

TRACKING HISTORY

Churchgate



Bhayander Bridge



Ballard Pier Station, which no longer exists



Bombay Central car shed in 1950

Mamata takes the Central line

No New Services For Western Railway's Saturated Network

Devraj Dasgupta & Roana Maria Costa | TNN

Mumbai: Central Railway (CR) has decided to run a large number of its new services from Thane to Kalyan further north to Karjat and Kasara as Mumbaiers take up home in far-flung suburbs. The shift in demographics is evident from the categorical mention in the Railway Budget on Wednesday that CR will start as many as 32 new services from Thane and Kalyan for end-points like Karjat, Khopoli and Kasara instead of running them all the way from CST.

In a rather unusual surprise, the budget makes it clear that all the 101 new train services to be launched in 2010-11 would be on the CR network. The break-up of 101 new services includes 32 from Thane/Kalyan to Karjat, Kasara and Khopoli, 16 services on the CR mainline from CST and Dadar, 18 services on the main Harbour line and 35 on the trans-Harbour line comprising the Thane-Vashi and Thane-Nerul-Panvel links.

It's perhaps for the first time that Western Railway (WR) has scored a complete blank. Senior officials said WR is almost running at full capacity and unless there is

addition of tracks and related technical systems, it would be difficult to have new trains and services. WR has already introduced 160 new services in last two years besides converting many nine-car to 12-car trains. Now WR would have to wait for conversion from 1500 MV direct current (DC) to 25,000 MV alternate current (AC) to create space on the tracks and run new trains, clarified a WR official.

CR officials are quick to point out that line capacity on the main network between CST to Kalyan is also almost saturated. As a result, the least number of new services (16) are on this section between CST-Kalyan, said an official. Besides, ticket sales are proof that a lot of commuters work in the Thane/Kalyan belt and stay further north to benefit from low-cost housing.

CR currently does have few services from Thane to stations further north, but barely worth taking notice. For instance, CR runs three services from Thane to Karjat, one each to Ambernath and Badlapur and two to Titwala. The proposed 32 new services on this patch is a full-fledged effort to de-congest CST and cater to the new-rush sections.

But the biggest beneficiary in 2010-11 would be the



OFF-TRACK ON BUDGET DAY: A Churchgate-bound fast train, which broke down at Jogeshwari, is towed away by a diesel engine

perennially neglected Harbour section. The Harbour and Trans-Harbour lines put together will have 53 new services out of 101 cleared in the budget. From just 12 services on the Thane-Vashi section in 2004-05, CR has come

a long way. It now runs 160 services on the Thane-Vashi and Thane-Nerul-Panvel sections, said an official. In fact, the Thane-Nerul section already has a fast train. Efforts are on to run 12-coach trains on the two Trans-Harbour

lines by October this year, added the official.

But CR officials said there are no clear indications at what times of the day the new services will be fitted in.

WR officials said that they are running under super-sat-

urated conditions in which they cannot increase any more services until they convert from DC to AC.

"Our emphasis is more on augmentation of services from 9-car to 12-car," an official said.

Mamata's Boost For Mumbai's Lifeline

Local Line

- 101** More suburban services on Central Railway
- 32** Between Thane/Kalyan and Kasara/Karjat/Khopoli
- 16** On the CR Main line
- 18** On the Harbour line
- 35** On the trans-Harbour line (Thane-Vashi)

2 Ladies' Specials

Between Thane-Vashi & Panvel-Nerul-Thane

- Vasai Road & LTT (Kurla) will be developed into multi-functional complexes, with budget hotels, multi-level parking, food courts, etc
- Thane to be developed into world-class station, with better exits, ticket counters, etc
- Rs 660 crore for Mumbai Urban Transport Project. Phase I expected to be completed by end 2010; Phase II by March 2014
- CST, LTT (Kurla) Thane and Kalyan will get OPD facilities and diagnostic centres for railway staffers
- Creches and women's hostels announced for rail employees

Long-Distance Track

- Karmabhoomi** | UNRESERVED TRAINS FOR COMMON PEOPLE
Darbhanga-Mumbai Express (Weekly)
Guwahati-Mumbai (Weekly) via Howrah-Tatanagar-Jharsuguda-Bilaspur-Nagpur
- Bharat Tirth** | SPECIAL TOURIST TRAIN
Mumbai-Pune-Tirupati-Kancheepuram-Rameshwaram-Madurai-Kanyakumari-Pune- Mumbai

Route	Frequency
Duronto Mumbai-Secunderabad AC (Bi-weekly) Mumbai-Ernakulam AC (Bi-weekly) Indore-Mumbai AC (Bi-weekly) Jaipur-Mumbai AC (Bi-weekly)	Increased FREQUENCY Ahmedabad-Mumbai Central Express (FROM 6 TO 7 DAYS)
Other Long Distance Sultanpur-Mumbai Express (weekly) Mumbai-Shirdi Intercity Express (Tri-weekly) Haridwar-Mumbai CST AC Express (Bi-weekly) Pune-Panvel-Ernakulam Superfast (Bi-weekly)	Bandra-Delhi Sarai Rohilla (FROM 3 TO 4 DAYS)
Extended Routes Mumbai CST-Jabalpur Express extended to Allahabad (Bi-weekly)	Ahmedabad-Mumbai Central Express (FROM 6 TO 7 DAYS)

Global dreams for Thane

Roana Maria Costa | TNN

Mumbai: Union Railway Minister Mamata Banerjee added another suburban station Thane to the list of World class stations. Two years ago in his railway budget the then flamboyant Union Railway Minister Lalu Prasad declared CST as a world class station. Besides this suburban station on Central Railway another station on WR Surat has also made it to the list.

When a station is slotted under this bracket, an ambitious plan is drawn to upgrade its surroundings so that commuters have safe and comfortable passenger services with all modern amenities to meet ever increasing population.

The project also looks at superior road connectivity, parking within the station premises, smooth arrival/ departure and movement of pedestrians, passenger vehicles, modern train maintenance facilities; modern operational offices, residential quarters and other facilities for railway staff; integrated development with the surrounding city, commercial exploitation of the available land and creation (see box) under a private public partnership model.

Senior Railway officials told TOI that Thane has "rightfully" got this status. "The first train ran between CST and Thane (then called Thana) in 1853. This station has immense historical importance to Indian Railways," he said.

Chief PRO, CR, S C Mudgerikar added that Thane is today the second busiest and the largest hub on CR's suburban network in terms of number of passengers who use the station. "After the opening of the Thane-Vashi trans harbour line corridor opening there are



WORLD-CLASS VISION: A worker renovates the CST dome

ROAD TO CHANGE

The project involves preparing a master plan for upgrading the station and its surroundings to a world-class terminal through Public Private Partnership. It should ensure among other things comfortable passenger services with all modern amenities catering to an average of 0.8 million passengers per day; superior road connectivity with city; superior train operation; integrated development with the surrounding city and creation of an iconic urban infrastructure

10 platforms there. There is continuous effort to upgrade the station," he said.

Railway officials said that the east side of this station can be commercially exploited as there is land there and the remodeling of the existing building on its west side can also be considered. "We can learn from the on-going process at CST," said the official.

Meanwhile at CST, the master plan of the project is nearly ready. Three plans have been finalized and will be shortly sent to the Railway Board for approval. The financial angle and feasibility is also being worked out. "The project at Thane can be a reality if there is political will and funds," he said.

He added that projects of the stature of CST take. The CST project is likely to take off after 12-18 months.

Hi-speed boost for short travel

Devraj Dasgupta | TNN

Mumbai: Railway minister Mamata Banerjee's move to create high-speed passenger corridors could be a boon for the city. Not only is it expected to benefit a burgeoning population that is buying homes far away from the metropolis, but could also stem migration by enabling people on business visits to the city from neighbouring cities or states to return the same day. The Railways has already identified six corridors for the project and an international consultant is doing the feasibility study. The corridors include Mumbai-Pune-Ahmedabad, Delhi-Chandigarh-Amritsar, Chennai-Bangalore-Ernakulam, Hyderabad-Vijaywada-Chennai, Howrah-Haldia and Delhi-Agra-Lucknow-Patna.

Railway Board estimate these projects would require huge investments. Officials said preliminary studies show a likelihood of the corridor may cost between Rs 70 to Rs 100 crore. So a 500-km track from Ahmedabad to Mumbai could mean an investment of Rs 3,700 crore. To get profits after spending so much, the Railways may need to charge between Rs 4 to Rs 5 per km, taking the Mumbai-Ahmedabad fare to Rs 2,000 at least.

Multi-functional complexes for Vasai Road and LTT

Roana Maria Costa | TNN

Mumbai: If Union Railway Minister Mamata Banerjee has her way then two stations, one each on CR and WR will house multi-functional complexes soon. Announced on Wednesday in her budget, Didi said that Vasai Road and Lokmanya Tilak Terminus would be the chosen stations to be added to the list.

According to Railway officials this comes as good news as this would not only upgrade the stations but also bring in revenue.

Exact details of the projects are not available with officials right now. Presently work is on to construct a new station building at LTT and CR officials said that they are unsure if the complex would be a completely new one or an addition by way of an annex to the up coming one. "The project would be under a PPP model. New Mumbai stations like Vashi and Belapur are already examples of the concept and go beyond being just railway stations as they have other features like office spaces too," said Chief PRO, CR, S C Mudgerikar.

He added that platforms would be made free for passenger movement and all related activities like toilets and catering stalls and allied necessities would either be in the new complex or at a level above the platform.

"The idea is not yet concretised and final plans would be available after a consultant is appointed, a survey is carried out for its feasibility and processed," he said. LTT has open land on both its east and west side which can be tapped into.

Meanwhile on WR, Chief PRO, S S Gupta said that there it is feasible to set up such a complex at Vasai Road station as it is half for suburban as well as long distance trains. Long distance trains which go to Gujarat, the North



LOOKING AHEAD: More good news coming

Multi-functional complexes may have budget hotels, retail shops, passenger amenities, food courts/plazas, house offices, multi level parking, and better circulating areas.

as well as the Konkan and the down South halt here. "There is land available on both side of the stations but there it most likely will come up on the west side," Gupta said.

The concept of such complexes was introduced last year but these are the first two stations in Mumbai. "We may have budget hotels, multi level parking, food courts and plazas and better circulating area," he said.

City hopes to find succour in 101 new services

Shreya Bhandary | TNN

Mumbai: More services, new trains and model stations notwithstanding, city commuters remain divided in their verdict on Mamata Banerjee's Railway Budget on Wednesday. While passengers are happy with Banerjee promise of 101 new trains to the city, they doubt much will change. "It will be great provided the frequency on both Harbour and Central lines are improved," said Shruti Mehta, a student.

Many women commuters seemed content with the addition of two ladies' special trains for Central Railway. "It is very important that these trains be added during peak hours. As of now there is just one ladies' special, for the 8am commuters, but a large number of women travel to work



till almost 9.30 am. One special should be introduced for that crowd," said Bhagyashree Dalvi, a BMC employee travelling to Dombivli.

A few commuters appreciated the many aspects touched upon in this year's budget.

"This year, Mamata Banerjee has considered many things. City passengers, outstation trains, reduction in freight charges, etc. all got a mention which was very good," said Gyanchand Jain from Thane. But at the same time, a few be-

lieved none of the promises would be implemented. "They were supposed to turn CST into a world class station but they haven't even started working on it," said Pratap Bane, a software engineer from Kurla.

Western Railway commuters were unhappy. "Most passengers travel on WR but the trains are always running late, we have no new trains or even ladies' special trains," said Meera Jadhav from Borivli.

"They were supposed to start several 15-car trains. What happened to that?" asked another fuming passenger.

Passenger associations are also not biting the bait, upset that trains promised in the last budget—like Nashik-Shirdi, Shirdi-Mumbai and Gandhidham-Howrah Express were yet a distant dream.

Mobile e-ticket vans in suburbs

Devraj Dasgupta | TNN

Mumbai: Railway minister Mamata Banerjee's move to start e-ticketing mobile vans is likely to de-congest queues at major stations in Mumbai, saving travellers the inconvenience of coming all the way from distant suburbs. Although tickets are available on the internet, computer penetration is not very high in far-flung suburbs. Mobile e-ticketing vans would be stationed at government medical college hospitals, high courts, district courts, university campuses, IT hubs, IITs and IIMs. Officials could not give any specific details, they said the vans were likely to be in the suburbs and IIT at Powai.

Mixed bag, say railway officials

Roana Maria Costa | TNN

Mumbai: There are mixed reactions to Union railway minister Mamata Banerjee's second railway budget. Though Central Railway (CR) has got a major chunk of the goodies announced for the state on Wednesday, WR officials seem unperturbed, while everyone at CR is not a believer.

A very senior WR official on condition of anonymity told TOI that new services for WR would not have made sense anyway as it is super-saturated and cannot increase any more services until the conversion of the traction from direct to alternating current is completed. "Our emphasis is more on augmentation of services from 9-car to 12-car," he said.

He added that WR doesn't feel completely left out as the minister has promised funds under the Mumbai Urban Transport Project under both its phases.

Chief PRO, WR, S S Gupta said, "With specific targets being given to MUTP-I and II more emphasis would be given to the suburban sector and there would be all round development."

Mumbai Railway Vikas Corporation MD, P C Sehgal said that Rs 5,300 crore is required under the second phase and if the funding continued this way for the next five years projects will be completed.

Chief PRO, CR, S C Mudgerikar said the budget has brought cheer to its passengers, especially measures like increase in suburban and long-distance trains, ladies'

specials and Thane being made a world-class station

But everyone is not happy at CR. "There is no road map for the promises made. The announcements were made in the air with no adequate homework done," a senior railway official said.

He added that after years of not increasing ticket prices it was high time to do so, especially due to the burden imposed on the Railway's finances by the pay commission. "The railways is going through a rough patch and our coffers are not healthy. We should have some arrangement so that when fuel prices are increased train ticket prices increase proportionately. Right now we find it difficult to get funds even for maintenance and repairs," he said.