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LABOUR LAW VIOLATION Prof Yunus to appeal today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus and three other top officials of Grameen Telecom will file an appeal today against their jail sentence.

They will file the appeal with the Labour Appellate Tribunal.

On January 1, Sheikh Merina Sultana, chairman of the Third Labour Court of Dhaka, sentenced Prof Yunus, chairman of Grameen Telecom, and its directors Ashraful Hassan, Nurjahan Begum and M Shahjahan to six months in prison for violations of the labour law.

"We will submit a petition, containing 25 to 30 points against the sentence," said Abdullah Al-Mamun, lawyer for Prof Yunus and the others.

Soon after the verdict was announced, the sentenced filed for bail which the court granted them for a month.



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Locals in the capital's Jatrabari have built wooden and bamboo bridges in close proximity to each other over Kajla Khal, a canal that serves as a drainage system for the area. Residents of the nearby neighbourhoods often experience water logging in monsoon because the canal remains partially clogged.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Sabalenka retains Australian Open crown

REUTERS, Melbourne

Aryna Sabalenka produced an utterly dominant display to become the first woman in 11 years to retain the Australian Open title and send out a warning to her rivals with her second Grand Slam title on Saturday.

The Belarusian blew away Zheng Qinwen 6-3, 6-2, in 76 minutes with a show of power that overwhelmed the Chinese 12th seed, emulating compatriot Victoria Azarenka's 2012-13 feat by winning the Daphne Akhurst Memorial Cup back-to-back.

Sabalenka came into the match without having dropped a set at the year's first major and stayed perfect to join Ash Barty, Serena Williams, Maria Sharapova, and Lindsay Davenport in the elite club of players to have done so this century.

"I'm speechless right now," Sabalenka said at her press conference as she sipped a glass of wine. "I don't know how to describe my emotions. But definitely, I'm super, super happy, and proud of everything I have been able to achieve so far."

Sabalenka dropped only one set at last year's tournament and her dominance this year is a further reflection of the maturity and emotional



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ORDER TO PAY \$83.3M Trump to ask higher court to reduce compensation

REUTERS, New York

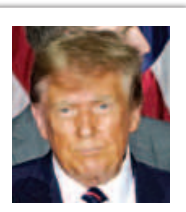
Donald Trump was handed a stinging defeat on Friday by a Manhattan jury that ordered him to pay \$83.3 million to the writer E Jean Carroll, who said he destroyed her reputation as a trustworthy journalist by denying he raped her.

Jurors needed less than three hours to reach a verdict in Manhattan federal court following a five-day trial. The sum that the former US president was ordered to pay far exceeded the minimum \$10 million Carroll had sought. Trump plans to appeal.

Carroll's case has become an issue in Trump's campaign to retake the White House in the November US election. Trump is the frontrunner for the Republican nomination to challenge Democratic President Joe Biden, who beat him in 2020.

Trump attended most of the trial, but was not in the courtroom for the verdict.

"Our Legal System is out of control, and being used as a Political Weapon," Trump posted on social



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RESERVED SEATS FOR WOMEN AL wants new faces in JS, not ex-MPs

ASHIK ABDULLAH APU

The ruling Awami League is considering not picking former lawmakers for the women's reserved seats in parliament to allow new faces in the Jatiya Sangsad, said party sources.

They said the nomination seekers were informed about the party's intent by the AL high command during separate meetings with the party president and the general secretary.

The AL wants fresh faces to fill the reserved seats for women in the 12th national parliament and former MPs are unlikely to be picked, said party insiders. "But for a few ex-lawmakers, there might be hope," an AL leader told The Daily Star, requesting anonymity.

On Thursday, AL President Sheikh Hasina had a meeting with the aspirants at the Gono Bhaban, where at least 30 female leaders spoke, expressing their desire to get the nomination.

The party chief expressed her interest in giving new candidates a chance to compete for the women's reserved seats.

When a former MP from a reserved seat for women in the last parliament rose to speak, Hasina said, "You were an MP last time. Why are you seeking nomination again? Sit down."

The next day, AL General Secretary Obaidul

Quader met the aspirants at the party president's political office in Dhanmondi.

There, Khaleda Khanom, an ex-MP from a reserved seat (Jhenidah) for women in the last parliament, drew Quader's attention.

Quader said, "Weren't you in the last parliament? Give others a chance this time. But don't worry. If the leader wants, she may consider," said a meeting participant quoting Quader as saying.

The Election Commission is expected to announce the election schedule for women's reserved seats early next month. The AL will begin selling nomination forms following a meeting of the party's parliamentary nomination board.

When another leader asked if she would get party ticket, the AL general secretary asked whether any central leader promised her a seat.

AL Organising Secretary BM Mozammel Haque and Executive Member Sahabuddin Farazi, among other central leaders, were present at Friday's meeting.

Leaders of AL's front organisations, including the Jubo Mahila League and the Mahila Awami League, were also present.

The AL, which won 223 seats in the January 7 national polls, will have at least 37 reserved seats for women in the House. The party had 43 lawmakers from the reserved seats for women in the last parliament.

The Election Commission is expected to announce the election schedule for women's reserved seats early next month. The AL will begin selling nomination forms following a meeting of the party's parliamentary nomination board.

18 journalists attacked while covering polls violence: CPJ

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Committee to Protect Journalists said at least 18 journalists were assaulted or harassed while covering irregularities and violence during the January 7 national election in Bangladesh.

A statement issued yesterday by the international body said Mujib Mashal, South Asia bureau chief for The New York Times, told CPJ that the newspaper was denied government approval to report on the polls.

The day before the election, the Daily Manab Zamin newspaper's website was blocked in Bangladesh, according to Matiur Rahman Chowdhury, the outlet's editor-in-chief.

Matiur told CPJ that the outlet did not receive a government notice detailing why the website was blocked, and access was restored on January 8.

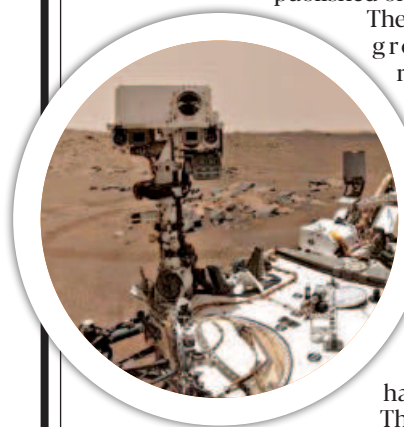
At around 1:00pm on election day, around 15 to 20 men wearing Awami League badges attacked seven journalists while they were reporting on an assault on independent

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Mars rover data confirms ancient lake sediments

REUTERS, Los Angeles

Nasa's rover Perseverance has gathered data confirming the existence of ancient lake sediments deposited by water that once filled a giant basin on Mars called Jerezo Crater, according to a study published on Friday.



The findings from ground-penetrating radar observations conducted by the robotic rover substantiate previous orbital imagery and other data leading scientists to theorize that portions of Mars were once covered in water and may have harbored microbial life.

The research, led by teams from the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) and the University of Oslo, was published in the journal Science Advances.

It was based on subsurface scans taken by the car-sized, six-wheeled rover over several months of 2022 as it made its way across the Martian surface from the crater floor onto an adjacent expanse of braided, sedimentary-like features resembling, from orbit, the river deltas found on Earth.

Soundings from the rover's RIMFAX radar instrument allowed scientists to peer underground to get a cross-sectional view of rock layers 65 feet (20 meters) deep, "almost like looking at a road cut," said UCLA planetary scientist David Paige, the first author of the paper.

'HOUTH MISSILE ATTACK' One Bangladeshi onboard British tanker on fire

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

One Bangladeshi and 22 Indian crew members are on board a British oil tanker MV Marlin Luanda which reported a fire outbreak in the Gulf of Aden, following an alleged Houthi missile strike.

The incident prompted the Indian Navy to rush its warship to join firefighting operations.

The fire broke out on the night of January 26 and the ship has 22 Indian and one Bangladeshi crew members onboard, the Indian Navy said yesterday.

The navy sent its guided missile destroyer INS Visakhapatnam to the site after responding to a distress call from the oil tanker.

The firefighting efforts onboard the oil tanker are being augmented by a team of India's National Biological and Chemical Defence along with equipment, the Indian Navy said.

"The fire-fighting efforts onboard the distressed Merchant Vessel is being augmented by the NBCD team along with fire fighting equipment, deployed by INS Visakhapatnam to assist the crew onboard the MV. The MV has 22 #Indian & 01 Bangladeshi crew onboard," the Indian Navy wrote on X, formerly Twitter.

While there was no official word on how the fire broke out, the blaze was reportedly caused by a missile fired by Houthi rebels.

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Rangpur Riders' Pakistani batter Babar Azam pulls one during his 46-ball 62 -- a second half-century in three games -- against Durdanto Dhaka in their Bangladesh Premier League fixture at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium yesterday. Rangpur won the match by 79 runs.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Bangladeshi shot dead in South Africa

A CORRESPONDENT, Feni

A Bangladeshi man was gunned down by criminals in South Africa's Johannesburg yesterday morning.

The deceased was identified as Nurul Huda Liton, 34, from Jagotpur village in Feni's Daganbhuiyan upazila.

The victim's younger brother, Nurul Alam Mithun, who also lives in South Africa, informed his family members about the matter over the phone.

Their cousin, Monir Hossain, then spoke to journalists.

Monir said Liton went to South Africa for work around 12 years ago. Later, he took Mithun.

Liton has two shops in the Hillbrow area of Johannesburg. Liton used to manage one of the shops, while Mithun looked after the other.

In the last few days, Liton had arguments with another Bangladeshi in Johannesburg over a business issue.

"When Liton was alone near his shop at around 9:00am [Bangladesh time], some criminals shot him and fled the scene," said Monir, quoting Mithun.

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