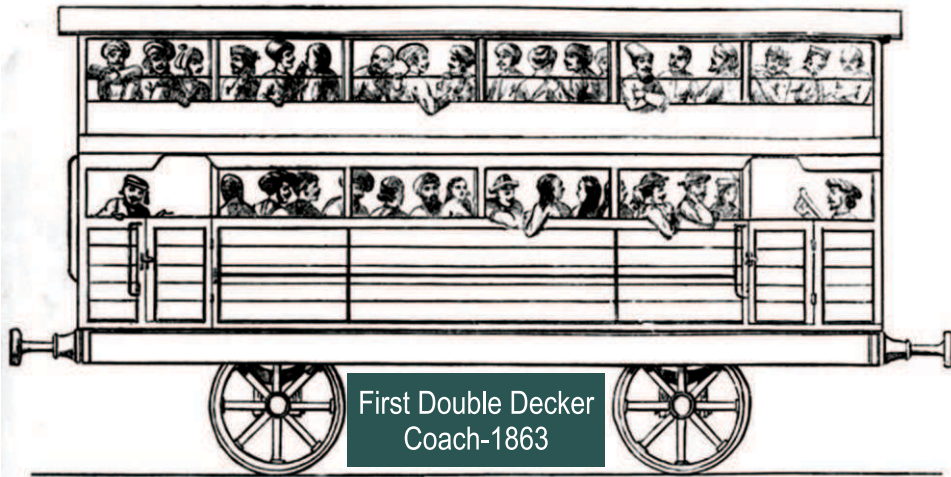


MORE TRAIN PER TRAIN : THE STORY OF DOUBLE DECKER



First Double Decker Coach-1863

BB&CI, the forerunner of Western Railway was the pioneer in this field. The first double decker was run exactly 150 years ago in 1863.

19th September, 2012 was a red letter day for Western Railway and the city of Mumbai. There was a deluge of coverage of the double decker train (running between Mumbai and Ahmedabad) by both print and electronic media. Though the new train - was one of the two dozen trains that are already running between these destinations, yet this train was special. The keen interest of the people and the media frenzy was understandable. We do not need many grey cells to comprehend it. It was a **DOUBLE DECKER** train. The whole city was elated. I was one of them.

Whenever one sees a double



★ **Shri Sharat Chandrayan**
CPRO, Western Railway

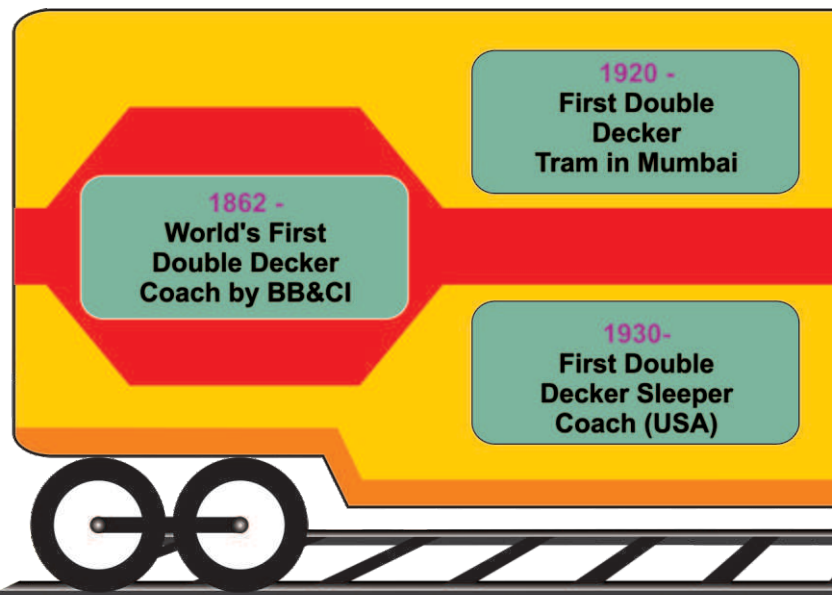
decker, the child in him comes out. Be it a bus, ship, aeroplane or a train! My first tryst with double decker was a train popularly known as "Flying Raneer". I often saw it at Mumbai Central station.

I always wished but never boarded. Still I was enthralled by it.

During early 2000's, in my enthusiasm to provide more seating space for ladies, I rejiggered the marshalling of the train and nominated a double decker coach instead of a normal coach for them. It sparked off a series of complaints from women passengers stating that it was difficult to board the double decker from low level platform as its doors are wide. Initially, I couldn't believe that it could be a cause of complaint. They raised the pitch and one of my seniors intervened and instructed me to board the coach myself to get the firsthand experience.



Double Stack Container



Now I was compelled to board the double decker. To my horror and surprise, I found that the ladies were right and I was wrong! The door was wide and they had genuine problem in embarking the train from a low level platform. There was another complaint of excessive dust at high speed, from the passengers seated at the lower deck. It coerced me to think about the design and the problems of these coaches profoundly.

A chance reading of our old BB&CI magazine revealed that BB&CI, forerunner of Western Railway was the pioneer of double decker coaches. They did it exactly 150 years ago. I was proud to be a part of this Railway. Soon, another fact came to my notice that Flying Raneer was the first train to have (non-AC) double decker coach in India. I was flabbergasted.

Double decker coaches are not very uncommon on foreign railways. Despite certain limitation of design, problem of dust in non-AC coaches and slow dispersal, etc., it has a number of advantages. It increases the passenger capacity without the need of remodeling of yard for a longer train. It also avoids changes in costly signal system which is required to reduce headway in order to increase the number of trains. It is more energy efficient and has lower

Whenever one sees a double decker, the child in him comes out.

operating cost per passenger.

Double decker train in its present avatar of air conditioned coach, is ideal for being the inter-city train. The cities having a distance of between 400-500 km such a Mumbai – Ahmedabad, New Delhi-Jaipur, New Delhi-Amritsar, Ahmedabad-Jaipur, Indore-Bhopal, etc., are ideal destinations for running such trains between them.

Flying Raneer~ India's first non-AC double decker train.



Flying Raneer Express



Courtesy-DNA

AC Double Decker Train

I believe that there are three windows of opportunity available for Railway in India.

- ONE: Consolidation of white goods and their movement in domestic containers.

- TWO: Suburban/ metro railways, but they need viability gap funding as they require huge investment.

- THREE: Inter-city trains, for which double decker is the best choice. India has over 50 cities having population of more than 1 million. Double decker inter-city express will usher a new era of connectivity, trade and urban growth. It has the advantages of greater throughput, cheaper cost and better energy efficiency. Its growth needs sustained effort, child like exuberance though its development will not be a child's play.

 Sharat Chandrayan

CPRO, Western Railway, Churchgate

