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AUG 21 GRENADE ATTACK

SC continues hearing appeal against acquittal of Tarique, Babar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday continued for third day hearing on the appeals against a High Court verdict that acquitted BNP Acting Chairman Tarique Rahman, former state minister Lutfozzaman Babar, and others in two cases filed over the August 21 grenade attack.

A six-member bench of the Appellate Division of the SC headed by Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed also fixed today for further hearing.

Earlier in the day, Deputy Attorney General Abdullah Al Mahmud Masud placed arguments on behalf of the state, praying to the apex court to scrap the HC judgement and to affirm the trial court verdict in the cases.

Defence lawyers SM Shahjahan, Zainul Abedin, Kayser Kamal, Mohammad Shishir Manir, Jaiad Bin Amjad and Md Maksud Ullah were present in the courtroom during the proceedings.

On June 2, the Appellate Division allowed the state to move two appeals against the HC verdict in the cases.

On December 1 last year, the HC

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PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

A child reaches out from under an umbrella to catch raindrops in his hand. While he seems to be enjoying the moment, the constant shift between rain and heatwaves continues to trouble city dwellers. The photo was taken in the Palashi area of the capital yesterday.

UPCOMING ELECTION

EU to provide €4m to ensure global standards

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The European Union yesterday said that it will provide 4 million euros to support Bangladesh in conducting the upcoming 13th national elections in accordance with international standards.

EU will also send a team of technical experts to Bangladesh next month to assess the situation ahead of deploying an election observation mission.

Michael Miller, EU ambassador to Bangladesh, shared the developments at a press briefing in the afternoon, after a meeting with Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin at the EC headquarters in Dhaka.

The meeting between the CEC and a six-member EU delegation under the leadership of Miller began around 11:00am and continued till 12:30pm.

Miller said, "Next month, a team of technical experts will visit. This is not the observation mission; their role is to assess whether the conditions are suitable for deploying an election observation mission in Bangladesh."

"The European Union is working in partnership with Bangladesh to support a transition leading to democratic elections. We are moving toward a

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Lost without a trace

Hathazari madrasa student's disappearance remains unsolved after a year of dead ends

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and DIPAN NANDY

With fear, grief, and uncertainty, a family from Barguna's Bamna spends every single day of their lives in an agonising wait.

For more than a year, they have been desperately searching for Omar, also known as Belal Hossain, a 29-year-old Dawra-e-Hadith student of Darul Ulum Moinul Islam Madrasa in Hathazari, who went missing.

Despite countless visits to government offices, their son has not returned.

"We don't know if my brother is alive or dead. We don't know if we'll ever get him back," said Belal's elder brother Md Sumon, in a choked voice, while talking to The Daily Star.

Until mid-July 2024, Belal stayed in touch with his family. But after that, there was no trace of him. At first, the family asked his madrasa teachers and classmates for information. But everyone only said Belal had been missing for quite some time.

Then came mysterious messages and threats. On August 26 last year, Sumon received a message from an unknown number – "I am Belal. My health is not good. Come save me quickly; otherwise, they will kill me."

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418 people died on roads last month

Reports Road Safety Foundation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 418 people were killed and 856 were injured in 443 road accidents across the country last month, said the Road Safety Foundation yesterday.

Among the deceased, 72 were women, 53 were children, and 47 were students, according to a report from the organisation.

Motorcycles were involved in 131 of the crashes, leaving 109 people dead, which accounts for 26.08 percent of the total deaths recorded in July.

During the same period, 92 pedestrians were killed in accidents, accounting for 22 percent of all fatalities.

The report also recorded four waterway accidents that claimed six lives. In addition, 18 people died and seven were injured in 21 rail-related accidents.

The foundation prepared the report based on information from nine national dailies, seven online news portals, various electronic media, and its own monitoring.

Of the road crashes, 81 (18.28 percent) were head-on collisions, 216 (48.75 percent) occurred when vehicles lost control and fell into ditches, 94 (21.21 percent) involved pedestrians being hit or run over, 44 (9.93 percent) were rear-end collisions, and the rest were caused by other reasons.

A total of 609 vehicles were involved in the crashes, which included 114 buses, 108 trucks, 17 private cars, 131 motorcycles, 84 three-wheelers, and 25 locally made vehicles, such as Nasimon, Vatvoti, and Mahindra.

AT A GLANCE

- Total accidents: **443**
- Total injured: **856**
- Vehicles involved: **609**
- **72** women, **53** children, **47** students among the dead
- Motorcycle crashes: **131** (109 deaths, 26%)
- Pedestrian deaths: **92** (22%)
- Rail accidents: **21** (18 deaths, 7 injured)

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JULY UPRISING Busan Int'l Film Festival introduces memorial prize

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Busan International Film Festival (BIFF) has announced a new international award titled the "July Memorial Prize", set to debut at its 30th anniversary edition from September 17 to 26 in Busan, South Korea.

Introduced under the patronage of the Ministry of Culture, the award will recognise one film from the Vision Asia competition section, with eligibility limited to works exploring themes such as social justice, freedom of speech and expression, civil rights, and struggles against inequality.

The prize, established to commemorate the July Uprising, will be officially presented to the winning filmmaker on the festival's closing day.

KILLINGS OF TWO WOMEN BY THEIR HUSBANDS

MJF expresses outrage, seeks justice

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) yesterday expressed deep shock and outrage over the recent deaths of two young women – Syeda Fahmida Tahsin Keya, 25, from Dhaka and Jamey Akter, 19, from Gazipur – both allegedly killed by their husbands within a single week.

In a press statement, MJF said these murders highlight the ongoing and pervasive crisis of domestic violence against women in Bangladesh.

MJF also called on the government, law enforcement agencies, and society at large to ensure strict enforcement of the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act; expand shelters, counselling, and livelihood support services for survivors; address the stigma and social barriers that silence victims; launch nationwide awareness campaigns to challenge the normalisation of domestic violence; and promote simple versions of the related laws.

The MJF statement came following a report of Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) which said 363 incidents of domestic violence occurred in the country between January and July this year, resulting in 322 deaths, including 114 suicides.

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CORRUPTION CHARGES

ACC sues ex-GCC mayor, Sikder family

STAR REPORT

The Anti-Corruption Commission has sued former Gazipur City Corporation mayor Zahangir Alam and six others on charges of embezzling around Tk 2.6 crore.

ACC Assistant Director Md Ashiqur Rahman filed the case yesterday at its Integrated District Office in Gazipur, said ACC Director General Md Akhter Hossain at a press briefing at the ACC headquarters.

According to the case, Zahangir, during his tenure as mayor, opened a fake account under the name of GCC at Premier Bank's Konabari branch on October 7, 2019, without any resolution or approval from the corporation. He used his personal mobile number to open the account with the help of then branch manager Md Motaleb Hossain.

Meanwhile, the ACC filed a case against 26 individuals, including members of the Sikder family, for allegedly embezzling Tk 110.27 crore from First Security Islami Bank PLC, said Akhter Hossain.

The accused include Ron Haque Sikder, Rick Haque Sikder, and John Haque Sikder.

NBR OFFICIALS' WEALTH STATEMENTS SOUGHT

The anti-graft watchdog has asked 17 senior officials of the National Board of Revenue to submit their wealth statements as part of an investigation into allegations of accumulating assets beyond known sources of income, said the ACC DG.



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Unabated waste dumping has left this stretch of Baliapur Road in Savar in a dilapidated state. Bus passengers often complain of the foul stench while crossing the area. The photo was taken yesterday.

Promote sustainability, reduce aid dependency

Speakers urge dev agencies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amid the rising cuts in aid, development agencies have called for effective use of funds and greater transparency to ensure grassroots communities benefit the most during humanitarian crises.

They suggested building the capacity of local non-profits in line with the Grand Bargain commitment and promoting sustainable practices that can reduce dependence on aid.

The observations were made at an international seminar, titled "Accelerating Grand Bargain 3.0 for Advancing Humanitarian Action in Bangladesh", organised by COAST Foundation, BDCSO Process, and Cox's Bazar CSO-NGO Forum at a city hotel yesterday.

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