



Carrying an assortment of colourful, inflated gas balloons in the shape of animals, Ashik sets off to different fairs in Khulna city. Children gleefully greet him and tug at their parents to get them their balloons of choice. Selling each for Tk 50, Ashik earns Tk 1,000-1,200 daily, with which he supports his family. This photo was taken at Khalishpur Probhati High School field recently.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

# AMBULANCE service in trains

Railway to add 4 such cars to its fleet as part of project to procure 200 new carriages

TUHIN SHUBIRA ADHIKARY

Bangladesh Railway (BR) is on course to procure 200 broad gauge (BG) passenger carriages to meet the ongoing crisis of rail engines and expand its services by adding new trains to its fleet.

Among the carriages, there will be four AC ambulance sleeper cars as well.

Once the sleeper cars are added to the fleet, for the first time a train in Bangladesh will have ambulance facilities for ailing patients, BR sources said.

The state-run transport agency will procure the carriages under a Tk 1,704.34 crore project within June 2025.

The project, where European Investment Bank will provide Tk 1,331.20 crore as loan, is likely to be placed before the next Ecne meeting on Tuesday, BR sources said.

The development comes at a time when 190 BG carriages, out of 468 (around 41 percent), are overaged, causing obstruction to train operations and improvement of passengers services, they said.

Once the new carriages are added to the fleet, it will also increase the availability of carriages and help to replace the old and overaged carriages.

**The ambulance sleeper cars will have all the facilities an ICU ambulance provides. Each of the cars will have such facilities for 12 ailing patients.**

Moreover, BR will be able to operate more trains on new routes to meet growing demands and increase revenue of the losing concern, the sources added.

According to project documents, of the 200 carriages, 80 will be Shovan Chair Cars, 42 AC Chair Cars, 25 AC Sleeper Cars, 16 Shovan Chair Cars with dining car and prayer room, and 26 AC Power Cars with luggage van and guard brake.

#### AMBULANCE FACILITIES

Meanwhile, each of the four AC ambulance sleeper cars will cost around Tk 7.51 crore, according to project documents.

#### AT A GLANCE

BR to get **200** new carriages  
80 Shovan chair cars  
42 AC chair cars  
25 AC sleeper cars  
16 Shovan chair cars with dining car and prayer room  
26 AC power cars with luggage van and guard brake  
7 more cars for other purposes

#### AMBULANCE CARS

4 AC ambulance sleeper cars to be added to fleet  
Each costing around Tk **7.51** cr  
Cars to have facilities of standard ICU ambulances

#### PROJECT COST

Carriages to be procured under Tk **1,704.34** cr project  
European Investment Bank will provide Tk **1,331.20** cr as loan  
Currently, **190** out of **468** broad gauge carriages are overaged



A BR official, who is well-informed about the project, said the ambulance sleeper cars will have all facilities a usual ICU ambulance provides.

Each of the cars will have such facilities for 12 ailing patients.

Huge traffic congestion on the road and providing people with improved services at a relatively low cost are the reason behind introducing the ambulance service, the BR mechanical engineer told The Daily Star yesterday.

#### WHY MORE CARRIAGES?

Currently, BR has a total of 3,093km rail lines across 43 districts, of which 879.85km are Broad Gauge (BG) while 533.7km are Dual Gauge (DG) while the rest are Metre Gauge lines, according to BR's latest Information Book.

All BG lines are in the west zone.

However, the railway is currently implementing a 30-year master-plan for 2016 to 2045, divided into six phases.

A total of 230 projects, with an estimated cost of Tk 5,53,662 crore, have been proposed in the plan.

According to the masterplan, gauge conversion to BG is to be accomplished gradually so that within 30 to 35 years, the whole track will be converted to BG as part of the infrastructure rationalisation policy, show BR documents.

Additionally, the construction of Padma Bridge with rail line and dedicated railway bridge over the Jamuna river will improve connectivity between railways zones as well as with neighbouring countries, which will ultimately enhance passenger and freight traffic growth.

Internal enhanced demand, replacement of old carriages and ensuring internal traffic handling will create a necessity of 400 BG passenger carriages within two to four years, of which 200 will be required soon, reads the document.

The number of BG carriages were 324 in 2010, out of which 114 were more than 35 years old. In 2019, the number increased to 467 and stood at 468 till October last year.

Once the 200 new carriages are added to fleet, the replaced carriages could be used in local or commuter trains, based on condition reports.

Mentionable, railway has a total of 1,203 metre gauge carriages, and at least 52 percent of them are overaged.

Monjur-ul-alam Chowdhury, additional director general (Rolling Stock) of BR, and Mohammed Kudrat-E-Khuda, chief mechanical engineer (west), who is leading the project, could not be reached over phone for comments, despite several attempts.

## 6 killed, 2 hurt in road accidents

STAR REPORT

Six people were killed and two injured in road accidents in four districts during the last two days, according to reports from our correspondents.

In Narsingdi, three people died when a bus collided head-on with a microbus on Dhaka-Sylhet highway near Morjal bus stand around 4:00am yesterday, said SI Khaled Mahmud of Bhairab highway Police Station. The deceased – the driver and two passengers of the microbus – could not be identified immediately.

In Manikganj, a pedestrian was killed after being hit by a battery-run auto-rickshaw yesterday, said OC Riyaz Uddin Ahmed Biplob of Ghior Police Station. The deceased, Md Jalal Uddin (70), was a resident of Sribari.

In Dinajpur, two people were injured as three trucks crashed into four roadside shops in Phulbari area yesterday. Hasu Sheikh (52), one of the truckers from Pabna; and Golap Hossain (50) from Dinajpur were undergoing treatment at Phulbari Upazila Health Complex. The incident happened at Laxmipur village, said OC Md Ashrafur Islam of Phulbari Police Station.

Initially, a truck rammed into a roadside shop as its driver lost control over the vehicle after one of its tyres got punctured, said the OC. Later, two other Dhaka-bound trucks hit three shops.

In Natore, a bicyclist was killed as his cycle and a human haulier collided at Moukharahat in Baraigram yesterday. Shahidul Islam (40) from Uttarpara was declared dead at a hospital.

In Kaharol upazila, Md Sultan Ahmed (40) died after a speeding truck hit his cycle at Ichhail village on Wednesday.



PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

## Better care for newborns CMCH introduces neonatal unit

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

With a view to providing better treatment to critical neonatal patients, the authorities of Chattogram Medical College Hospital introduced Special Care Neonatal Unit yesterday, marking the birth anniversary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and National Children's Day.

CMCH Director Brig Gen Shamim Ahsan inaugurated the 30-bed unit established under the Neonatal Ward at the hospital.

The critical neonatal patients – aged between 0 day and 28 days – will benefit from the unit, said doctors.

Earlier, the newborns had to receive treatment with other patients at the Neonatal Ward, hospital sources said.

Tahmina Begum, who transferred her premature baby to the newly-introduced unit from a private hospital, said doctors at the private hospital suggested her to keep the baby in an incubator, which she could not afford.

"At the neonatal unit, babies like mine will get better treatment for free," she said.

According to doctors, not only the newborns, but also babies born underweight, with infection and breathing difficulties will be treated there.

The unit is equipped with modern treatment facilities – including phototherapy, ventilator and maintenance of temperature, said the director.

Prof Dr Jagadis Chandra Das, head of Neonatal Ward, said alongside other facilities, Kangaroo Mother Care has been introduced at the unit.

Kangaroo care, also called skin-to-skin contact, is a technique of newborn care where babies are kept chest-to-chest and skin-to-skin with a parent, typically their mother, said Dr Dhiman Chowdhury, a consultant at the pediatric ward of the hospital.

## Trader held with 663 sacks of rice meant for poor

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) yesterday arrested a man at Tangail Sadar upazila and seized 663 sacks (497 maunds) of rice, meant for the disadvantaged, from his warehouse.

The arrestee was identified as Sharat Chandra Sutradhar (60) of College Para in Karatia union in the area.

Mohammad Ershadur Rahman, commander of Rab-12, said acting on a tip off, they raided a depot near the main gate of Karatia Zamindar Bari area in the morning and arrested Sharat.

The law enforcers later seized the rice.

After arrest, Sharat admitted to the law enforcers that he used to

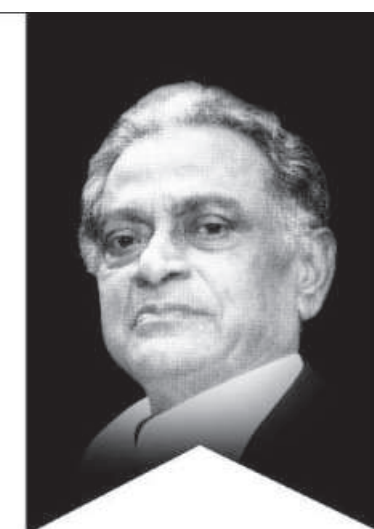


PHOTO: STAR

sell rice, which was meant for the disadvantaged under a government scheme of Tk 10 per kilogramme, on black market.

The official also said Sharat used to sell the rice to people at higher prices at his store.

A case was filed against him, he added.



**Kazi Golam Mahboob**  
(1927-2006)

An activist of the 1952 Language Movement and President of the Bangladesh Supreme Court Bar Association

"A heart of gold" is what every family member and friend has complimented about our father. His love for our family, especially our mother, was paramount.

He consistently lifted up those around him, whether it was through financial support, or simply a funny joke or a compliment. We salute him for the sacrifices he made for the nation as the convener of the Language movement and his noble patriotism.

Sixteen years ago we lost our father only in body, but not in spirit. We remain grateful and comforted knowing how much he positively affected the lives of others. The love he spread on this Earth continues to grow and will live on, and that is the ultimate measure of any human being.

A milad mahfil and prayer congregation will be held in Dhaka and his birthplace Gournadi, Barisal.

- Family Members

**AMOREX BANANI T1**  
1305 SFT creating inspirations

**DOM-INNO**

**BUSINESS CENTRE MIRPUR T1**  
3210 | 1605 sft

PERFECT COMMERCIAL SPACE FOR  
**SHOW ROOM OFFICE SPACE**

09612 119999  
01885 000300  
sales@dominno-bd.com