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RCF Kapurthala Rolls Out First LHB Coach Rake for Bangladesh Railway

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RCF Kapurthala Rolls Out First LHB Coach Rake for Bangladesh Railway

12 August 2026 · 3 min read ·

✓ Every fact web-verified against primary sources

Rail Coach Factory (RCF), Kapurthala, rolled out the first 19-coach **LHB (Linke Hofmann Busch)** broad-gauge rake for **Bangladesh Railway** on **August 12, 2026**, the first delivery under a 2024 export order for 200 coaches.

WHAT WAS DELIVERED

The rake comprises **3 AC Sleeper, 3 AC Chair Car, 11 Non-AC Chair Car** coaches and **2 Power Cars**, totalling 19 coaches. It is the first tranche of a broader order for **200 coaches across seven variants**, brokered by **BITES Limited** and financed by the **European Investment Bank (EIB)**, with deliveries scheduled to run from **June 2026 through December 2027**. The coaches are built to crashworthy design standards under **European Standard EN 15227**, and are configured to run on Bangladesh Railway's **415V electrical system**, distinct from the 750V system used on Indian Railways' own LHB rakes.

BITES AND INDIA'S RAIL-EXPORT ECOSYSTEM

BITES Limited is a **Navratna** Central Public Sector Enterprise under the **Ministry of Railways**, functioning as India's principal transport-engineering consultancy and export-facilitation arm, structuring deals that combine Indian manufacturing capacity, in this case RCF Kapurthala's coach-building expertise, with export financing arranged through institutions like the European Investment Bank. This model lets Indian Railways' domestic manufacturing base serve as an export platform for regional rail modernisation, generating both commercial revenue and diplomatic goodwill.

CONTINUITY IN INDIA-BANGLADESH RAIL COOPERATION

This delivery builds on an earlier supply of **120 LHB coaches to Bangladesh Railway in 2015-16**, indicating a sustained, repeat commercial relationship rather than a one-off transaction. It also sits within India's wider rail-connectivity engagement with Bangladesh, which includes the **Agartala-Akhaura rail link** and the broader **Maitri Setu** connectivity framework linking Northeast India to Bangladesh, all components of India's "**Neighbourhood First**" policy.

THE SOFT-POWER AND CONNECTIVITY DIMENSION

Rail-coach exports of this kind function as a quieter, longer-horizon instrument of regional influence compared with high-visibility summit diplomacy: modernised passenger rolling stock improves everyday commuter experience in the recipient country for a decade or more, builds durable technical and maintenance relationships between the two countries' railway systems, and creates a track record that supports future, larger connectivity or infrastructure agreements. For India, sustaining and expanding rail-coach exports to neighbouring countries is also a tangible marker of "Make in India" manufacturing capability finding external markets, beyond the domestic modernisation of India's own rolling stock.

UPSC RELEVANCE

GS Paper 2: India's "Neighbourhood First" policy; India-Bangladesh bilateral relations and connectivity infrastructure (Agartala-Akhaura link, Maitri Setu); the role of PSU consultancy/export arms like RITES in regional diplomacy.

GS Paper 3: Manufacturing capacity and export competitiveness under Make in India; railway infrastructure and rolling-stock standards.

Mains angle: "Infrastructure exports, such as railway rolling stock, function as a sustained instrument of India's neighbourhood diplomacy. Discuss with reference to India-Bangladesh rail cooperation." (250 words)

Prelims focus: RITES Limited's status as a Navratna CPSE under the Ministry of Railways; the financing source for the current order (European Investment Bank); the size of the current order (200 coaches, seven variants) versus the 2015-16 supply (120 coaches).

★ FACTS CORNER, KNOWLEDGE PEDIA

RCF KAPURTHALA-BANGLADESH RAILWAY COACH ORDER:

First rake rolled out: August 12, 2026; 19 coaches (3 AC Sleeper, 3 AC Chair Car, 11 Non-AC Chair Car, 2 Power Cars)

Full order: 200 coaches, 7 variants; brokered by RITES Limited; financed by the European Investment Bank

Delivery window: June 2026 to December 2027

Built to EN 15227 crashworthy standard; runs on Bangladesh Railway's 415V system

Prior supply: 120 LHB coaches, 2015-16

RITES LIMITED:

Navratna CPSE, under the Ministry of Railways

Sources: *PIB, Ministry of Railways, The Hindu*

Source: RCF Kapurthala Rolls Out First LHB Coach Rake for Bangladesh Railway — Ujiyari.com | Free UPSC & State PCS Current Affairs

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