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## Level crossings to be 'safer'

Ministries decide speed bumps ahead of them; overpasses or underpasses under future road projects

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Amid growing concerns over the casualties at unauthorised and unmanned railway level crossings, the authorities yesterday decided to take several measures to ensure safety.

The steps include constructing speed breakers on each side of level crossings, reducing the number of illegal level crossings and erecting overpasses or underpasses in future projects, officials said.

The decisions were made in an inter-ministerial meeting over the issue at Rail Bhaban yesterday.

Representatives of LGRD, road transport and bridges, railways ministries and Bangladesh Railway (BR) were present at the meeting with Railways Ministry Secretary Salim Reza in the chair.

The meeting was held at a time when around 70 percent authorised level crossings do not have dedicated manpower. Besides, there are 1,149 unauthorised level crossings which have no gateman.

### UNMANNED, ILLEGAL LEVEL CROSSINGS

Out of 1,412 authorised level crossings, 964 are unmanned, according to the latest document of BR.

At least nine government bodies were involved in constructing unauthorised level crossings, with the Local Government Engineering Department having constructed the highest 516 level crossings, the document shows.

Between 2008 and 2018, 263 people were killed in 297 rail-related accidents between, it said. But the actual number would be much higher.

At least 158 people were killed and 39 others injured in

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A motorcycle being pulled out of a manhole on KDA Avenue in Khulna city after a biker fell into it yesterday. The accident happened as the authorities concerned removed the cover for work in sewerage lines on both sides of the road.

PHOTO: DIPANKAR ROY

## 'Some AL men brought in arms for use against me'

Quader Mirza claims

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

Ruling Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader's younger brother Abdul Quader Mirza yesterday claimed that some AL leaders from Feni and Noakhali had sent arms to be used against him.

Mirza, the incumbent mayor of Basurhat municipality in Noakhali, said his brother is not supporting him. He also said the local Awami League or administrations are not by his side and everyone left him as he was telling the truth about them.

Only local people are supporting him, he said.

"You will need us to win in the national election. You will have to be careful to win in future. It is not very easy. You will have to collect information on those who walk with you," Mirza said, addressing his elder brother while speaking at an electoral rally at ward 9 of Basurhat municipality.

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## Invisible power protecting rapist

Claims mother of murder, rape victim

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The mother of the 17-year-old girl who was raped before her death said an invisible power was trying to protect the man accused of raping her.

"Considering everything, it seems to us that they have been getting special privileges since the beginning," the grieving mother told The Daily Star.

Even though the body of the O-level student was sent to a morgue Thursday evening, the autopsy was not done until the next day, she said.

Besides, police mentioned in the inquest report that she was 19 although when she was 17.

Fardin Iftekhar Dihan, the accused, was taken to a court and then to jail within a short time, she added.

"When we wanted to know what the boy said in his confession, the police told us that they would let us know. But they had not done that in the last two days."

The family wanted to accuse three other men besides Dihan, because when Dihan called the girl, he said there would be four of them at his flat, the mother said, adding that she saw the four of them at the hospital.

But police recommended that the three

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## INDONESIA PLANE CRASH

# Black boxes located

No hope for survivors as rescuers find body parts, debris in sea

REUTERS, Jakarta

Indonesian authorities yesterday located the black boxes of the Sriwijaya Air jet that crashed into the sea soon after taking off from the capital Jakarta, as human body parts and pieces of the plane were retrieved.

The Boeing 737-500 with 62 passengers and crew was headed on a domestic flight to Pontianak in West Kalimantan on Saturday before it disappeared from radar screens four minutes after take-off.

Indonesia National Transport Safety Committee (KNKT) chief Soerjanto Tjahjono said the locations of Flight SJ 182's two black boxes had been identified.

"Hopefully, we can retrieve them soon," said military chief Hadi Tjahjanto, without giving an estimated timeframe.

Search will continue into the night, a search and rescue official said, but efforts will be limited to sonar scans by boats.

There were no clues yet as to what caused the crash, the first major aircrash in Indonesia since 189 passengers and crew were killed in 2018 when a Lion Air Boeing 737 Max in 2018 also plunged into the Java Sea soon after take-off from Soekarno-Hatta International Airport.

Even before the latest crash, more people had died in air crashes in Indonesia than in any other country over the past decade, according to Aviation Safety Network's database.

Pieces of wreckage were brought to Jakarta port by rescuers, including the plane's altimeter radar, emergency chute and a piece that was suspected to have come off of the bottom part of the plane's tail, KNKT official Nurcahyo Utomo said.

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## Man killed in 'gunfight' between Rohingyas

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

A man was killed and 10 others were injured in a "gunfight" between two groups of Rohingyas at a refugee camp in Cox's Bazar early yesterday.

The dead Noor Hakim, 27, was a resident of Chakmarkul Rohingya Camp no. 21 in Teknaf upazila.

Commanding Officer of Armed Police Battalion (APBn)-16 Torikul Islam said the "gunfight" took place between two groups of Rohingyas over establishing supremacy in Chakmarkul area around 3:00am.

The criminals fled when APBn members rushed to the spot, the commanding officer said.

Later, the law enforcers recovered the bullet-hit body of Hakim and sent it to the morgue of Cox's

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## Shifting sands reveal lost Oman village



AFP, Wadi Al-Murr

Encroaching sands have left little evidence that the Omani village of Wadi al-Murr ever existed, but former inhabitants and curious visitors are coming to rediscover the hamlet engulfed by the desert.

Salem al-Arimi, originally from the area, looked out nostalgically over the expanse.

According to local elders, "all the houses in the village were invaded by the sand that assailed them 30 years ago, forcing the inhabitants to leave their homes," he said.

Building tops and sections of stone wall emerge here and there, bearing witness to those who once lived here.

Deserts are expanding all over the world, pushed on by climate change, and affected populations have few weapons to fight back.

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## Covid deaths, infections jump after dip

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The number of Covid-19 deaths and new cases have increased in the 24 hours until 8:00am yesterday after a dip in the previous three days.

Yesterday, a total of 25 people died due to Covid-19, according to a press release from the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

In the previous day (Saturday), 22 Covid-19 patients died.

With the latest count, the total number of deaths due to Covid-19 rose to 7,781. This was around 1.49 percent of all confirmed cases in the country.

At least 1,072 people tested positive for the viral infection in those 24 hours yesterday. The number of newly infected was 692 the day before.

On Friday, 785 people tested positive, according to the DGHS data.

With this, the total

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## New Covid cases in China double

German deaths top 40,000

AGENCIES

The daily number of new coronavirus cases has doubled in China, prompting tougher movement restrictions and, in the capital, passengers must scan a health code before boarding a cab or ride-hailing car, officials said yesterday.

Mainland China reported 69 cases on Saturday, compared with 33 reported a day earlier, the country's national health authority said.

The new rule on cab journeys follows the discovery on Saturday

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WINDIES' ARRIVAL SIGNALS CRICKET'S RETURN... Players of the West Indies cricket team boarding a bus at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport after arriving in the country yesterday morning. Bangladesh will play the West Indies in three ODIs and two Tests, which will mark the return of international cricket in the country after more than 10 months' absence due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

PHOTO: BCB

## TRUMP IMPEACHMENT BID GOP support uncertain

More Capitol rioters in viral posts arrested; senator urges social media providers to keep data

AGENCIES

Democratic-led efforts to impeach US President Donald Trump for a historic second time gained momentum over the weekend, although it looked far from certain whether enough Republicans would back the move with just days left in his term.

Democratic members of the House of Representatives will introduce articles of impeachment today after Trump encouraged his supporters to storm the US Capitol on Wednesday, Representative Ted Lieu said on Twitter.

The California Democrat, who helped draft the charges, said the articles had drawn 190 co-sponsors by Saturday night. As of Saturday afternoon, no Republicans had signed on, Lieu's spokeswoman said.

"We have videos of the speech where (Trump) incites the mob. We have videos of the mob violently attacking the Capitol. This isn't a close call," Lieu tweeted Saturday night.

Trump initially praised his supporters at the Capitol but later condemned their violence in a video. The decision to call for calm came at the urging of senior aides, some arguing he could face removal from office or legal liability, sources told Reuters.

Impeachment by the Democratic-led House, equivalent to an indictment, would trigger an unprecedented second trial in the Republican-controlled Senate, which cleared

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### PRAYER TIMING JANUARY 11

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha  
AZAN 5:30 12:45 4:00 5:30 7:00  
JAMAT 6:05 1:15 4:15 5:35 7:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION