, and her hair was a mess. The sound of the water bottle startled her as she frantically groped for something around her. She was looking for her purse. She reached into it and ensured things were the way she had kept them. Once satisfied, she calmed down.

I apologised for waking her up in the night and began settling down. I, too, was a bit shaken up by the sudden encounter. I managed to mumble my name to her to introduce myself. I saw her from the corner of my eye. She returned my look with a blank stare.

Since she had been sleeping, I asked her if I could switch on the light in the cabin.

"Can't you see, that I can't see?" she mumbled.

The reality struck me. I quickly apologised and decided to retire on my berth for the night.

I felt something brush past my toes. I woke up and noticed my co-passenger was struggling to move towards the washroom.

I asked her nervously if I could help her.

She nodded in the affirmative.

While she was gone, I wondered if I should go to sleep or help her when she came out of the washroom. I decided to stay awake, but with my eyes closed. I was craving for sleep. But as I lay there, I realised my hesitance was due to my shyness around young women. Given my age, I was still figuring these things out. I was in the middle of all these thoughts, I noticed that she walked past me and went towards the next cabin.

"Excuse me!" I called out to her.

She heard me and stopped mid-way. Turning back, she managed to find her way back to our cabin.

After we settled and I was all set to go to sleep again, I heard her soft voice in the darkness. "Good night, Aman."

"Good night...?" I managed.

"Priya," she said.

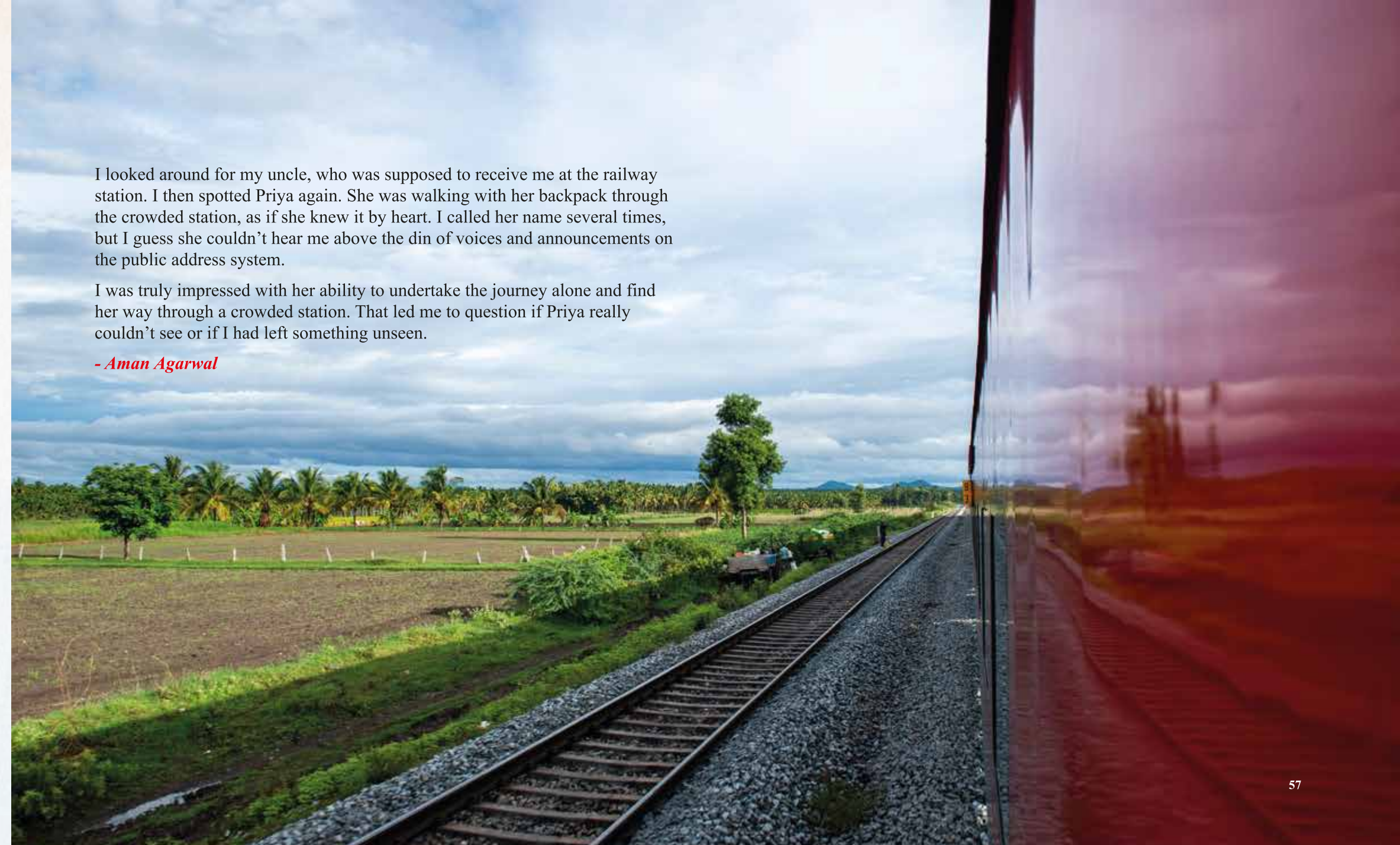
The following day, we got up around 8 a.m. and freshened up. It was still an hour to reach our destination, hence Priya started chatting with me. She wanted to know what I was doing, what I was studying and my plans for the future.

We soon reached our destination. We alighted from the train together and bid each other goodbye. Priya smiled before walking away.

I looked around for my uncle, who was supposed to receive me at the railway station. I then spotted Priya again. She was walking with her backpack through the crowded station, as if she knew it by heart. I called her name several times, but I guess she couldn't hear me above the din of voices and announcements on the public address system.

I was truly impressed with her ability to undertake the journey alone and find her way through a crowded station. That led me to question if Priya really couldn't see or if I had left something unseen.

*- Aman Agarwal*





## My First Train Journey

I remember my first train journey to Delhi when I was 10 years old. It was during my summer vacation with my family, and we hopped on to the Mangala Express from Ratnagiri. The mix of excitement and nervousness made it a memorable experience.

As the train chugged along, I was amazed by the beautiful scenery passing by – the green fields, charming villages and serene rivers. At one of the stations, my parents bought me a toy train, which kept me happily occupied throughout the journey.

As the night fell, I snuggled into the comfortable sleeper berth, falling asleep to the rhythmic motion of the train. The following day we arrived in Delhi, and my uncle had come to welcome us at the station. We were all thrilled to begin our exciting summer vacation.

That journey on the Mangala Express marked the beginning of my unforgettable train journeys, always filled with new adventures and cherished memories. These journeys of my childhood will always carry a special place in my heart.

*- Chaitanya Kulkarni*

## Learning an Important Lesson!

I've been away from home for almost a decade, and trains have always been my go-to mode of transport for returning home. One particular incident stands out in my mind! It was during my summer vacation when I was in the second grade. I was travelling to Daund with my cousin, uncle, and aunt, who was a Railway Magistrate from my hometown, Solapur. We also had a Railway Protection Force (RPF) official accompanying us.

It was our first-ever 2-tier AC journey, and we were thrilled to be in a sleeper coach. During the trip, my cousin and I decided to collect a souvenir. We spotted a loose screw, and the excitement led us to take it as a souvenir. Little did we know the trouble it would bring! My uncle and aunt playfully made us believe that we damaged railway property and might end up in jail. The whole drama left us scared and sobbing, but it became a lesson in responsibility. We learned not to mess with things we don't understand and that adults can be pretty convincing! Looking back, it brings a mix of relief and laughter.

*- Yashashri Gavai*







## Lifelong Bond

*For countless individuals in India, the Railways is not just a mode of transport, but also a lifelong companion.*

*Come, explore the deep-rooted connections, enduring tales, and unbreakable love that binds people to this iconic railway network throughout their lives.*

## Understanding the Strength of Love

Once on a train journey, I noticed this elderly man sitting alone and lost in his own thoughts. Out of curiosity, I spoke with him and learnt that he was travelling to meet his granddaughter after many years. His son was busy with work and couldn't take him along, hence he was travelling all alone with eagerness and anticipation.

During our conversation, he shared stories of his simple and sweet life in the village, his love for farming, and his wife. He spoke fondly of his family, especially his granddaughter, whose photos he carried in a treasured album.

When he accidentally dropped the album, I picked it up, and he got very emotional, explaining its significance to him. He had actually planned to give the album to his granddaughter as a special gift.

As we reached his station, he was visibly nervous. He thanked me for the conversation and left the train. I watched him from the train embracing his granddaughter on the platform, showing her the album, and their joyous reunion brought tears to my eyes.

The experience reminded me of the power of family and the enduring strength of love, even as we face challenges and from a long distance. This learning has stayed with me forever.

*- Aishwarya Nimmagadda*

## The Railways Connect Us All

The simple act of sharing a meal with strangers on the train taught me how to create connections and community. The railway connects us to the beauty of our surroundings and the people we share it with. It reminds me that we are all connected.

*- Sushil Akkavar*





## Saluting Indian Railways for its Integral Part in my Life

Indian railways have always been an integral part of my life, with almost 50% of my time spent travelling on trains. Whether for personal or business trips to different parts of the country, trains have always been my most comfortable and safest choice of travel.

I have witnessed the incredible transformation of Indian Railways from meter gauge to broad gauge, diesel to electric locomotives, and manual ticketing to user-friendly online platforms, such as Windows, for online ticket booking. Siemens continues to play a pivotal role in technological advancement of Indian Railways, making customers their central focus.

Now as I live in Mumbai, I make a special mention of local trains that I rely on for my daily office commute. These local trains have transformed countless lives, powering various industries in the financial capital of India.

Without trains, my life would have been incomplete, and I wouldn't be where I am today. I salute the Indian Railways and Siemens for being an indispensable part of my journey.

*- Ramanathan Ulaganathan*



## Yeh Dosti Hum Nahi Todenge

Indian Railways has always been a beautiful and inseparable aspect of my life. I compare my connection with Railways to the well-known iconic duos: "Vikram aur Betaal" or "Akbar aur Birbal". I would never want to break the bonds I have established with trains over the years.

As a 5-year-old child, the railway yard was my playground. I admired the black steam locomotives that stood there. My first cherished gift was a toy train set with an 8-shaped track.

When I moved from Delhi to Mumbai, the under-construction metro railway sites became a common sight during my daily commute.

For my long-distance trips, I recall packing my lunch and tiffin, and also remember those enduring long queues to book tickets before online ticketing started. The journeys often lasted 18-40 hours, and I cherished the thrill of top speeds, tunnels and high rail bridges.

I still cherish the bucket list of railway experiences, including toy trains, Vande Bharat, and the visit to rail museums.

Each trip had some valuable life lessons to teach – such as reflection, avoiding assumptions, punctuality, and appreciating the kindness of strangers.

Even now I stay updated on developments in Indian Railways through the social media. I have an eternal love for trains, and today, my son shares the same sentiments.

*- Bijesh Kamath*

## Lifetime Learnings along Pune-Mumbai-Pune

This was a journey I'll never forget. I had just moved to Pune and was travelling to Mumbai every other weekend to meet my niece.

Choosing to travel by Deccan Queen Express for my bi-monthly Pune-Mumbai-Pune journeys was a no-brainer. On one such journey, I was sitting besides a kind old Uncle in his 70s. He offered me some 'Farsan' and also shared his life story.

He spoke about his life in Pune, his journalist daughter and his software engineer son who was now settled in the US. They had a loving grandson and had even visited US for six months. However, the weather didn't suit them there, and his wife's health worsened so they returned.

Then came the most profound advice from Uncle: **"Don't go only after money and make properties only where you can manage them. I had to sell many of my properties now as there was no one to take care of them."**

His wisdom left me speechless. As we reached Dadar station, we bid farewell to each other. But his words stayed with me, changing my perspective on life, relationships and finances.

This was truly a special journey that taught me several valuable life lessons.

*- Vaishali Pathare*





## About Learnings and Life Lessons

Trains have a unique way of teaching us important life lessons. In a way, a train journey mirrors the journey of a lifetime.

Onboarding the train on time is like achieving success at the right moment. And just like the length of the train, life can also be long and full of experiences. The push we receive while boarding the train can lead us onto a smooth journey, much like the support we get in life and how it paves the way for success.

Every passenger on the train represents a different aspect of life. Sometimes, the journeys bring peace, while at other times, there is total chaos. Laughter and fun mingle with rhythm as we interact with our fellow travellers.

Like the train tracks, life takes us on an interesting journey, and with our strength and perseverance, we successfully reach our destinations and also enjoy every step on the way.

So, let us keep riding on the tracks of life, and just like trains, we will find our way to our unique and true destinations.

Thank you, friends, for patiently listening to my railway story!

**- Niral Gadara**



## Maa Tujhe Salaam

Train travel journeys fascinate me greatly. I always prefer train travel over other modes of transportation for the sheer amount of nostalgia that it grips me with.

Back in the day, I remember travelling by trains to visit my relatives. I always associated train travel with some Bollywood movies I had watched. It was the closest one could relate to. Some songs were special and nostalgic like “Gaadi Bula Rahi Hai.”

My last train journey was in December 2022, from Delhi to Katra Railway Station at Jammu, as I was visiting the shrine of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi. I travelled by Tejas Express and was fortunate to get a window seat.

I loved to gaze out of the window at the world outside and observe human habitation, people, fields that passed by, and whatever was on the horizon throughout the journey. Luckily, the seat next to me was not occupied, promising me even more space and comfort during the journey.

The onboard service on the train was exceptional throughout the journey. The hospitable crew served delicious refreshments, breakfast and lunch, which I thoroughly enjoyed. The train crossed many stations.

The train crossed several tunnels and the views on the journey were truly spectacular. My window seat view helped me witness the diversity of India, which unravelled before my eyes all along the journey. Each time the train stopped at a railway station, I also noticed some nuanced differences in the way people wore their clothes, their dialect, the type of food sold at the stations, and the architecture of each railway station.

As the train neared Jammu station, the mountains stood there in the distance like the sentinels of time. Even as they seemed mute, I could tell that they communicated extensively with our discerning minds.

My exhilarating train journey ended as we reached Katra. I realised that India’s railway network had grown and matured over the years. Also, the decisive steps taken by the government were reaping their deserving harvest. I proudly saluted the nation by singing, “Maa Tujhe Salaam” in my mind.

I was already looking forward to my next journey by the Indian Railways to create more memories and make other railway stories to write about.

#MyRailwayStory continues till today with my profession, in my earlier role as the Chief Project Manager for Delhi Metro Rail Corporation’s overhead electrification of the Pink Line. This is the longest and the most connected line of DMRC. Today, I am the Program Manager for the Pune Metro Line # 3 turnkey project.

I am proud to have worked on these projects and have contributed to nation building in my own small way.

**- Chander Wasan**





## Making Best Friends for Life!

Once I was travelling from Aurangabad to Amritsar. This was a solo trip, a 30-hour train journey. I settled into my seat, worrying about the long journey and the boredom it would attract. As the train started, I looked around at my fellow passengers, and I noticed two boys travelling to Amritsar.

After a few hours, I found myself standing near the train's open door with them, and enjoying the rush of the wind as we sped through the countryside. I started a conversation with them, and before I knew it, we were all laughing and joking like old friends.

As the journey progressed, we hopped off the train at different stations to explore and try local food. The food wasn't always hygienic, but it was tasty and we enjoyed every bite of it. Back on the train, we then sang songs at the top of our lungs, danced in the aisles, and also played card games.

It was truly an unforgettable experience for all of us, and I instantly knew that I had made some new friends for life.

Once we reached Amritsar, I even stayed with them in their houses. We explored the city together, visited the Golden Temple, and also ate delicious food, including the Amritsari Kulcha

Yes, the Indian Railways connects people from all walks of life. It is also a great way to explore the beauty and diversity of our country. Thank you immensely, Indian Railways, for connecting me with my friends and for making our train journeys unforgettable.

**- Nilesh Rathod**

## Turning Soul Mates from Best Friends

As they rightly say, train travel has a unique way of magnifying memories. And I can't agree more. There's one particular train travel that has genuinely changed my entire life.

I was returning from an official trip on a rainy evening, and was travelling from Ernakulam to Coimbatore. My best friend, who worked in Ernakulam, joined me on Chennai Express to spend the weekend.

We had been friends for several years, and were always there for each other through thick and thin, but little did we know that that train journey will change everything.

Sitting on the upper berths of the train, we both laughed and cried, and something incredible happened between us on that day. As the hours passed by, we opened up about our feelings for each other on this blessed journey. And that is when we realised that we were meant to be more than just best friends. At that very moment, we became a couple, and it felt as if the stars had aligned perfectly well for us.

On 1st December 2018, we embarked on that rail journey as best friends, but arrived at our destination in Coimbatore as true soulmates! Sounds unique and special, isn't it?

No wonder, this train journey will be etched in our hearts forever – as a special journey that brought us together, and connected our souls in a way we had never expected.

**- Durga Devi**

## Coloured with Different Hues of Personal Experiences

The Indian railway system is the fourth-largest rail network after US, China and Russia, spanning across thousands of kilometers and practically covering the entire nation.

Apart from being a significant mode of transport, the travel experience is a living remnant of history with each station, with each track narrating tales of the past. The vintage charm of an old station and the vintage ticket stubs evoke an era when travel held an alluring significance.

Every train journey is a story waiting to unfold. The platform, a stage for tearful goodbyes and joyous reunions, bears testimony to countless emotions. As the whistle blows and the train pulls away from the station, it leaves behind a symphony of feelings—that of hope, anticipation, and the bittersweet pangs of departure.

In our lives, the Indian Railways are coloured with several hues of personal experiences. And even today, it continues to enrich our lives with better technology adaptations and infrastructure support. Trains are more than just a means and mode to reach a destination. They are vessels that transport us through time, and help us collect memories like passengers along the way.

Who can forget the distinct aroma that wafts through a train's corridors? The diverse cuisine served on trains becomes a part of the unusual experiences, and the taste is forever linked with the respective journey.

From sharing homemade snacks and lunch with our fellow passengers, to savoring the unique cuisines served on board trains, these culinary moments add further flavour to our special memories connected with trains.

Long live the Indian Railways!

**- Kamal Bali**  
**Chairman, CII Southern Region**





# Summing Up

---



*The vision of an electrified, high-capacity, and technologically advanced railway network reflects the 'Next Big Dream' for India's transportation infrastructure. As Indian Railways represents an unbroken fortress of trust, it sets the direction for next-generation connectivity.*





## A future ready rail system

India is considered to have one of the world's most extensive rail transport and logistic networks. It is used daily by 9.6 million passengers, and more than 22,000 trains carry over a billion tonnes of freight yearly. The Indian Government aims to increase the share of the railways for freight transport by 40-45% as part of the National Rail Plan 2030.

As the Indian economy moves towards the US\$ 5 trillion mark, Indian Railways aims to increase the share of rail in freight movement from 27% to above 45% by 2030. To cater to this increase in freight movement, the railways' capacity will need to undergo a planned but substantial increase.

## Creating destinies

India's overall GDP growth will reflect in growing urbanisation, with a projected 50% of them living in urban areas by 2050. Massive infrastructure development will be required to turn this into a reality. Consequently, it places Indian Railways at the forefront of this activity enabler, as the ***Bharat Bhagya Vidhata***. The most cost-effective and sustainable approach to achieve this is integrated mobility, mass transit system and the metros. Indian Railways, the nation's trusted partner in economic development, is ensuring this, with its trusted technology partner Siemens.

## Towards sustainability

Indian Railways are also well on track regarding the goal on achieving net-zero mobility, with its partner Siemens. The combined strategy of Indian Railways and Siemens is to meet achieve sustainability and live up to its target on achieving carbon footprint, as is reflected in its business activities, investment decision-making and corporate governance.





