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Poor service despite huge investment

Railway making loss every year; passengers see little improvement in quality of service

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Despite increasing government investment in Bangladesh Railway over the years, railway services have not shown much improvement and the entity is continuing to rack up losses.

Bangladesh Railway (BR) authorities, meanwhile, claim that their priority remains on improving services for citizens and not cutting losses. Yet, people are not getting the expected service from the railways, considered a safe public transport system.

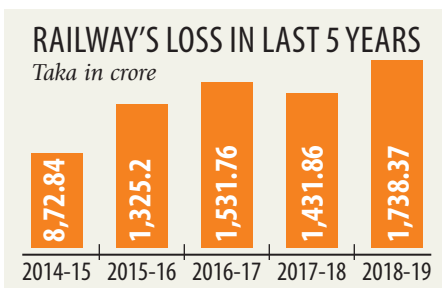
Plagued by shabby compartments, dirty toilets, long delays, unfriendly-access to stations and platforms, ticketing issues, and lack of security, the services offered by BR leave much to be desired.

At the same time, there has been a number of fatal accidents and derailments due to poorly maintained lines and carriages.

Against this backdrop, the BR is going to observe service week from today to mark the eighth anniversary of the formation of the railways ministry.

During the week, 10 taskforces will take action against ticket scalping and check passengers' suffering.

The taskforce, comprising officials of



BR and the ministry, will also "closely monitor" some important issues like train schedules and condition of toilets and compartments.

The BR operates 360 passenger and some 30 freight trains on its 3,000km network across the country, divided into eastern and western zones.

While the number of passengers has risen over the years, the sector has failed to ensure expected service quality.

PASSENGERS' SUFFERINGS

Abu Sadiq late Friday went to Kamalapur Railway Station to go to Dinajpur by Panchagarh Express -- a semi-nonstop intercity train from Dhaka.

His train, scheduled for 10 past midnight, was delayed by 30 minutes but he could only reach Santahar of Bogura by

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The footbridge at Mirpur-10 roundabout in the capital is in a sorry state. Plants in the flower pots have died due to lack of care and the pots have become trash bins. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN



On this day in 1971

DECEMBER 4

The joint force of East Bengal Regiment and sector 1 Captain Mahfuz advance on Chittagong from Western sector and continue their move towards the eastern sector.

They avoid the Pakistani camps on straight lines; rather they pass the camps to confuse the Pakistan military.

Indian fighter jets keep bombing different military

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PURCHASE FOR HABIGANJ MEDICAL COLLEGE

Prices unusually high, but why?

MINTU DESHWARA, back from Habiganj

Sheikh Hasina Medical College in Habiganj spent over Tk 35 lakh to buy 450 anatomical charts for Tk 7,800 each supplied by a Dhaka-based company.

Such a chart can be ordered from online marketplace daraz.com.bd for Tk 496. On amazon.com, the price shown for these charts range from \$8 to \$25.95 (Tk 672 to Tk 2,179.80), depending on quality.

Mizan Mia of Habiganj town, who sells such charts depicting various organs of human body, told this correspondent that the charts are available at Tk 100 to Tk 150 each.

This is not all. The bills for computers, printer, projectors, weighing machines, furniture, books, and anatomical models submitted by two suppliers to the college authorities show unusually high prices compared to market rates.

For instance, in one bill of Nirjhora Enterprise, the price of a set of Hitachi StarBoard, a 79-inch interactive whiteboard, is Tk 15.35 lakh.

On hitachistarboard.us.com, the price shown is \$1,499 with a wall mount unit at \$195. In other words, the interactive board can be bought for Tk 1.42 lakh.

Noman Khan, owner of Authentic Computer in Habiganj town, said he sells Hitachi Company's 79-inch interactive board for Tk 1.35 lakh.

Similarly, a digital weighing machine for laboratory use has been priced at Tk 6.40 lakh by Punam Trade International in their bill, whereas on Amazon, the price of the costliest lab scale is not more than \$700 or Tk 59,500.

In the purchase bills, 67 Lenovo laptops (model 110 Core i5 8th generation) were priced at Tk 99.49 lakh, each costing Tk 1.48 lakh. But the college bought laptops with 6th generation processor.

Besides, an HP colour printer (model Jet Pro M452nw) was priced at Tk 2.48 lakh.

Noman Khan said the same model of laptop that the college bought is available at Tk 39,000 to Tk 42,000 each, and an HP printer of the same model is priced between

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'Unknown person gave me IS cap'

Claims condemned militant Regan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rakibul Hasan Regan, who was sentenced to death in the Holey Artisan café attack case, yesterday claimed that he got the prayer cap with the IS logo from an unknown person on the crowded court premises on November 27, the day the verdict in the case was delivered.

"I don't know the person who gave it to me," responded Regan after Judge Md Majibur Rahman of the Anti-Terrorism Special Tribunal of Dhaka asked him about the cap.

The Neo JMB militant, an ultra-radical offshoot of banned militant outfit Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), was

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Karate brings glory

3 more gold medals for Bangladesh in SA games



Marzan



Humaira



Al Amin



ATIQUE ANAM from Kathmandu

Humaira Akhter Antara could barely finish her sentences as she choked back the tears while expressing her feelings after winning Bangladesh a gold medal in women's karate (under-61kg kumite) in the 13th South Asian Games at the Satdobato Sports Complex in Kathmandu yesterday.

The 18-year-old karateka, who had won the first medal for her country the day before, was quite restrained when expressing her feelings on that day. But after she beat Nepal's Anu Gurung to win gold in the women's under-61kg category, she could not complete the post-event interview as she stammered for a while before desperately trying to hold back her tears.

"I sacrificed many things, including my studies, for this sport. I missed my university admission tests just because of the SA Games preparation. If I were not playing here, I would have got admitted

to a good university," said the teenager before breaking into tears, as if all her pent-up emotions stemming from years of dedication, sacrifice and hard work had finally found a meaning.


Antara came to karate six years ago and had persevered through these years to see this day, she said, to win a medal at the South Asian Games.

Her gold medal was the third of the day for Bangladesh, which had begun with Al Amin Islam's gold early in the morning, the Army man beating Pakistan's participant in the final of the under-60kg category of kumite.

The second gold came soon through Marzan Akter Priya, who beat Pakistan's Qausar Sana in the under-55kg final of kumite. Priya, another teenager like Antara, did not shed a tear but was equally reflective of her struggles to reach this stage.

"My father was against me doing karate. He wanted me to stop pursuing this sport

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