

Prime Minister of India & Prime Minister of Bangladesh Jointly along with Chief Minister, West Bengal Flag off New Cross-Border Train between India & Bangladesh, "Kolkata-Khulna Bandhan Express" from Kolkata through Video Confencing

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**Two Rail Bridges in Bangladesh and International Rail Passenger Terminus at Kolkata Station also Inaugurated**

Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, the Bangladesh Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of Bangladesh & the Chief Minister of West Bengal, Mamata Banerjee, in an historical event today **flagged off Cross Border Train between India & Bangladesh, the Kolkata-Khulna Bandhan Express** through video conference from Kolkata station. The leaders unveiled jointly an e-plaque to inaugurate the following:

- (i) Second Bharirab & Titas Railway Bridges in Bangladesh,
- (ii) International Rail Passenger Terminus with End-to-End Immigration and Customs Clearance Facilities (for the passengers of Maitree Express and Bandhan Express) at Kolkata station.

Shri Sudip Bandyopadhyaya, Member of Parliament & Chairman, Parliamentary Standing Committee on Railways, Smt. Mala Saha, MLA, Shri Harindra Rao, General Manager, Eastern Railway, Mr. Toufique Hassan, Dy. High Commissioner, Bangladesh Deputy High Commission, Kolkata were also present to grace the occasion at Kolkata station.

In his address, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi said that the close connection and understanding between two countries requires connectivity between the people across the border and Maitree Express and Bandhan Express trains will further add to connectivity between India and Bangladesh and strengthen and strengthen our bonding. He underlined the fact that India has emerged as the most trusted partner of Bangladesh by undertaking and completing a series of developmental projects in Bangladesh.

The Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina, lauded the initiative and expressed hope that there would be more such initiatives for increasing rail link & connectivity between the two countries. She also highlighted the fact that it would result in reducing the journey time for the passengers of Maitree and Bandhan Express trains with the

introduction of International Passenger Rail Terminus with End-to-End Immigration and Customs Clearance Facilities.

The Chief Minister of West Bengal, Mamata Banerjee said that this new Passenger Train link between Kolkata & Khulna will strengthen the ties between two countries. She expressed happiness on introduction of the new train between the two countries & recollected the traditional bonding with Bangladesh.

The Bandhan Express train is the second train to be flagged off after the introduction of 'Maitree Express' between Kolkata and Dhaka Cantonment stations in April, 2008. It covers the distance between Kolkata and Khulna through Petrapole & Benapole route to cater to the demands of the people from both the countries to enhance the connectivity.

The Bandhan Express will be a weekly service on every Thursday. The Kolkata - Khulna Bandhan Express (13129 Up) will depart from Kolkata at 07.10 hrs.(IST) and arrives at Khulna at 12:30 hrs.(BST) on the return journey the Khulna-Kolkata Bandhan Express (13130 Down) will depart from Khulna at 13.30 hrs. (BST) and arrive at Kolkata at 18.10 hrs.(IST) on the same day. The immigration and Customs checks will take place at Kolkata International Passenger Terminal for the Indian side and at Benapol border station for Bangladesh side.

The journey time of Maitree Express from Kolkata to Dhaka will be 08 hrs.25mts while from Dhaka to Kolkata it will take 08 hrs.15mts. The journey time would be reduced by 2 hours. It will depart from Kolkata at 7.10 hrs.(IST) (on Mon, Tue, Fri & Sat) and arrive at Dhaka at 16.05 hrs.(BST) instead of earlier arrival at Dhaka at 18.05 hrs.(BST). On the return journey it will depart from Dhaka at 08.15 hrs.(BST) (on Wed, Fri, Sat & Sun) instead of earlier departure from Dhaka at 08.10 hrs. (BST) and arrive at Kolkata at 16.00 hrs.(IST) instead of earlier arrival at Kolkata at 18.10 hrs.(IST).

In order to reduce the en-route journey time of the passengers of the existing Kolkata – Dhaka Cantt. Maitree Express and newly introduced Kolkata – Khulna Bandhan Express, Ministry of Railways, with the coordination of Department of Immigration & Customs has opened an **International Rail Passenger Terminus** at Kolkata station with proper infrastructure and facilities of end-to-end immigration. With this new facility at Kolkata Terminal, the passengers of Maitree Express and Bandhan Express will be immensely benefitted.

The second Bhairab Bridge and Titas Bridge in Bangladesh built under the assistance of Government of India are two of the most important projects in Bangladesh for infrastructure and rolling stock development. The one kilometer long second Bhairab Railway Bridge was built over the mighty Meghna river at a cost of around USD 75 millions by Indian contractors and consultants. Similarly, the Titas bridge over river Titas in Eastern Bangladesh was built with a cost of around USD 25 million. Both these bridges are on the main Chittagong to Dhaka Trunk Rail Line which will help in faster movement of both passenger and freight trains of Bangladesh.

Following is the text of the Prime Minister's address on the occasion:

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festival season  
video conference  
leaders  
, visits  
protocol  
South Asia Satellite launch video conference  
Petrapole ICP  
connectivity projects video conference  
Connectivity people-to-people connectivity.  
international passenger terminus - express - express

customs immigration , 3

, rail shared vision

connectivity , pre-1965 connectivity vision

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rail 100 million dollars rail network

8 billion dollars concessional (-) finance commitment projects

Development Connectivity , links , ,

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**END**

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