

Vijayawada – Historical Background

Vijayawada is one of the most important junctions on Indian Railways, strategically located at the tri-junction of Chennai-New Delhi North-South route and Chennai-Howrah East-Coast route. The rail routes leading towards Guntur/Guntakal and Machilipatnam/Narsapur also join at Vijayawada. Vijayawada city is located on North bank of Krishna River, which is the second largest peninsular river.

Legend: Legend has it that the Mahabharat warrior Arjuna's penance for a boon was answered by Lord Shiva in the form of Pasupathasthra atop Indra Kiladri hill. Vijaya is another well-known name of Arjuna. Hence, the town below Indra Kiladri hill came to be called as Vijayawada. The presiding deity of Vijayawada city is Goddess of power called Kanaka Durga, whose temple is located on Indra Kiladri hill.

Modern city: To harness the irrigation potential of Krishna River, the then British Government built an Anicut across river Krishna at Vijayawada. Elaborate canal systems linked to this Anicut were constructed covering the entire Krishna delta region spread over Krishna, Guntur and West Godavari districts. This system gives irrigation facility to about 13 lakh acres. Vijayawada city prospered immensely on account of growth of agriculture in Krishna delta region. This British built Anicut was replaced by Prakasam Barrage in 1957.

New State Capital: When the unified State of Andhra Pradesh was bifurcated in the year 2014, the government of residuary state of Andhra Pradesh has chosen Amaravati region to be its capital city. Amaravati capital region engulfs the entire Vijayawada city. Most of the State government offices have been relocated from Hyderabad city to Amaravati region from where the newly carved AP State administration is presently functioning.

National prominence: Vijayawada city played host to many national movements including Independence Struggle. Mahatma Gandhi visited Vijayawada twice in the years 1921 & 1929. It is a matter of pride for the city that one of its most prominent citizens Shri Pingali Venkaiah designed our National Flag.

Railway History: Erstwhile Bezwada Railway station, renamed as Vijayawada, was founded with a small shed in the beginning. The old station was constructed with Mangalore tiles by 1928. The new station building was opened to the public on 19.01.1979. The Route Relay Interlocking Cabin at Vijayawada was opened on 24.01.1976.

Evolution of Vijayawada Division: The Madras and Southern Maharatta (MSM) Railway was opened to public on 01.07.1856 with headquarters at Madras. The Bezwada district was part of MSM Railway, the other districts being Rayapuram and Podanur. The Regional Transportation Superintendent (RTS) was incharge of MSM Railway with Rayapuram as Hqrs. and the District Transportation Superintendent (DTS) was incharge of Bezwada district. The MSM Railway was amalgamated with

Southern Railway in 1951. The Bezwada district spread from Tondiyarpet to Waltair (both exclusive) and West Block Cabin of Vijayawada station on Kazipet side.

Economic land scape of Vijayawada Division: Vijayawada Division caters to two important Ports on the East Coast i.e. Krishnapatnam & Kakinada, which handled total cargo of 10.59 MTs & 6.35 MTs during 2019-20 respectively. Division also caters to major industrial clusters located around Krishnapatnam and Kakinada Ports apart from serving vibrant agricultural economy of Coastal Andhra.

Important land marks in Railway development:

- 1893 : Construction of Railway Bridge on River Krishna (for MG)
- 1893 : Rajahmundry-Waltair Section
- 1893 : Bezwada-Kovvur Section
- 1897 : Construction of Railway Bridge on River Krishna (for BG)
- 1898 : Bridge on the river Pennar
- 1899 : Rail-route from Bezwada to Madras
- 1900 : Rail Bridge on river Godavari
- 1900 : Train service from Madras-Bezwada-Howrah
- 1907 : MG track from Bezwada to Machilipatnam
- 1930 : Train service from Bezwada to Delhi
- 1951 : Bezwada district became part of Southern Railway
- 1956 : Bezwada Division was created as part of Southern Railway headed by Divisional Superintendent.
- 1961 : MG trains were run from East Coast to West Coast from Machilipatnam Port to Marmagoa Harbour.
- 1966 : Bezwada Division became part of South Central Railway.
- 1972 : Electrification Project started (It was completed in 25 years).
- 1974 : Rail-cum-road Bridge on river Godavari (2.984 km) commissioned.
- 1977 : MG section of Bezwada Division extended from Tadepalli to Guntakal (excluding) and from Guntur to Macherla.
- 1980 : 1st section between Vijayawada–Chirala–Gudur energized.
- 1994 : Vijayawada Division has become unigauze with conversion of entire MG track into BG track.
- 1996 : Vijayawada-Rajahmundry-Duvvada section was energized.
- 1997 : New Godavari Bridge (Max. Span of 97.552 mts. for any PSC Railway Bridge)

Districts covered by present Vijayawada Division: Vijayawada Division spreads over seven revenue districts viz., Nellore, Prakasam, Guntur, Krishna, West Godavari, East Godavari & Visakhapatnam of Andhra Pradesh.

Places of Tourist attraction:

Vijayawada : Goddess Kanaka Durga on Indra Kiladri Hill.

Managalagiri : Sri Laxmi Narasimha Swamy Temple (15 Kms. from Vijayawada).

Dwaraka Tirumala : Sri Venkateswara Swamy Temple (120 Kms. from Vijayawada).

Annaram : Sri Satyanarayana Swamy Temple (236 Kms. from Vijayawada & 90 Kms. from Rajahmundry).

Pacharamams : All the five Saivaramams are in Andhra Pradesh. They are (1) Kshiraramam at Palakollu (2) Somaramam at Bhimavaram (3) Bhimaramam at Samalkot (4) Draksharamam near Rajahmundry (5) Amararamam at Amaravati.

Kondapalli : Famous for Toys made of Poniki light wood (20 Kms. from Vijayawada)

Kuchipudi : Famous for its Kuchipudi Classical dance style (50 kms. from Vijayawada)

Machilipatnam : Known for its Kalankari print (60 Kms. from Vijayawada).

Narsapur : Antarvedi (situated on the bank of Vasista Godavari) (15 Kms. from Narsapur)