

HISTORY OF RATLAM DIVISION

Ratlam Division of Western Railway came into existence on the 15th of August 1956, under Divisionalisation scheme of Indian Railways. The inauguration ceremony was performed by Shri Thakatmal Jain, the then Chief Minister of Madhya Bharat State.

THE PAST

The rail link of Ratlam Division has a glorious history of more than 130 years. The Meter gauge section was started way back in 1874 while the Broad Gauge came into existence in 1893. It is a major junction and a rail division of Indian Railways on meter and broad gauge lines.

Four major Railway tracks pass through Ratlam City; these are towards Mumbai, Delhi, Ajmer and Khandwa, amongst which the railway track between DADN-Khandwa was Meter Gauge track.

1. HOLKAR RAILWAY

MAHARAJA HOLKAR, in 1870, offered a loan of Rs. 100 lakhs for the construction of a rail-line to his capital city of Indore, taking off from the G.I.P. main line. A quick survey was made and Khandwa on the G.I.P. line was chosen as junction point. The alignment was to pass through Sanawad, Kheree Ghat on the Narmada and then by way of the Choral Valley up the slopes of the Vindhya to Indore. Maharaja Holkar's contribution accelerated the construction of rail-lines in Malwa region.

The Holkar Railway required very heavy works due to very steep gradients (upto 1 in 40) on the Vindhya Ghats. It also involved digging of 4 tunnels aggregating 510 yards in length, deep cuttings and heavy retaining walls. River Narmada was crossed by a bridge of 14 spans, 197 feet each and piers 80 feet above low water level. There are 14 other large bridges with high piers, the highest pier being 152 feet above the bottom of the ravine.

The first section Khandwa-Sanawad was opened for traffic on 1.12.1874. The Narmada Bridge was opened for traffic on 5.10.1876 by His Highness the Maharaja of Holkar who named it 'Holkar-Narmada Bridge'.

2. SCINDIA - NEEMUCH RAILWAY

Surveys between Indore and Neemuch started long back in 1871-72 when the plan and estimates for the whole project was submitted to the Government of India in 1872-73. Maharaja of Scindia agreed to grant a loan of Rs. 75 lakhs at 4 per cent per annum interest for the project and the railway was renamed as 'Scindia-Neemuch Railway'. It also included a branch line to Ujjain from Indore. The Indore - Ujjain branch line was opened in August 1876 and the line was completed in 1879-80.

3. NEEMUCH-NASIRABAD RAILWAY

Neemuch - Nasirabad railway construction planning was made for joining Rajputana railway and Nasirabad Scindia railway to Neemuch. Although the survey of Neemuch - Nasirabad railway was carried out in the year 1871-72, the construction was started in the year 1879, and the work completed in March 1881.

4. RAJPUTANA MALWA RAILWAY

The above mentioned three units that is Holkar Railway , Scindia Neemuch Railway and Neemuch - Nasirabad Railway amalgamated under a single management in the year 1881-82 and were named as Rajputana Malwa railway.

5. B.B. & C.I. RAILWAY

The identity of Rajputana Malwa Railway remained for a very short while and its management was taken over by B.B.& C.I. Company on 01.01.1885. Till independence of the country the complete Metre Gauge Network of Ratlam division was managed by B.B. & C.I. Railway.

The first Broad Gauge line of the division from Godhra to Limkheda was completed in the year 1893 and Limkheda - Dahod, Ratlam line was completed and opened for traffic in the year 1894, while the Ratlam -Nagda- Ujjain BG line completed and opened for traffic during the year 1896.

The whole management of this line was under (BB & CI) Bombay, Baroda & Central India Railway till independence i.e. upto 15.08.1947.

The Doubling of the following sections were completed as per year indicated against them:-

Godhra - Piplod section	1958-1959
Piplod -Dahod - Ratlam section	1959-1960
Ratlam - Nagda section	1960-1962
Nagda - Ujjain section (except Gambhiri Bridge)	1979-1981
Ujjain - Maksi section	1964-1965
Maksi - Bhopal section	1993-2001
Kalapipal –Phanda Section	2003-2008
Akodia-Mohammadheda-Shujalpur	2005-2010
Parbati-Baktal section	2012-2013

On Dahod-Ratlam section - New Tunnel at PCN was built in the year 1988, Mahi River Bridge in 1992 and Anas River Bridge were completed and opened for traffic in the year 1996.

6. WESTERN RAILWAY

On 5th November 1951, Western Railway with its Headquarters at Bombay came into existence after merging of BB & CI Railway with the other State Railways.

THE PRESENT

The Broad gauge portion extends from Godhra to Bhopal, Ujjain to Dr. Ambedkar Nagar and Dr. Ambedkar Nagar-Fatehabad-Ratlam-Chandaria & Maksi-Dewas. The Metre Gauge portion of the division extends from Dr. Ambedkar Nagar to Khandwa.

The division has the longest and steepest gradients of 1:150 on Broad Gauge between Limkheda and Rentia stations of Ratlam-Godhra section; Metre Gauge also has the longest and steepest gradients of 1:40 with reverse curve of 8.8° between Kalakund and Patalpani station of Dr. Ambedkar Nagar -Khandwa section.

Ratlam Division serves the people of Malwa with efficient, cheap, accessible transport. The division is not only of geographical importance but also of industrial, social, economic and historical importance.

Besides Indore, which is one of the most important commercial cities of Madhya Pradesh on Ratlam division, Dewas and Nagda are the other industrially developed towns on the division while Pithampur near Indore is the newly developed industrial area.

The division includes the tribal districts of Jhabua and Dhar, the historical and holy cities of Ujjain and Omkareshwar. Chittaurgarh of the Rajasthan Mewar area is one of the world famed historical cities and an important tourist place.

The division transports 1.50 lakh of passengers per day by running 128 BG Mail express train and 37 (34+3) BG/MG passenger train per day.

Ratlam division is contributing significantly in the development of social and economical conditions of the area by transporting various commodities like Cement, Clinker, Manganese ore, Sodium Sulphate, Caustic Soda, wheat etc. from various loading points.