



Thane station

How a lizard held Thane station to ransom

It falls on woman, her screams empty the place

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A three-inch long lizard that fell on a woman commuter created panic beyond imagination at Thane station on Thursday night. As she screamed for help, confused commuters well versed with adversities on local trains, panicked and ran helter skelter. Canteens on the platforms were shut quickly while the railway police, who could not fathom what set off the panic, kept running from one platform to another, carrying a stretcher with them.

It was around 8:30 pm when a fast local to Badlapur arrived at platform number five of the station. A huge crowd of commuters were moving along the staircases at the time. Suddenly a loud cry, "*Bachao, bachao*" baffled commuters and people started pushing one another on the staircases. Rahul Surve, a Thane resident, who was on the staircase at the CST end, said, "I was in the middle of the packed staircase when suddenly, all the women on the platform started shouting. Everyone on the staircase, unaware of the situation, instantly started running up and out of the station. It was almost a stampede on the staircase."

Some commuters on the platform jumped onto the tracks on hearing the commotion and a few unfortunately even fell into the open drains between platforms.

Jaikishen Gupta, an employee of a canteen located on the platform said, "We quickly pulled down our shutters as we thought some kind of emergency had gripped the station. In a moment, the entire platform was empty of commuters. There wasn't even a single person on it."

Meanwhile, some commuters informed the Government Railway Police office at platform number 1 about the commotion. "We ran with a stretcher assuming there had been an accident but we did not find anything amiss. We checked all the platforms but everything seemed normal," said S D Jadhav, a constable who was present at the scene.

When the police conducted an enquiry, the reason for the commotion completely baffled them. "It was a middle-aged woman who had shouted for help when a lizard fell on her from the roof of the train. People did not understand why she screamed and instead of helping her, started running. Fortunately no one was hurt," said an official from Thane railway station.