



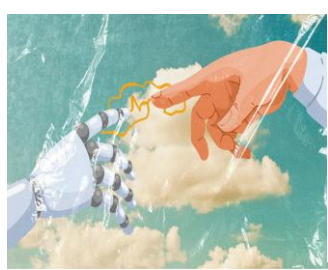
Mexico elects Sheinbaum as first woman president
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ILLEGAL RAIL CROSSINGS

Mushrooming despite rising fatalities

TUHUN SUBHRA ADHIKARY

Different government agencies have built at least 140 level crossings across the country over the last four years without taking permission from Bangladesh Railway.

The agencies, which include the LGED, union parishads and municipalities, constructed those in blatant violations of the relevant law, raising the risk of railroad-related fatalities.

Currently, there are 3,111 level crossings in the country that has a railway network spanning 3,093 kilometres. Of the crossings, 1,225 or around 40 percent, are unauthorized, shows the latest BR data.

Moreover, more than 50 percent of the 1,886 legal level crossings don't have any dedicated gatekeepers.

According to the BR data, 322 people were killed in 353 accidents at level-crossings since 2008.



✓ Total number of level crossings 3,111	✓ Authorised, manned level crossings 938 (49.73%)	✓ 140 illegal level crossings built in last 4 years
✓ Authorised level crossings 1,886 (60.72%)	✓ Unmanned level crossings 948 (50.27%)	✓ 353 level crossing accidents since 2008 killed 322
✓ Unauthorised level crossings 1,225 (39.38%)	SOURCE: BANGLADESH RAILWAY	

The number of deaths, however, is much lower than those counted by several non-governmental organisations. The Road Safety Foundation, an NGO working to ensure transport safety, said at least 219 people were killed in 116 accidents at level crossings from January 1, 2020 to July 29 this year.

According to the foundation's data, 74 people were killed in 35 accidents at level crossings till July this year, while 76 lives were lost in 43 accidents last year and 69 lives in 38 accidents in 2020.

In reply to a query, he said that if the railway decides to employ gatekeepers for all unauthorised level crossings, it has to recruit 10,000 people for this purpose only.

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Tea workers block the Dhaka-Sylhet highway near Jagadishpur area of Madhabpur in Habiganj. The workers were demonstrating to press home their demand of a raise in their daily wages from Tk 120 to Tk 300. The photo was taken around noon yesterday.

Photo: Mintu Deshwara

PRESS COUNCIL ACT

Amendments go against views of stakeholders



ZYMA ISLAM

While the Bangladesh Press Council has proposed an amendment to the Press Council Act to impose stricter fines on journalists, the council's records show the move is contrary to the sentiments of the journalists in its board.

In June, the cabinet approved in principle an amendment to the law that would allow the Press Council to levy fines on journalists for "false reporting".

The council can also take suo motu action against news that "is against the state", Cabinet Secretary Khandaker Anwarul Islam had said while briefing journalists after the meeting in June.

This proposed amendment to the Press Council Act-1974 was sent to the information ministry by the Press Council.

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DEATH IN POLICE CUSTODY

We'll sue cops first, then receive body

Sumon's family vows;protesters block DIT Road

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The family of Sumon Sheikh, who died in police custody on Saturday, will not receive his body for burial until it files a murder case with a court today.

"We prepared a murder case but could not submit it as court hours were over. We hope to file a case tomorrow [today]. Then, we will receive the body and bury him in Bhola," Sujan Sheikh, a brother-in-law of the deceased, told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said they would lodge the case against some police personnel, including the officer-in-charge of Hatirjheel Police Station and a staffer of the company where Sumon worked. Sumon's body was at the mortuary of Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital after autopsy.

Around 7:30pm yesterday, relatives and locals formed a human chain in Rampura Bazar area, demanding justice for Sumon. They blocked the DIT Road.

Around 10:30pm, members of Chhatra League swooped on the protesters, claimed sources and relatives of the deceased.

An official of Rampura Police Station said he saw some people moving the protesters and clearing the road. Police have refuted the allegations and showed CCTV footage of Sumon dying by suicide inside the lockup.

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More attacks may happen

PM alerts people, says Rashid, dalim were in Dhaka during Aug 21 attack



BSS, DHAKA

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday cautioned people about a repeat of carnage like that of August 15, 1975, as those who don't like the country's development would not sit idle.

She reiterated that the August 21 grenade attack was launched under direct patronage of the BNP government.

She said then prime minister Khaleda Zia, also the BNP chairperson, had sent abroad four people, including one of the perpetrators of August 21 grenade attack Maulana Tajuddin, and killers of Bangabandhu Col Rashid and Dalim on that day.

Hasina said it was learnt that Col Rashid and Dalim were in Dhaka at that time and they were under the supervision of Khaleda and her elder son Tarique Rahman.

She added that the perpetrators had decided to leave the country when they were sure that Hasina did not die.

"More attacks may happen. The August 15, 1975, attack was carried out when Bangabandhu started country's development. Today, Bangladesh became a developing nation and is heading towards a developed one. ... those who don't like this will not sit idle, they must attack. ... so be alert to this."

Later, she along with AL's general secretary placed another wreath on behalf of the party.

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