Genesis

On 15th August 1854, East Indian Railway (EIR)’s first train ran from Howrah to Hooghly, a distance of 24 miles. Regular services were introduced from that day, with stops at Bally, Serampore and Chandannagore.

In 1862, EIR extended upto the west bank of Yamuna on its way to Delhi. In 1864, in a bid to connect Calcutta and Delhi, trains started running between the two cities without any bridge on Yamuna by ferrying the coaches on boats across the river at Allahabad. In 1865 the Yamuna Bridge at Allahabad opened. In 1867 EIR branch line extended from Allahabad to Jubbalpore.

After the Government of India took over the management of EIR in 1925, it was split into six divisions — Howrah, Asansol and Dinapore known as the lower divisions and Allahabad, Lucknow and Moradabad known as the upper divisions.

Eastern Railway (ER) was formed on 14th April, 1952 by integration of the East Indian Railway (EIR) consisting of Sealdah, Howrah, Asansol and Danapur Divisions and the entire Bengal – Nagpur Railway (BNR). The jurisdiction of ER extended from Howrah to Mughalsarai in the North, upto Visakhapatnam in the South and upto Nagpur in the Central area. The three Upper divisions of E.I.R. were added to Northern Railway.

Later, the portions of BNR stretching from Howrah to Visakhapatnam in the South, Howrah to Nagpur in the Central area and upto Katni in the North Central Region were separated from Eastern Railway and formed as “South Eastern Railway” with effect from 1st August 1955.

Asansol Division was formed in 1925, Dhanbad Division in 1964, Mughalsarai Division in 1975 and Malda Division in 1984 as part of ER.

After redistribution and construction of new lines over a period of time, Eastern Railway as on 30th September 2002, stretched over 4245.61 kilometres.

On 01-10-2002, three divisions viz. Dhanbad, Mughalsarai and Danapur were separated from Eastern Railway to create new East Central Railway zone with headquarters at Hajipur. Eastern Railway now consists of 2500 Route Kilometres spread over four divisions viz. Sealdah, Howrah, Asansol and Malda out of which 1424 route kilometres are electrified on 25 KV AC traction.

Jurisdiction

Eastern Railway extends to Bangaladesh border in the East upto Lalgola, Benapole and Gede. Malda and Kiul to the North, Namkhana near Ganga Sagar to the South and Asansol and Jhajha in the West.

Starting from Howrah, the trunk route of Eastern Railway runs 221 kms. to Sitarampur from where it takes two directions towards Delhi, one via Patna and other via Dhanbad – Gaya. Both these routes converge again at Mughalsarai Station of East Central Railway. Adjoining
railways are North East Frontier Railway to the north, East Central Railway to the west and South Eastern Railway to the south.

The area served by Eastern Railway is important to the economy of the country, as apart from serving the most densely populated region in the country, this Railway serves the areas rich in minerals, agriculture and industry.

### Units & Branches

Apart from four open line divisions i.e Sealdah, Howrah, Asansol and Malda, this Railway has three major Workshops situated at **Liluah, Kanchrapara** and **Jamalpur**.

**Liluah Workshop**

To meet up the requirement of rolling stock of railways, the Carriage and Wagon Workshop at Liluah was set up in 1900. The workshop was primarily assigned the task of manufacturing passenger coaches and freight wagons as well as their periodic overhaul. The coach manufacturing was undertaken up to 1972 and about 3000 coaches were produced. Wagon manufacturing was discontinued after 1947.

Liluah is currently undertaking periodic overhauling (POH) of various types of coaches and freight wagons. It has become the largest coaching POH workshop in the country. With an effluent treatment plant, the workshop has been certified with ISO 9002.

**Kanchrapara Workshop**

Kanchrapara workshop was set up in 1863 by the then Eastern Bengal Railway as a combined workshop for repairs to steam locomotives, wooden bodied carriage and wagons. The management of this workshop was taken over by the state on 1st July, 1864. With the introduction of electric traction, this workshop has now undertaken the work of repairs and periodic overhaul of Electric locomotives and Electric Multiple Units (EMU).

**Jamalpur Workshop**

The Locomotive Engineering Workshop at Jamalpur (as it was originally known) was established 150 years ago on the 8th of February, 1862. It enjoys the distinction of being the largest and the oldest locomotive repair workshop with the most diversified manufacturing activities within the Indian Railways. On 15th January 1935, the Jamalpur Workshop along with the entire railway colony was destroyed by an earth-quake. It took 3 years to rebuild it from scratch. Jamalpur workshop undertakes manufacturing and repairing of various types of wagons, periodic overhauling of diesel locomotives, 140 ton cranes, tower-wagons and whiting jacks.

**Mechanical Signal Workshop, Howrah**

Apart from the above, Eastern Railway has one Mechanical Signal Workshop situated on the west bank of river Hooghly at Howrah. It manufactures and repairs mechanical signalling gears and electrical and electro-mechanical signalling instruments which are supplied to all the zonal railways on IR.
Services

Coaching Services

Eastern Railway provides long distance passenger traffic service in the form of several prestigious Mail/Express trains. The Rajdhani Express was introduced for the first time on Indian Railways between Howrah and New Delhi over Eastern and Northern Railways in 1969.

The honour of running the fastest long-distance train of Indian Railways has again gone to Eastern Railway with the introduction of Duronto Express trains. The first Duronto Express on Indian Railways ran from Sealdah to New Delhi on 18-09-2009.

On the suburban front, Howrah and Sealdah divisions of Eastern Railway are catering to the needs of the Greater Kolkata suburban passengers. Most of the suburban routes are electrified and more than 1300 EMUs/MEMUs are run everyday making ER the second largest suburban network on Indian Railways.

Eastern Railway has also been the pioneer in introducing Diesel Multiple Units service for the first time in the country to meet the requirements of passengers in those sections which are not electrified.

On other electrified routes, Mainline Electrical Multiple Units (MEMU) have been introduced for passenger services in non-suburban areas. This service is widely appreciated by the commuters.

Eastern Railway has the honour of running one of the two international Mail-Express trains of India. The “Maitree Express” between India and Bangladesh, which runs from Kolkata to Dhaka via Gede, made its first run on 14-04-2008.

Eastern Railway also has recently claimed the honour of running the first fully Air Conditioned Double Decker Express in the country from Howrah to Dhanbad on 01-10-2011.

Freight Services

Eastern Railway loaded more than 60 Million Tonnes freight in 2012-13 in addition to carrying heavy passenger and local traffic (1206.5 Million).

Out of the total originating freight traffic of Eastern Railway, coal constitutes about 65 – 70%. The major Power Houses like NTPC, CESC, WBSEB, DVC & Industries of Eastern India depend on the coal loaded on Eastern Railway.

Apart from coal, this Railway also transports Iron and Steel products from Durgapur and Burnpur, Stone from Pakur and Jamalpur, Cement from Durgapur and host of other merchandise including Jute, Tea, Textile, Automobiles, agricultural produce etc. at various stations.

POL installations at Rajbandh and Budge-Budge, Cement plants at Durgapur and the industrial complexes at Asansol, Durgapur, Chittaranjan, Burnpur and industrial suburbs of Kolkata and Howrah are served by this Railway.
Goods train services also run between India and Bangladesh via Gede – Darshana and Petrapole – Benapole routes.

**Places of Interest**

**Rail Museums**

Eastern Railway has the honour of having a prestigious railway museum at Howrah spread over an area of 4 acres. It was inaugurated on April 07, 2006. Presently about 25,000 visitors every month enjoy the rich heritage of railway at this unique institution. It has become a must visit destination for the tourists and railway enthusiasts. Another museum (Gitanjali) in the memory of Gurudev Rabindranath has been opened in July 27, 2012 at Bolpur and highlights the extraordinary life and contributions of the Kabiguru.

**Places of Tourist Interest**

Important places of interest being served by Eastern Railway are Kolkata, Belurmath, Bolpur/Shantiniketan, Sundarban, Deoghar/Baidyanathdham, Mandarhill, Munger (International School of Yoga), Mayapur (ISKCON), Furfurasharif, Tarapith, Gour Malda etc.