

AI cameras to prevent elephant collisions on Dohazari–Cox’s Bazar railway

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Dhaka: Bangladesh Railway is set to spend BDT 40 crore on installing AI-powered cameras along the Dohazari–Cox’s Bazar rail line to prevent elephant and wildlife accidents, particularly in areas passing through protected forests.

Officials say six sensor-equipped cameras, imported from the US and supplied by a Hong Kong-based firm, will be operational by the end of this year. The system, designed by international consultants, will detect elephants on the tracks and trigger red warning lights visible to train drivers from up to 700 meters away—enough distance to stop trains safely.

The 103-km railway, launched in December 2023 at a cost of BDT 11,000 crore, cuts through 27 km of protected forests, including Chunati and Fasiakhali sanctuaries. Despite building overpasses and

underpasses for safe crossings, incidents continue, a baby elephant was killed in October 2024, prompting authorities to impose a 20 km/h speed limit in sanctuary zones. In July 2025, a collision was narrowly avoided when a herd appeared at night.

Experts argue the line has disrupted traditional elephant corridors. Researcher Prof Monirul Hasan Khan called the mitigation measures insufficient, though the AI system may reduce risks. Wildlife officer Nur Jahan noted that while elephants have avoided the overpass in recent months, some underpasses and culverts remain in use.

Project Director Md Sabuktagin defended the infrastructure, stating that underpasses are over five meters high, fencing and saltwater points have been installed, and elephants continue to use certain passages.

Chunati Wildlife Sanctuary, home to 40–50 Asian elephants, remains a critical habitat intersected by the new railway—making the upcoming AI safety system crucial for both trains and wildlife.

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