

Varanasi Division

Varanasi is one of the oldest cities of the world and occupies an important place amongst all the religious, cultural and spiritual cities of India. Varanasi is situated on the bank of the holy river Ganges. Most famous temple of **Lord Shiva, the Kashi Vishwanath Temple**, one of the twelve Jyotirlingas, is located here. Tourists, not only from various parts of India, but also those from foreign countries all over the world, visit this place very frequently. **Sarnath**, the famous **Baudh Pilgrimage** is situated very close by, at a distance of about 8 Kms only. This is the place where Lord Buddha delivered his first Preaching. Varanasi is also famous for its cottage industry, handicraft and products thereof, including world famous **Benarasi Sarees** too.



Shri Kashi Vishwanath Temple

Varanasi Division of North Eastern Railway was formed on 01.05.1969. The main routes of the division on Broad Gauge Line comprise of Gorakhpur-Chhapra, Bhatni-Prayagraj Rambagh, Chhapra-Aunrihar, Mau-Shahganj, Gorakhpur-Paniyahwa, Indara-Phephna, Aunrihar- Jaunpur, Kaptanganj- Thawe and Chhapra Kachery-Thawe sections, while Indara-Dohri Ghat is only Meter Gauge section (under gauge conversion).

Varanasi division is **mainly a passenger traffic oriented division**. Until 1981, when the work of gauge conversion started on Gorakhpur-Siwan section, this division was basically Meter Gauge route system. Subsequently, gauge conversion was completed in phases :Varanasi-Bhatni (year-1990), Varanasi- Prayagraj Rambagh (year-1993-94), Aunrihar-Chhapra (year-1996), Mau-Shahganj (year-1997), Gorakhpur-Paniyahwa (year-1997), Indara-Phephna (year-1999), Aunrihar-Jaunpur, Kaptangaj-Thawe (year 2011) and Chhapra Kachery-Thawe (year 2016-17). Thus, barring only Indara-Dohri Ghat section, Gauge Conversion has been completed on all other sections of the division. As a result of this, Varanasi division has become a predominantly Broad Gauge division. The principal routes for running of goods trains on the division comprise of Gorakhpur-Chhapra, Varanasi-Gorakhpur, Prayagraj Rambagh – Varanasi - Chhapra, Gorakhpur - Paniyahwa and Indara - Phephna.

Trains to and from Northern and North Eastern regions of the country pass via these routes. There are **Eight interchange points** of the division : These are Chhapra Gramin station (with Sonpur division), Paniyahwa (with Samastipur division), Gorakhpur cantt (with N.E.Railway/Lucknow division), Jaunpur, Shahganj, Lohta & Varanasi Stations (with Northern Railway/Lucknow division) and Prayagraj Jn (with N.C.Railway/ Prayagraj division).

Sugar production had been the only industry in Varanasi division. Although, there are 31 sugar mills in the area, most of these are either sick or closed. *Large passenger traffic, therefore, is the main source of revenue earnings for the division.*