



P3 DNCC, DSCC to act against sewerage lines linked to waterbodies



P6 Despite Xi's 'fire', call with Biden avoided Taiwan escalation



P7 'Hawa' steers Nazifa Tushi towards stardom



WR4 SATIRE 'Do women even breathe after 10pm?'



PHOTO: COLLECTED
 A mangled microbus lies on the rail track after the Chattogram-bound Mohanagar-Probhati Express hit the vehicle at Purba Khoiyachora Jhorna level crossing in Mirsharai upazila yesterday afternoon. The train dragged the vehicle about one kilometre.

Fun trip ends in tragedy

11 killed as train hits microbus at level crossing; the victims were teachers, students of a Ctg coaching centre

MD NAZRUL ISLAM, DWAIPAYAN BARUA and FM MIZANUR RAHAMAN

A picnic was organised to boost the morale of a batch of SSC and HSC students, but the smiling faces in the group photo taken yesterday morning will remain a poignant reminder that some of those lives were cruelly cut short mere hours later.

Hours after the now viral group photo was taken, the vehicle they rented for the trip got hit by a train at a level crossing in Mirsharai, Chattogram. Eleven people in the vehicle died at the scene and six others were critically injured, while one escaped with minor scratches.

Besides the driver and his assistant, there were 12 students and four teachers of R&J Coaching Center in the Toyota HiAce. They left Jugirhat area of Hathazari in the port city around 9:00am for Khoiyachora waterfall in Mirsharai.

The crash occurred at Purba Khoiyachora Jhorna level crossing around 1:45pm when they were on their way back. Officials said the Chattogram-bound Mohanagar Probhati Express train hit the vehicle and dragged it for at least a kilometre before the train came to a halt.

The railway authorities said a guard of

the level crossing signalled the vehicle to stop at the crossing, but the driver ignored him. However, officials quoting the locals said there was no one at the crossing.

Of the dead, Golam Mostafa Niru, 26, was the driver; Mostafa Masud Rakib, 19, Redwan Chowdhury, 22, Ziaul Haque Sajib, 22, and Wahidul Alam Jisan, 23, were teachers of the coaching centre; and Moshab Ahmed Hisham, 16, Sagor, 13, Mohammad Hasan, and Iqbal Hossain Maruf were students.

Two other bodies were yet to be identified, said Minhajur Rahman, upazila nirbahi officer of Mirsharai.

Six others, including the driver's helper, were admitted to Chattogram Medical College Hospital in critical condition. Everyone on board the vehicle were residents of Jugirhat area of Hathazari.

Muhammad Emon, an SSC candidate, who only suffered minor injuries to his ear and leg, told The Daily Star: "Most of us were tired and asleep. I was on the left side in the middle row. Suddenly I woke up to a loud noise and discovered myself on the ground beside the rail tracks."

He could not say anything further. Saddam, a gateman of the railway, told reporters immediately after the crash that he was at the level crossing and the

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Everything shattered

STAR REPORT

In just a few months, Musba Ahmed Hisham was supposed to settle with his mother and sister in Canada. All processes for the shift had been done and it only seemed a matter of time before he would fly to Canada after completing his SSC exams in September.

But a tragic accident mangled any hope of that cherished reunion as he, along with 10 others, was killed when a train hit their microbus in Chattogram's Mirsharai upazila yesterday. "He was scheduled to go to Canada after the examination, but everything has been shattered. How can I answer to his mother?" said 55-year-old Akbar Hossain Manik, Hisham's uncle.

Youngest among four siblings and a student of KS Nazu Mia High School in Hathazari of Chattogram, Hisham used to study in

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

Death lurks at unsafe level crossings

SHARIFUL ISLAM

Accidents at unprotected level crossings continue to claim lives as decisions taken at an inter-ministerial meeting around one and a half years back to curb such fatalities remained largely unimplemented.

At least 35 people have been killed in major accidents at level crossings so far this year with the latest accident leaving 11 people dead in Mirsharai of Chattogram yesterday.

Besides, three school children were killed on March 9 after a train ran them over around 150 meters off a level crossing in Cumilla on their way to school.

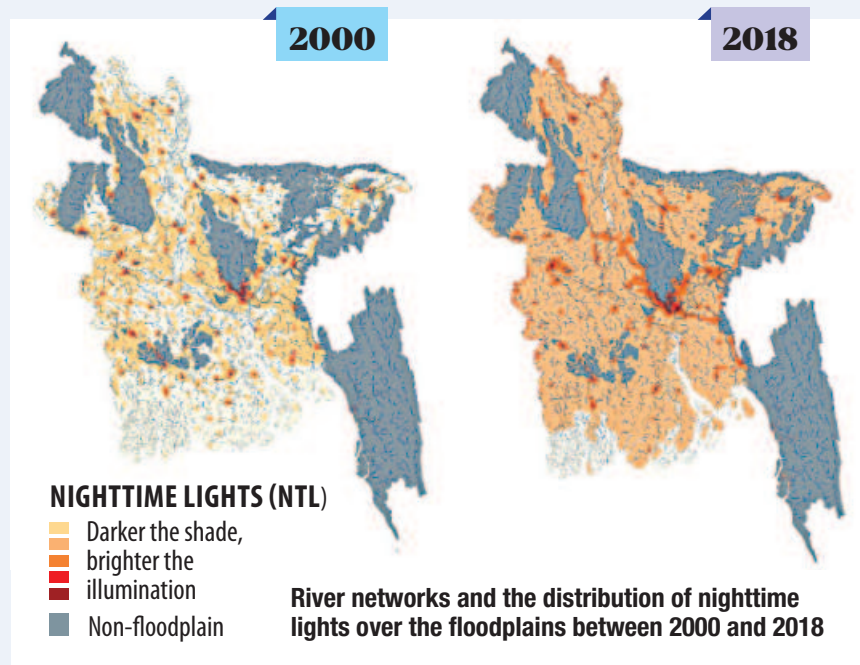
According to statistics of the Accident Research Institute (ARI) of Buet, 173 people were killed at the crossings in six years till 2021 and 739 people in 13 years till last year.

Amid growing concerns over the casualties at unauthorised and unmanned level crossings,

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

1.5 crore more at FLOOD RISK

Rising human activity in floodplains putting increasing number of people under submergence threat



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"Embankments have been constructed on around 75 percent of rivers of the country. The normal functioning of rivers has been hampered due to human settlements and infrastructural developments in the floodplains of the rivers."

AKM Saiful Islam
 Institute of Water Modelling and Management, Buet

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

In less than two decades, the number of people exposed to flood risks rose by 1.5 crore, around nine percent of the country's population, due to human settlements and infrastructural developments in floodplains, says a study.

The study also found that within the 2km river buffer locations, forests shrunk by 91.98 percent, grassland 6.02 and barren areas by 27.92 percent while built-up areas have increased by 11.06 percent over the period.

On the other hand, the areas of human settlements and infrastructural developments have expanded to 778.74 sq km from 701.19 sq km within that buffer zones across the country.

The at-risk population has been increasing since the start of the century but there has seen a sharp rise since 2014, finds the study titled "Dynamics of human presence and flood-exposure risk in close proximity to Bangladesh's river network: an evaluation with multitemporal satellite imagery."

There were around 7.2 crore people living within the 2km river floodplains in 2000. It

has risen to 8.7 crore in 2018, it found.

"An increase in human activity in river basins and floodplains is putting more people at risk of flood than ever before," it observes.

The study was published in Geocarto International, a

days.

"Embankments have been constructed on around 75 percent of rivers of the country. The normal functioning of rivers has been hampered due to human settlement and infrastructural development in the floodplains of the rivers. So,



multi-disciplinary journal of remote sensing and Geographic Information Systems (GIS), in late June this year.

Researchers and experts said encroachment of riverbanks and floodplains by individuals and organisations is rampant in some areas and should be stopped immediately to avoid a dire situation in the coming

when the rivers receive a huge amount of water, it takes time for the water level to recede," Prof AKM Saiful Islam of Institute of Water Modelling and Management at Buet told The Daily Star yesterday.

Referring to the study, he said the way the floodplains have been encroached upon or intervened

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

Govt pushing country towards economic collapse

Alleges BNP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP has alleged that the government is pushing the country towards economic collapse.

"A few days ago, the finance minister said they would not take any money from the IMF. But media reports said Bangladesh sought \$4.5 billion loan from IMF. The government is continuously telling lies to make fools of people," Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir, secretary general of the party, said yesterday.

Addressing a rally, organised by Dhaka North City BNP unit, in front of the Jatiya Press Club to protest load shedding and mismanagement in the energy sector, the BNP leader said, "If they [government] remain in office for some more time, it will destroy the country."

Portraying a gloomy picture of the country's economic sector, Fakhru said, "Newspapers are saying that usable [foreign] reserves in the country are now \$31 billion, but it is not correct as there is gold equivalent to around \$8-9 billion. Experts say that the amount [from the reserves] that can be used is not more than \$16 billion."

In the protest rally, it was seen that the party's activists and followers thronged the venue with lanterns, and a lantern was also hung from the main stage.

The BNP leader alleged that the government destroyed the energy sector by corruption and plundering money from the sector.

Narrating the repression and suppression of BNP leaders and activists, Fakhru said prices of daily essentials

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6



Traders have set up makeshift furniture shops occupying almost the entire footpath in the capital's Azimpur, leaving little space for pedestrians to walk. Vegetable vendors also take up space on the road, narrowing it. The photo was taken on Thursday. PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Young Tigers take on Zim

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An inexperienced Bangladesh side will have a point to prove when they meet hosts Zimbabwe in the first T20I of the three-match series in Harare today.

The match is scheduled to start at 05:00 pm (BST) and will be telecast live on T Sports.

A change in leadership at the eleventh hour saw Nurul Hasan Sohan being named the captain for the series with regular T20I skipper Mahmudullah Riyad rested.

Mahmudullah, however, is not the only senior player to miss out from T20Is against Zimbabwe as wicketkeeper batter Mushfiqur Rahim was also not included for the tour while premier all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan was granted leave and opener Tamim Iqbal having already retired from the format earlier this month.

In fact, this is going to be only the second T20I that Bangladesh will play without any of

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5