



DHAKA MONDAY AUGUST 22, 2022

REGD. No. DA 781

VOL. XXXII No. 211

BHADRA 7, 1429 BS

www.thedailystar.net

MUHARRAM 23, 1444 HJRI

16 PAGES : Tk 15.00

ILLEGAL RAIL CROSSINGS Mushrooming despite rising fatalities

TUHIN SHUBHRA 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 unauthorised, 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.

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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. Story on page 12.

PHOTO: MINTU DESHWARA

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."

The premier also warned people of conspiracy being hatched as the next general election approaches.

Hasina, also Awami League president, was presiding over a discussion organised by her party at its 23 Bangabandhu Avenue central office marking the 18th anniversary of the gruesome August 21, 2004, grenade attack.

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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

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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," Sujon 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

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