

Ngp-Umred rly line set to open in July

■ Coal transport, regional connectivity to improve; final inspection awaited

■ By Dheeraj Fartode

THE long-awaited Nagpur-Umred railway line is likely to start operations in July 2025. The track-laying work up to Umred (55 km) has been completed and papers will be submitted to the Commissioner of Railway Safety (CRS) by the Maharashtra Rail Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd (MRIDCL) on Monday.

According to MRIDCL officials, after the submission of documents, a safety inspection by CRS is expected by the end of June. Once cleared, train movement between Nagpur and Umred will begin in July. This new railway link is expected to benefit not just



Newly-constructed Umred Railway Station.

passengers, but also coal transportation in the region.

Boost to regional economy

THE Nagpur-Umred route is crucial for the transportation of coal from Western Coalfields Limited (WCL) mines in the Umred area. The new Broad Gauge (BG) line will reduce travel time for coal rakes moving to Koradi and

Khaparkheda thermal power stations and bring it down from 22 hours to just 4 hours. It will also benefit NTPC's Mauda plant and Adani's Tiroda power plant by shortening the transportation distance to 25 km from 50 km.

The railway line will also bring economic opportunities for residents of Kuhi and Umred tehsils as it will improve connectivity and possibly attracting more businesses and industries to the area.

Contd on page 2

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Gauge conversion project overview

THE Itwari–Nagbhir section (106 km) was the last remaining narrow-gauge section in the country. It was shut down on November 25, 2019, and gauge conversion work began in December 2019. The project is being executed by MRIDCL, a joint venture between the Government of Maharashtra and the Ministry of Railways.

Initially sanctioned in 2013–14, the project faced delays due to funding issues and negative return projections. It was revived when MahaGenco agreed to contribute 50% of the State's

share, recognising the strategic importance of faster coal supply to its power plants. The total cost of the gauge conversion is estimated at Rs 2,000 crore, with both State and Central Governments sharing the expense equally. So far, Rs 1,400 crore has already been spent. The full project, including electrification and station upgrades, is expected to be completed by December 2025. After Umred, track-laying work has also been completed up to Bhiwapur (12 km), and the remaining work on this stretch is expected to be finished within the year.

The new BG line will also help ease congestion on the saturated Wardha–Sewagram–Nagpur route, offering an alternative for train movement and improving overall efficiency in the region's railway network.



The electrical equipments set up at the Umred Railway Station.