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ICT CASE

Mother tells
tribunal about
last conversation
with her son

3 more witnesses testify

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A grieving mother told the International Crimes Tribunal-1 yesterday that her son had rejected her desperate plea to return home from Ashulia during the August 5 police firing, saying that if he died, she should identify his body with the help of his ID card.

“Why are you being so selfish, Ammu? I can’t come home now. There are four bodies in front of me, and I’m holding an injured protester,” recalled Shahana Begum as she described her last conversations with her son, Sajjad Hossain Sajal.

Sajal, a textile engineering student at City University and the family’s only son, was allegedly shot and later burnt alive with five other bodies of protesters near Ashulia Police Station.

The atmosphere in the courtroom became heavy as the mother broke down in tears, again and again, while testifying as a

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Displaced Palestinians take shelter in a tent camp in Gaza City as the Israeli military prepares to relocate residents to southern Gaza, following ongoing military operations.

PHOTO: REUTERS

ASSAULTED ON AUG 15

Rickshaw-puller
Azizur gets bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rickshaw-puller Azizur Rahman, who was assaulted by a mob while trying to pay tribute to Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Dhanmondi 32 on August 15 and later sent to jail, secured bail yesterday in an attempted murder case linked to last year’s July uprising.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate MA Azharul Islam granted him bail after his lawyer submitted a petition, said Abul Bashar, sub-inspector and general recording officer.

“There is no legal bar for him to walk out of jail,” said Azizur’s lawyer Advocate Farzana Yasmin Rakhi.

Azizur was shown arrested in a case filed on April 2 with Dhanmondi Police Station. Sub-inspector Mohammad Touhidur Rahman produced him in court on Saturday.

In the forwarding report, Touhidur appealed to keep him in jail until the investigation was complete, saying the plaintiff alleged he was shot in the back during a student procession in Dhaka’s New Market on August 4, 2024. The court then sent him to jail.

However, a day later, the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) issued a

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Star INTERVIEW

Election, reforms
must proceed
simultaneously

Says Zonayed Saki

MD ABBAS

Zonayed Saki, chief coordinator of Ganosamhati Andolon, has emphasised that reforms and the upcoming national election must move forward hand in hand.

In an exclusive conversation with The Daily Star at his party office recently, Saki outlined his Ganosamhati’s stance on the reform process, efforts to change the constitution, and the political situation following the July uprising.

He said the interim government has initiated a participatory and consensus-based approach by forming commissions, gathering political input, and drafting reform proposals.

According to Saki, the commission has to find a way to implement the issues which have been compiled into the “National Charter” or “July Charter”. The unresolved matters can be left to the next parliament.

“We believe any reform must be rooted in mutual agreement. Administrative and institutional reforms can be immediately enforced by executive orders from the interim government and later ratified by parliament,” he said.

“However, constitutional reforms require a new parliamentary mandate.”

To that end, Ganosamhati Andolon has proposed that the next parliament serves as a Constituent Assembly, tasked with implementing unanimously agreed constitutional changes within six months of its formation.

Such a move, Saki said, would ensure the legal sustainability of the

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BANGLADESH-MYANMAR BORDER

Landmine-related
injuries on the rise

PORIMOL PALMA, MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN and MOKAMMEL SHUVO

Having lost her right leg in a landmine explosion, Nur Kaida, a 23-year-old Rohingya woman, now feels helpless at a refugee camp in Teknaf.

“I have become a burden,” said Kaida who was maimed while trying to return home in Maungdaw, Rakhine State, in February this year.

“Our family is devastated,” she said softly, her frail body bearing visible signs of malnutrition.

Like many others, she and her family fled their village to a forest in August last year amid fierce fighting between Myanmar military and Arakan Army (AA). Hiding in the forest for months, they attempted to return to the village after the AA claimed control over much of Maungdaw in early December.

But their hope was short-lived. On February 3, as they approached the entrance to their abandoned home, a hidden landmine detonated, leaving Kaida and her two siblings severely injured.

“Landmines were laid around many houses after we fled the village. Now, people are too afraid to go back,” she said, adding that local villagers believe the landmines were planted to prevent the return

of displaced Rohingyas.

Kaida, along with her parents and two siblings, escaped to Bangladesh and took shelter at the refugee camp in the second week of February.

“Landmines were laid around many houses after we fled the village. Now, people are too afraid to go back.”

NUR KAIDA, a Rohingya woman, about her neighbourhood in Maungdaw

They are among more than a million Rohingyas who have fled to Bangladesh since 2017 – around 750,000 during the military crackdown that year, and another 200,000 after a fresh conflict between the AA and military junta in late 2023.

RISING LANDMINE CASUALTIES

Landmine-related injuries along the Bangladesh-Myanmar border have been on the rise over the last couple of years, according to Border Guard Bangladesh data.

In the first six months of this year, at least 18 people – 17 Bangladeshis and one Rohingya – were wounded in landmine explosions on the Myanmar side of the border. Two Rohingyas were killed and six others wounded last year, while five people were injured in 2023.

Human Rights Watch reported last November that the Myanmar military continues to deploy banned antipersonnel landmines across all 14 states and regions despite international prohibitions.

Since the military coup in February, 2021, both the junta and non-state armed groups, such as the AA, reportedly increased the use of these mines, it said.

Landmine Monitor 2024 ranked Myanmar the world’s deadliest country for landmine casualties, with 1,003 civilian deaths and injuries recorded in 2023 – nearly triple the figure in 2022. The grim trend continues, with 692 civilian casualties, including many children, reported in the first six months of this year. Experts believe the actual toll is significantly higher.

With the junta losing ground in Rakhine, the AA has been accused of planting mines, particularly near houses and along routes used for cross-border movement.

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ACC seeks
wealth info of
Bashundhara
chairman, wife

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission has issued a notice to Bashundhara Group Chairman Ahmed Akbar Sobhan and his wife Afroza Begum, seeking their wealth statements.

In a press release issued yesterday, the commission said the notice was served under section 26(l) of the ACC Act, 2004.

According to the notice signed by ACC Deputy Director Sheikh Golam Mawla, the Bashundhara Group chairman has acquired movable and immovable properties worth Tk 252.22 crore in the country, while his wife Afroza Begum has movable and immovable properties worth Tk 453.12 crore in Bangladesh.

The notice further said the couple jointly obtained citizenship of Saint Kitts and Nevis by spending \$250,000, and laundered a huge amount of money through bank accounts opened in Switzerland, under companies registered in the British Virgin Islands and the Isle of Man.

It stated that the couple – either in their own names or through others acting on their behalf – possess movable and immovable properties, both at home and abroad, which appear to have been accumulated through dishonest means and are inconsistent with their known sources of income.

Without obtaining proper approval from Bangladesh Bank, they illegally transferred money to Saint Kitts and Nevis, the notice added.

New type of
supernova found
after star explosion

REUTERS, Washington

Astronomers have observed the calamitous result of a star that picked the wrong dance partner.

They have documented what appears to be a new type of supernova, as stellar explosions are known, that occurred when a massive star tried to swallow a black hole with which it had engaged in a lengthy pas de deux.

The star, which was at least 10 times as massive as our sun, and the black hole, which had a similar mass, were gravitationally bound to one another in what is called a binary system.

But as the distance separating them gradually narrowed, the black hole’s immense gravitational pull appears to have distorted the star – stretching it out from its spherical shape – and siphoned off material before causing it to explode.

“We caught a massive star locked in a fatal tango with a black hole,” said astrophysicist Alexander Gagliano of the US National Science Foundation’s Institute for AI and Fundamental Interactions located at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, lead author of the study published this week in the Astrophysical Journal.



Demonstrators blocked the main gate of Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital in Barishal yesterday, protesting the August 14 attack on those demanding sweeping reforms in the health sector. The blockade disrupted healthcare services. A female patient, who had been admitted earlier, faced difficulties in returning to the hospital after she underwent tests at a diagnostic centre.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

‘Mob’ beats
man to death
in Lalbagh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A 26-year-old man was beaten to death allegedly by a mob in the Shahidnagar neighbourhood of Lalbagh in Dhaka early yesterday, police said.

The victim was identified as Tofiqul Islam, aka “Killer Babu” and “Tera Babu”, said Mostafa Kamal Khan, officer-in-charge (OC) of Lalbagh Police Station.

Locals caught him around 3:30am near Shahidnagar Lohar Bridge and assaulted him, suspecting his involvement in criminal activities, the police officer said.

Upon being informed, army personnel from Azimpur camp rescued him in a “critical state”, OC Kamal said.

He was taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, where doctors declared him dead around 7:45am, the OC added.

The body was kept at the DMCH morgue for autopsy.

“We are investigating the incident,” said the OC.

He was accused in around 10 cases filed with Lalbagh Police Station, including on drug-related charges, according to the police officer.