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Activists raise red flags over new Yesvantpur to Vasco-da-Gama train

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MANGALURU: Indian Railways dealt a crippling blow to aspirations of train commuting people of coastal Karnataka in technically announcing a new train from Yesvantpur to Vasco-da-Gama via Padil from March 7 while cancelling three trains – partially between Mangaluru and Karwar and vice-versa and Pernem-Karwar DEMU between Karwar and Madgaon. This has led to widespread consternation among train activists in the region.

Activists pinned blame on this latest development on Konkan Railway Corporation Ltd (KRCL) that always has been negative towards requirements of the state. When South Western Railway proposed to bifurcate existing Bengaluru-Kannur/Karwar Express at Subrahmanya Road and operate Karwar portion via Padil bypassing Mangaluru region, it denied watering and fuelling facilities for the train in its network.

Later, KRCL opposed SWR's proposal to operate a bi-weekly train between Yesvantpur and Vasco-da-Gama. When SWR, owing to mounting demands from people of coastal Karnataka for speedy service proposed the present new daily train, KRCL changed its earlier stand and agreed to its earlier proposal to bifurcate the Bengaluru-Kannur/Karwar Express at Mangaluru, while cancelling the train between Mangaluru and Karwar.

Inter Rail Timetable Committee that met in Bengaluru recently endorsed the new train. KRCL in the interim petitioned railway minister Piyush Goyal to get the train cancelled. With Angadi coming under fire that his move to introducing new trains in Karnataka was causing loss to railways, MPs Shobha Karandlaje, Ananth Kumar Hegde and former MP Jayaprakash Hegde sorted the issue with railway minister Piyush Goyal on Thursday.

As per revised proposal, Yesvantpur-Vasco-da-Gama-Yesvantpur express (16595/16596) will operate daily and existing Bengaluru-Karwar overnight express (16513/14 and 16523/24) will be cancelled. Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa and minister of

state for railways Suresh C. Angadi will flag off the train at Yesvantpur on Saturday and run on open timings. Regular services from Yesvantpur and Karwar will start from Sunday.

The existing Karwar overnight express that operated as combined service with Bengaluru-Kannur-Bengaluru express (16511/12 & 16517/18) will be cancelled from Sunday. Passengers already booked on these trains will be shifted to new train. Services to Mangaluru will be unaffected as Bengaluru-Kannur Express via Mangaluru Central (4-days via Kunigal and 3-days via Mysuru) will operate with revised composition of 15 coaches.

TIMETABLE

The new train will run as Karwar-Vasco-da-Gama-Karwar special from Karwar to Vasco, the ministry said. Train 16595 leaves Yesvantpur at 6.45pm to reach Karwar at 8.25am and leaves Karwar as a special train at 8.30am to reach Vasco-da-Gama at 10.30am. After maintenance at Vasco, the train departs at 3.25pm to reach Karwar at 5.25pm. Train 16596 departs Karwar at 5.30pm to reach Yesvantpur at 8am.

While existing train (16513/14 and 16523/24) took about 17 hours between Bengaluru and Karwar, new train (16595/16596) takes 13.45 hours. En-route, the train with LHB coaches will halt at Chikkabanavara, Channarayapatna, Hassan, Sakleshpur, Subrahmanya Road, Kaniyur, Kabakaputtur, Bantwal, Surathkal, Mulki, Udupi, Barkur, Kundapura, Byndoor, Bhatkal, Murdeshwar, Honnavar, Kumta, Gokarna Road and Ankola.

OPPOSED

Anil Hegde of Paschima Karavali Rail Yatri Abhivridhi Samiti said there demand for train services persists even with the new train. Existing train that provided connectivity between Mysuru, Mangaluru and Karwar cannot be cancelled without concurrence from Divisional Railway Users' Consultative Committees. Mysuru Grahaka Parishat's Yogendra Swamy said cancellation of Karwar train disconnects Mysuru's connectivity with Karwar.