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34 eminent personalities protest bid to 'harass' Yunus

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Thirty-four noted citizens on Sunday issued a statement protesting the attempts to seize the institutions founded by Nobel Laureate Prof Dr Muhammad Yunus.

They also urged the government and all concerned authorities to stop all "harassment" against Dr Yunus.

"We have noticed recent news reports regarding attempts to seize several institutions established by Nobel laureate Dr Muhammad Yunus. These attempts include trespassing and forced entry into institutions such as Grameen Kalyan and Grameen Telecom, both located within the Grameen Telecom building. Furthermore, a political rally was held in front of the building, constituting an unauthorised intrusion," the statement said.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2



The parents and sister of Major Mohammad Mominul Islam Sarkar weep near his grave at the Armed Forces graveyard in the capital's Banani yesterday morning, 15 years after he was sprayed with bullets during the horrific BDR mutiny at Pilkhana in the capital. Family members of all army personnel, who had lost their lives in the carnage, attended a special memorial before visiting the graves of their loved ones. On February 25, 2009, 74 people, including 57 army officers, were killed in an armed revolt.

PHOTO: STAR

Sweden to join Nato as Hungary ratifies bid

REUTERS, Budapest, Stockholm

Hungary's parliament approved Sweden's Nato accession yesterday, clearing the last hurdle before the historic step by the Nordic country whose neutrality lasted through two world wars and the simmering conflict of the Cold War.

Hungary's vote ended months of delays to complete Sweden's security policy shift and followed a visit by Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson on Friday during which the two countries signed an arms deal.

Sweden's Nato membership was supported by 188 lawmakers in Hungarian parliament, with six against and no abstentions.

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban's government has faced pressure from Nato allies to fall in line and seal Sweden's accession to the alliance.

"Finally it is done, Sweden is the 32nd member of the alliance, and this way Nato has become stronger," Agnes Vadai, a lawmaker of the opposition party Democratic Coalition (DK) told parliament.

Stockholm abandoned its non-alignment policy for greater safety within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

With Sweden following Finland into Nato, President Vladimir Putin has effectively achieved the very thing he sought to avert when he launched his war in Ukraine - an expansion of the alliance, Western leaders have said.

While Finland became a Nato member last year,

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

CYBER SECURITY ACT 5 sections can put journos in trouble

Says Justice Hassan Arif

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Justice Sheikh Hassan Arif, a judge of the High Court Division of the Supreme Court, yesterday said five sections of the Cyber Security Act can be used to put journalists in trouble.

"Sections 22, 23, 25, 27, and 28 of the Cyber Security Act will always remain a threat to independent journalism."

Section 22 is about digital or electronic forgery, but it does not say what constitutes forgery.

"Define which act is forgery and which act is not forgery," the judge said.

Section 23 deals with fraud using any digital or electronic medium, and section 25 is about the transmission or publication of information that is offensive, false, or threatening. Section 27 deals with punishment for cyber terrorism, and section 28 deals with the publication and broadcast of information on websites or in any electronic format that hurts religious values or sentiments.

"If these are not defined specifically, governments will come with different views at different periods. The mindsets of ministers will become different. Many have tremendous intolerance..." he said, adding that journalists can get relieved of the charges under section 29 that deals

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

UN voices alarm as Israel prepares for Rafah invasion

Palestinian PM resigns citing 'new reality' of Gaza conflict

AFP, Palestinian Territories

Israel said yesterday its army had readied a plan to evacuate Gazans ahead of a feared invasion of far-southern Rafah, which the UN chief warned would "put the final nail in the coffin" of aid operations.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said that Rafah - where 1.4 million Palestinians live in crowded shelters near the Egyptian border - is also "the core of the humanitarian aid operation" in the besieged Gaza Strip.

In another shock impact of the almost five-month-old war, Palestinian prime minister Mohammad Shtayeh in the occupied West Bank handed in his government's resignation to the head of the Palestinian Authority, president Mahmud Abbas.

Shtayeh cited "the new reality in the Gaza Strip" and "the escalation in the West Bank and Jerusalem", where deadly violence has surged since October 7.

Meanwhile, the League of Arab States yesterday called Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories an "affront to international justice", saying failure to end it amounted to "genocide".

The International Court of Justice entered its last day of week-long hearings after a request from the United Nations, with an unprecedented 52 countries giving their views on Israel's occupation.

"This prolonged occupation is an affront to international justice," the 22 Arab-country bloc's representative told judges in The Hague.

"The failure to bring it to an end has led to the current horrors perpetrated against the Palestinian people, amounting to genocide," Abdel Hakim El-Rifai said, reading a written statement.

Most speakers during the hearings have demanded that Israel end its occupation, which came after a six-day Arab-Israeli war in 1967.

Elsewhere, a US airman has died after setting himself on fire outside the Israeli embassy in Washington as he lit himself on fire, according to footage shared on social media.

The shocking act was an escalation of recent protests across the United States against Israel's actions in Gaza.

Emergency responders on Sunday had rushed to the scene in response to a "call for person on fire outside the Israeli Embassy," the capital city's fire department.

The unnamed man had filmed himself shouting "Free Palestine" as he lit himself on fire, according to footage shared on social media.

Israel's top ally Washington and other powers discussing a post-war Gaza have called for a reformed Palestinian Authority to take charge of both the West Bank and Gaza, which has been ruled by Hamas since 2007.

➤ A total of 29,782 people killed since October 7

➤ A US airman die setting himself on fire outside Israeli embassy in Washington



Music legend Pankaj Udhas no more

AGENCIES

Music legend and Padmashri winner Pankaj Udhas breathed his last yesterday. The veteran ghazal singer, who was known for his ghazals like "Chitti Ayi Hai" and "Chandi Jaisa Rang", passed away at age 73 due to prolonged illness.

His daughter, Nayaab Udhas, confirmed the news of her father's passing on Instagram.

As per Hindu, the veteran singer passed away at 11:00am at Breach Candy hospital.

Born on May 17, 1951, in India's Jetpur, the Indian ghazal and playback singer was known for his works in

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

SEXUAL HARASSMENT Viqarunnisa teacher held

Parents of one victim file case; multiple students lodge complaints with school

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Murad Hossain Sarkar, a math teacher at Viqarunnisa Noon School and College, has been arrested in a case filed over the sexual harassment of several students of the school's Azimpur branch.

Lalbagh Police Station Officer-in-Charge Khandaker Mohammad Helal Uddin told The Daily Star that Murad, 48, was held at his home in Kalabagan around 1:00am today.

One of the victims' parents yesterday lodged the case with the police station.

In the first information report, she stated that her daughter started going to the teacher's private coaching centre in 2023.

On March 10, 2023, Murad kept the seventh grader at the centre after classes, then groped and forcibly kissed her.

He also groped and sexually abused her on several other occasions, the FIR read.

On November 16, 2023, he followed the girl to the prayer room after class and attempted to rape her there, the FIR read. When she resisted, he threatened her with expulsion from school and said he would tell everyone and humiliate her parents.

The FIR added that the school authorities caught the wind of the allegations and called several parents on February 3, 2024. There, the victim told her mother that several of her classmates also faced sexual abuse by Murad.

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1

Scientists unravel the mystery of whale song

CNN ONLINE

Eerie, fascinating and at times unnerving, whale songs are one of the most mysterious sounds to have been heard reverberating through the ocean.

How baleen whales, which include humpback whales, are able to sing underwater has eluded scientists since whale songs were first discovered more than 50 years ago.

While toothed whales, which include dolphins and killer whales, developed a vocal organ in their nose to produce sound, baleen whales are thought to use a larynx - or voice box - in their throat to do so, according to a new study published in the journal Nature on Wednesday.

A baleen whale's larynx is shaped differently from other mammals. It has long, rigid, cylinder-like cartilages that form a U shape. This structural adaptation allows the leviathan to breathe massive amounts of air in and out when they go to the surface, according to the study.

In the respiratory tract, the evolved nasal and oral plugs protect the airways from water when the marine mammal breathes and eats.

Air sacs also evolved in a way that may allow a baleen whale to recycle air while creating vocal sounds, according to researchers.



Comilla Victorians' Liton Das and Towhid Hridoy bump fists during their partnership of 143 runs against Rangpur Riders in the first qualifier of the Bangladesh Premier League at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. Story on page 2.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

Rohingyas given NIDs, passports on forged docs

DB arrests 23 including Ansar members

MUNTAKIM SAAD

During the Rohingya influx in 2017, a girl along with her family moved to a refugee camp in Cox's Bazar from Maungdaw, a town in Rakhine state of Myanmar.

Her family was trying to get a passport and have Amira, now 14, sent to Saudi Arabia where a relative resides.

Amira is not her real name. The Daily Star is not disclosing her name as she is underage.

The family first contacted Rohingya brokers in Cox's Bazar who communicated with brokers in Dhaka's Agargaon passport office.

The brokers in Dhaka stole the identity of a 21-year-old woman in Ishwarganj of Mymensingh and made Amira impersonate the woman.

On February 18, Amira underwent the passport application process, submitting her photo and biometric information. She was scheduled to get her passport on March 12.