

# Indian Railways hands over 20 Broad Gauge Locomotives to Bangladesh

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To further strengthen bilateral relationship, 20 Broad Gauge (BG) locomotives were virtually flagged off to Bangladesh in a handing over ceremony held today at Rail Bhavan New Delhi, by Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw, Minister of Railways. From the Bangladesh end, Minister of Railway, Md. Nurul Islam Sujan also joined in virtually. The event was attended by Shri A.K.Lahoti, Chairman & CEO, Railway Board, Board Members, senior officials of Railway Board and delegates of Bangladesh.



The handing over of these diesel locomotives, under grant assistance from the Government of India, fulfills an important commitment made during the visit of Hon'ble Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina to India, in October, 2019. In keeping with the requirements of Bangladesh Railway, the locomotives have been suitably modified by the Indian side. These locomotives will help handle the increasing volume of passenger and freight train operations in Bangladesh.

Speaking on this occasion, Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw said, "India's relationship with Bangladesh is civilizational, cultural, social and economic. Prime Ministers of both the countries are playing proactive role to improve bilateral relationship across social, economic and political sectors. Indian Railways are also playing a vital role in improving and strengthening rail connectivity across the border and improving trade between both the countries. As of now, five BG connectivity are operational, namely Geda- Darsana, Benapol- Petrapol, Singhabad- Rohanpur, Radhikapur- Birol and Haldibari-Chilahati. Work on two more cross border rail connectivities, Akhaura-Agartala and Mahihasan-Shahbazpur are progressing well and are likely to be completed and commissioned shortly."

Addressing the gathering virtually, Minister of Railway, Bangladesh Mr. Md. Nurul Islam Sujan said, "I express my gratitude to the Indian Government for their support. Previously in June 2020 Indian Government

provided 10 locomotives to Bangladesh as grant. We express our heartfelt gratitude to India for providing broad gauge locomotives. The supply of locomotives will help to improve both goods and passenger trains. We hope that existing collaboration between two countries regarding Railways sector will increase day by day.”



To enhance people to people contact, presently three pairs of passenger trains between India and Bangladesh, namely, Kolkata-Dhaka Maitree Express, Kolkata-Khulna Bandhan Express and New Jalpaiguri- Dhaka Mitali Express are running.

Trade between both the countries via rail have seen consistent growth with interchange of close to 100 cargo trains per month and approximately 2.66 MT cargo was sent to Bangladesh in the last financial year. The export commodities are Stone, DOC, Foodgrains, China Clay, Gypsum, Maize, Onion and other essential items, as and when required, from India. Since 2020 permission has been given to operate parcel container and NMG rakes which normally carry agricultural products, fabrics, finished goods, light commercial vehicles and tractors. A new traffic of geo-synthetic bags has just started and 3 Parcel trains have been sent from Gujarat.

In line with Indian commitment to improve Rail service in Bangladesh, 10 BG Diesel locomotives were handed over to Bangladesh on grant basis in July 2020. As reported by Bangladesh, these locomotives are performing well and contributing well in smooth movement rail traffic in Bangladesh.

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