

Traffic woes: Dhaka will see a ‘massive difference’ by 2030, PM says

February 9, 2023

Online Desk: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today said that Dhaka city will witness a “massive difference by 2030” as the government will implement various projects for improving rail connectivity to ease traffic congestion in the capital. “Insha Allah, Dhaka city will have a different scenario by 2030, through rail communication,” she said while inaugurating train operations from Rooppur, Shashidal and Joydebpur railway stations on the newly installed 69.20 km track under three projects of Bangladesh Railway, joining virtually from her official residence Ganabhaban, reports UNB.

The prime minister said that the government has already introduced Metro Rail for Dhaka city dwellers which will be extended from Uttara to Kamalapur in near future. She said that not only elevated, the government is also going to introduce underground train, and for that it has started construction work under the MRT-I project. “It (rail) will save commute time and costs. Traffic of Dhaka city will ease,” she said. Railways Minister Md. Nurul Islam Sujan, Deputy High Commissioner of India to Bangladesh Dr Binoy George, and Railways Secretary Dr. Md. Humayun Kabir also spoke at the programme. A documentary on the three projects of Bangladesh Railway was screened at the event.

The PM said that her government has constructed the Padma Multipurpose Bridge with own financing and ensured rail communication facilities on the bridge. She said that installation work of rail track on the Padma Multipurpose Bridge is going on in full swing. She added that extension of the rail track to Rupdia and Singia of Jashore is progressing. “Besides, two fast-track projects are being implemented to establish rail connectivity with the tourist destination Cox’s Bazar, thanks to the initiative of the Awami League government,” she said.

Sheikh Hasina said the government is also constructing a separate rail bridge on the Jamuna river, which is progressing fast. “Those who once opposed rail connectivity through the Bangabandhu Bridge are now proposing to construct a separate rail bridge on Jamuna river. Construction work of the Bangabandhu Rail Bridge is going on,” she said. The PM said that construction of Akhaura-Laksam dual-gauge double-line, Dhaka-Tongi 3rd and 4th dual-gauge line and Tongi-Joydebpur dual-gauge double-line are under construction.

In addition, she said, the government is constructing Dhaka-Narayanganj dual-gauge line, Bhanga-Barishal-Paira Port railway line, Joydebpur-Ishwardi dual-gauge double-line, Khulna-Darshana dual-gauge double-line, Sirajganj-Bogura dual-gauge railway line. “Moreover, work on Joydebpur-Mymensingh-Jamalpur dual-gauge double-line, Rooppur nuclear power plant rail-link, Akhaura-Agartala rail line, Dhirashram ICD project is in progress,” she said. The prime minister said that for the purpose of transporting goods of Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant, the government took up the project titled “Rehabilitation and Construction of Railway Line with Signaling for Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant” with own funding.

Under the project, a total of 26.52 km railway track including loop-line, Rooppur Railway Station building, 7 culverts, 13 level crossing gates and signaling-telecom work have been completed. Sheikh Hasina said they undertook the project to upgrade the Dhaka-Chittagong corridor to a double-line. Earlier, out of 321 km of this corridor, 249 km double-line construction has been completed, she said. The project titled “Construction of Dual Gauge Double Rail Line from Akhaura to Laksam and Conversion of Existing Rail Line to Dual Gauge” was taken up with Asian Development Bank and European Investment Bank and self-financing for construction of remaining 72 km double-line.

Saying that Laksam-Cumilla train service started earlier, Sheikh Hasina said that now railway double line construction from Shashidal to Rajapur and from Kasba to Mandbagh has been completed which was inaugurated today. “The double line on the remaining 33 km route will be completed in June this year, Insha Allah,” she said. The prime minister also highlighted briefly the development works for railway in the last 14 years. She said that they have constructed 650 km of new railway lines, converted 280 km of meter gauge to dual gauge and rehabilitated/reconstructed 1,297 km of lines.

Besides, 126 new station buildings and 223 station buildings have been rehabilitated/reconstructed, she said. In addition, 732 new railway bridges were constructed while 774 railway bridges were rehabilitated or reconstructed alongside rehabilitation of 50 broad gauge and 50 meter gauge passenger coaches. Sheikh Hasina said they have acquired 106 locomotives, 20 sets of DEMUs, 535 passenger carriages and 516 freight wagons. The government has developed and modernized signaling system at 130 stations, she said, adding that a total of 142 new trains including Mitali Express have been launched on 44 new and extended routes.