



An operator lights up a kerosene-run lamp, which is part of a British-era signalling device installed at Mobarakganj railway station in Jhenidah's Kaliganj upazila.

PHOTO: AZIBOR RAHMAN

BRITISH ERA SIGNALLING LAMPS

Lives at stake at 13 rly stations

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

It might come as a surprise, but 13 out of around 440 railway stations in the country are still using night-time switching signal lights run by kerosene oil and manual track switching mechanisms -- all installed during the British era.

A railroad switching mechanism -- referred to as 'points' by railway employees in the country -- at a railway station or a junction guides an incoming train onto a free track to avoid collision with a stationary train.

Switching signal lights are illuminated at night to inform the driver of an incoming train as to whether the train can approach a station or pass through a junction.

Both cargo and passenger trains passing through these 13 stations -- located in the districts of Chuadanga, Jhenidah, Jessore and Khulna -- at night run the risk of serious accidents and fatalities, as the switching signals are often blown out by strong wind.

In 2020, four trains were derailed at railway stations in Jhenidah and Jashore. In one of the accidents that took place at Saffarpur station in Jhenidah that year, an estimated damage worth around Tk 3 crore was incurred when a freight train loaded with stones collided head-on with another oil laden freight train.

This year, on February 22, two compartments of the Sundarbans Express were derailed at Kotchandpur station in Jhenidah.

According to data from Signal and Telecommunications office at Pakshi Division of Bangladesh Railway (west zone), 22 trains pass back and forth every day through the 13 stations from Chuadanga's Darshana to Khulna city. There are nearly 160 kerosene signalling lights at these stations, with each station having around 10 to 12 signals and around 9 to 10 switch points on both sides.

All the kerosene lamps inside the signal casings are lit up by an operator called

'point man' before a train is given clearance to approach a station at night. But before that, the same operator has to select a designated track for the incoming train by manually flipping all the tumblers of point levers, each weighing 26 kilograms.

In case the lamps in the signals are blown out by wind, the driver stops the train abruptly to avert an accident. When such occurrences happen in the middle of nowhere and in the dead of night, passengers are often gripped by fear and panic.

Sanjoy Biswas, point operator at Kotchandpur station in Jhenidah, said passengers on the route suffer immensely as the kerosene lamps at the station go off frequently.

For the safety of all, the lamps need to be replaced with a modern and computerised signalling system, he added.

Assistant Cabin Master Anisur Rahman and Point Man Ashrafuzzaman Liton of Jashore railway station said it is quite difficult for even the strongest of the employees to unlock and set nearly a dozen of point levers at a station, especially during adverse weather conditions.

Asked, Station Master Shahjahan Sheikh of Mobarakganj station in Jhenidah's Kaliganj upazila said though the current signalling system is not flawless, it does not pose too much risk.

Talking to this correspondent over phone, MM Rajib Billah, a signal and telecommunications engineer at Pakshi Division office of Bangladesh Railway (west zone), said the signalling and track switching systems have been modernised along the rail tracks between Rajshahi city and Darshana when the tracks were converted to double tracks.

Approval has already been given to upgrade the single rail track between Darshana and Khulna city rail stations into double tracks and the signalling and track switching systems along the tracks will also be modernised during the work, he added.

DEFAMING A WOMAN

DSA case filed against upazila chairman

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A case has been filed under the Digital Security Act against two people, including an upazila parishad chairman, for defaming a woman on Facebook.

Shima Rani Sheel, an activist of the ruling Awami League, filed the case with the Cyber Tribunal in Rajshahi on September 26.

The case came into the limelight after a month as Rezaul Haque Babu, chairman of Bera Upazila Parishad in Pabna, was quizzed by police in this regard.

Besides Babu, who is also the president of Jatsakini union AL, one named Molla Arman was also made accused in the case.

According to the plaintiff, Arman, the key accused in the case, posted a defamatory comment about her character on his Facebook on September, 19.

The second accused shared the post to defame her in society, she added.

The Cyber Tribunal accepted the case and directed the Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI) to investigate the incident.

Md Fazle Elahi, superintendent of PBI, Pabna, told The Daily Star that they were investigating the case.

"After getting court order we have started the investigation," he said.

Meanwhile, Babu said that the case was politically motivated and filed to harass him.

Free eye camp for underprivileged people

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Distressed Children & Infants International (DCI) and Rights and Sight for Children (RSC), in partnership with Faraz Hossain Foundation, organized a free eye screening camp for the underprivileged people in coastal area of Patuakhali's Bauphal upazila on Tuesday, marking the World Sight Day-2021.

A team of doctors from Ishani Islamia Eye Institute & Hospital, Barisal provided treatment from 10:00am to 4:00pm, to the underprivileged patients at the eye camp, according to a press release.

The free eye screening camp was aiming to identify and treat every underprivileged people, mostly financially unable to seek treatment, in the coastal areas who were in need of eye surgery, medicine or eyeglasses.

As many as 757 underprivileged children and adults received free eye treatment at the camp.

Of them, 106 patients were diagnosed with cataracts and 286 patients with refractive errors. About 195 eye glasses were also provided free of cost during the day-long camp while the rest of the refractive error patients will receive their eye glasses on October 22 from RSC Learning Centre (Opposite of Kalaiya Hayatunnesha Girls High School).

Besides, cataract patients will undergo surgery at Ishani Islamia Eye Institute & Hospital, Barisal, while about 365 patients were given medicines from the camp.

Founder and Executive Director of DCI Dr Ehsan Hoque in a special message said, "The goal of this eye camp is to provide the light of vision and new hope to the unfortunate and underprivileged people in memory of Faraz."

Mr SM Faisal Ahmed, chairman of 10-Kalaiya Union Parishad (UP), attended the eye camp as chief guest.

FEUD OVER PROPERTY

Schoolteacher arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Police on Tuesday night arrested a schoolteacher in connection with a case for assaulting his father in Chatmohar upazila of the district earlier in the day.

The matter draws attention among general people after photos of incident went viral in the social media.

The arrestee is Mohammad Mojnur Rahman, a teacher at RCN & BSN Government Model Pilot High School.

Meanwhile, police produced the arrestee before a Pabna court yesterday that sent him to jail, rejecting his bail prayer.

Officer in Charge (OC) of Chatmohar Police Station Anwar Hossain said Mojnur entered Mohela Post Office in Chatmohar on Tuesday noon and forced his father Ataur Rahman, a sub-postmaster, to register all his ancestral properties in his name.

When Ataur denied to do so, the arrestee beat his father at his office and later in a huge crowd when he tried to leave the place to avoid further humiliation, the OC said.

Police arrested the culprit after Ataur filed a case with Chatmohar Police Station against his son the same day.

Booters bow out

FROM PAGE 1

A free-kick from captain Jamal Bhuiyan, but Oscar Bruzon's charges, who needed victory to advance to the title decider, were left shell-shocked when the referee pointed to the spot following a collision inside the Bangladesh box in the 86th minute of the game.

Bangladesh winger Saad Uddin seemed to have come in contact with a Nepalese forward, who made most of the incident, diving on to the pitch.

The Bangladesh team, who were down to 10 men on 79 minutes following goalkeeper Anisur Rahman's sending off, protested vehemently, but to no avail.

Anjan Bista converted the spot-kick past substitute goalkeeper Ashrafur Islam Rana to equalise with two minutes of normal time remaining.

With a man down and morale shattered, there was no coming back for Bangladesh while the Nepalese players and officials were ecstatic on having made it to their final of the regional competition.

Nepal will play the final on October 16 against either Maldives or India, with the qualifier slated to be decided following the group's final match late last night.

Poisoned in their habitat

FROM PAGE 1

"They [forest officials] could not go to the spot until Wednesday morning, although the incident took place around 5:00pm on Tuesday. They sometimes hold awareness campaigns at the upazila auditorium despite our request to hold those near forest areas," he said.

Abhijit Kumar Barua, range officer of Moheskhalia Range under Chattogram Coastal Division, told The Daily Star that they found proof of the brutality upon a visit to the area on Wednesday morning.

"We found a total of three monkeys 500 yards away from where the killing took place. Bananas laced with toxins were found around the field. A troop of monkeys came out from the nearby forest and died within hours of consuming the fruit," he said.

Abhijit said usually 30 to 50 monkeys roam together in a group.

He said they identified the accused and collected the necessary proof of the crime to file a case under the Wildlife Conservation Act-2012.

Mentioning the area as a habitat for wildlife, Abhijit said some influential locals encroach upon the forest, start farming there and view wildlife as a nuisance. When monkeys and other wildlife feast on the crop, they lay snares to kill them.

"We have seen various crop fields including those cultivating bottle gourd, eggplant and other crops there. Due to poor

manpower, it becomes tough to evict those ... a few months ago, one of our colleagues died after being attacked by grabbers in Moheskhalia," he said.

Elephants, monkeys, fishing cats and badgers have been falling victim to illegal grabbers of forestland in greater Chattogram for some time.

As per the Wildlife Conservation Act-2012, if a person commits any crime against wildlife, he or she will be jailed for one year or pay a fine of Tk 50,000, or both in case of the first crime. The penalties are doubled for repeat offences.

Wildlife Biologist Monirul H Khan, also professor of Zoology at Jahangirnagar University, said it was a truly sad incident.

"Forest department must stop farming inside the forest and take necessary steps to protect wildlife, which has been facing severe onslaught across their range," he said.

Mohammed Abdur Rahman, divisional forest officer of Chattogram coastal forest division, told The Daily Star that his range officer went to the spot with a veterinary surgeon.

"We will sue the accused, who has already been identified, after receiving autopsy report," he said.

Abdul Hai, officer-in-charge of Moheskhalia Police Station, told The Daily Star they heard around 50 monkeys were killed, but no one came to lodge any complaint as of yesterday evening.

Dev spree to go on despite odds

FROM PAGE 1

Highlighting various initiatives taken by her government to reduce disaster risks, the premier said they were doing their part while the people would have to do theirs in this regard.

"People need to be careful and take some measures accordingly. While constructing houses, offices, and business establishments, you have to keep in mind that disasters such as fire, storm and flood can strike any time. So, everyone should follow the building code while constructing those to stay away from the risks."

Referring to BNP's arson attack (in 2014 to thwart the national election), the premier urged all to remain alert to man-made disasters.

She mentioned the measures taken by her government such as giving cash incentive to the people and businessmen as well as relief materials to the masses, providing treatment to the people, purchasing vaccines to minimise people's hardship and keeping the wheels of the economy moving amid the pandemic.

Hasina said her government has launched the mass Covid vaccination campaign with a target of bringing 80 percent citizens under vaccination coverage.

She called upon all to follow health protocols as anyone can become infected with Covid even after taking the vaccine.

The PM opened CPP's four units -- Druto Saradan Unit (quick response unit), Pani Theke Uddar Kora Unit (rescue from water unit), Oti Joar Monitoring O Saradan Unit (high-tide monitoring and response unit) and Khelaj Khelaj Durjog Prostoti Unit (disaster preparedness with fun).

She hoped that these units will help CPP accelerate disaster management work.

State Minister for Disaster Management and Relief Enamur Rahman and Secretary Md Mohsin spoke on the occasion from Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the capital.

Lawmakers, government officials and other dignitaries joined the programme from the Muktiyoddha Math, Cox's Bazar. Hasina earlier unveiled the cover of a book titled "Durjog Sahonshil Bangladesh Binirmamla Sheikh Hasina".

On behalf of the PM, the state minister for disaster management and relief distributed "lifetime honorary medal" to three best organisers and six volunteers, including three women, for their outstanding contribution to the field of disaster risk management.

The lifetime awardees are: organisers Saidur Rahman, AKM Hasan Al Rashid, and AJM Golam Rabbani, and volunteers Shova Rani Das, Ratna Rani Dey, Hawa Begum, Fazlul Karim, Abdul Hasim Siraj Kazi, and Md Hanif.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ
কমান্ডারের (পুলিশ সুপার) এর কার্যালয়
ইন-সার্ভিস ট্রেনিং সেন্টার, বগুড়া
উন্মুক্ত বিজ্ঞপ্তি (OTM)
দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং-০২/২০২১-২০২২

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