

No functional hospital left in north Gaza

Says WHO

AFP, Geneva

There is no longer any functional hospital in the north of the Gaza Strip, the World Health Organization said yesterday, describing “unbearable” scenes of largely abandoned patients begging for food and water.

The UN health agency said it had led missions to two badly damaged hospitals, Al-Shifa and Al-Ahli, in the north of the Palestinian territory on Wednesday.

“Our staff are running out of words to describe the beyond catastrophic situation facing remaining patients and health workers,” said Richard Peeperkorn, the WHO representative for the occupied Palestinian territory.

WHO has already described Al-Shifa, the largest hospital in Gaza which last month was the focus of an extended Israeli army operation and has been devastated by Israeli bombardments, as “a blood bath”.

The smaller Al-Ahli hospital had since become the only place where surgeries were possible in the north, but its director said it had stopped operating on Tuesday after being stormed by the Israeli army.

The WHO-led mission revealed that Al Ahli, which just two days ago was “overwhelmed with patients needing emergency care”, was now “a shell of a hospital”, Peeperkorn told reporters in Geneva via video link from Jerusalem.

“There are no operating theatres anymore due to the lack of fuel, power, medical supplies and health workers, including surgeons and other specialists,” he added.

“It has completely stopped functioning.”

Of Gaza’s original 36 hospitals, only nine are now partially functional, all of them in the south.

“There are no functional hospitals left in the north.”

Hospitals, protected under international humanitarian law, have repeatedly been hit by Israeli strikes in Gaza.

The Israeli military accuses Hamas of having tunnels under hospitals and using the medical facilities as command centres, a charge denied by the Islamist group.

Asked about the charge, Peeperkorn said “we on our missions have not seen anything of this on the ground”, adding that WHO was “not in a position to assert how any hospital is being used”.

Although Wednesday’s mission had aimed to deliver fuel, he said, the lack of security guarantees had meant they could only deliver medical supplies and medicines.

But that was not enough, he said.

“Without fuel, staff, and other essential needs, medicines won’t make a difference and all patients will die slowly and painfully.”

Al Ahli, he said, still counts around 10 staff striving to provide basic first aid, while around 80 patients are sheltering in a church within the hospital grounds and the orthopaedic section.



Relatives of Jihad Arafat, who was killed in Israeli bombardment, mourn over his body at the Najjar hospital in Rafah, in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

AERIAL ASSAULTS ON UKRAINE

7,400 missiles, 3,700 drones fired in 22 months

Kyiv says; Russia in ‘comprehensive’ defence cooperation with North Korea

REUTERS, Moscow

Russia has launched about 7,400 missiles and 3,700 Shahed attack drones at targets in Ukraine during its 22-month-old invasion, Kyiv said yesterday, illustrating the vast scale of Moscow’s aerial assaults.

Ukrainian air defences were able to shoot down 1,600 of the missiles and 2,900 of the drones, air force spokesperson Yuriy Ihnat said in televised comments. “We are faced with an enormous aggressor, and we are fighting back,” he said.

He said the lower missile downing rate was due to the use of

supersonic ballistic missiles, which are much harder to hit, as well as the fact that the West supplied Ukraine with advanced Patriot air defence systems only well into the war.

Russia says it only fires on military targets though Moscow has also admitted to targeting Ukraine’s energy infrastructure. Russia says it does not target civilians, despite thousands of documented civilian deaths throughout the war.

Western media outlets and analysts have produced evidence, including satellite imagery, of Russia setting up its own Shahed

production facilities.

Elsewhere, the chief of the Russian General Staff, Valery Gerasimov said that his country has established “comprehensive” defence cooperation with North Korea as well as continuing its strategic partnerships with India and China.

“The course towards developing a comprehensive strategic partnership with China and India continues. Active, comprehensive cooperation has been established with the DPRK,” Gerasimov said in a year-end address. He gave no further details.



A man uses a shovel to clear snow during heavy snowfall in Weihai, in China’s eastern Shandong province yesterday. Temperatures in cities across northern China hit record lows on December 20, as authorities issued an alert for extreme cold across swathes of the country.

PHOTO: AFP

RESPONSE TO REBEL OFFENSIVE

Myanmar junta accused of suspected war crimes

REUTERS

Myanmar’s military has likely perpetrated indiscriminate attacks on civilians and used banned cluster munitions in its fight against ethnic minority insurgents, Amnesty International said yesterday, calling for an investigation of suspected war crimes.

The junta is facing its biggest battlefield challenge since its 2021 coup, with coordinated rebel attacks on military posts in Shan state, bordering China, and in western Rakhine state.

An air strike in Shan state earlier this month used bombs that were most likely cluster munitions, Amnesty said in a statement, citing evidence analysed by its weapon investigator.

According to the Ta’ang National Liberation Army (TNLA), one of three groups in the rebel “Three Brotherhood Alliance”, the attack killed a resident and injured five people.

Civilians in Pauk Taw, Rakhine state, suffered looting, arbitrary arrests, inhumane treatment and torture,

Amnesty said citing interviews with 10 civilians.

“The Myanmar military has a blood-stained resume of indiscriminate attacks with devastating consequences for civilians, and its brutal response to a major offensive by armed groups fits a longstanding pattern,” said Matt Wells, director of Amnesty’s Crisis Response Programme.

Reuters could not independently verify the report and the junta’s spokesperson, Zaw Min Tun, could not be reached for comment. He has denied state forces target civilians in operations he called legitimate actions against “terrorists”.

More than 300,000 people have fled the fighting that erupted in late October, with more than two million displaced overall since the coup, according to the United Nations.

The coup unravelled a decade of democracy and reform, with anger over a sweeping military crackdown fuelling a resistance movement and an intensification of fighting with ethnic minority rebels.


N Korea’s Kim warns of ‘nuclear attack’

AFP, Seoul


North Korean leader Kim Jong Un warned Pyongyang will not hesitate to launch a nuclear attack if “provoked with nukes”, state media said yesterday, while Seoul and its allies called for “dialogue without preconditions”.

Kim’s warning follows a meeting between South Korea and the United States last week in Washington, where they discussed nuclear deterrence in the event of conflict with the North.

Kim told his military’s missile bureau “not to hesitate (launching) even a nuclear attack when the enemy provokes it with nukes,” Pyongyang’s official Korean Central News Agency said yesterday.



Jalalabad Gas Transmission & Distribution System Ltd.
(A Company of Petrobangla)
(Gas Bhaban, Mendibag, Sylhet-3100)



গ্যাস ব্যবহারে সশ্রদ্ধী হোন এবং
সময়মত গ্যাস বিল পরিশোধ করুন

তদ্বাচারা চর্চা করি
সমৃদ্ধ সোনার বাংলা গড়ি

বিনা কারণে গ্যাসের চুলা জ্বালিয়ে রাখা
আর বিপদকে ডাকা একই বিষয়

Ref. No. : 28.16.9100.098.07.003.23/ 234Date: 21/12/2023

Invitation For International Tender

01. Ministry/Division	: Ministry of Power, Energy & Mineral Resources /EMRD	
02. Agency	: Bangladesh Oil, Gas & Mineral Corporation (PETROBANGLA)	
03. Purchaser Name &	: Jalalabad Gas Transmission & Distribution System Ltd.	
04. Invitation for	: Procurement of Gas Pipeline Fittings	
05. Invitation Ref. No. & Date	: 28.16.9100.098.07.003.23/ 234 Date: 21/12/2023	
06. Procurement method	: Open Tendering Method(OTM)	
07. Budget &Source of fund	: JGTDSL’s own fund	
08. Tender Publication Date	: 22/12/2023	
09. Tender Last selling Date	: 04/02/2024 (During office hours on all working days.)	
10. Tender Closing date &time	: 05/02/2024, 11-30 A.M. (BST)	
11. Tender Opening date & time	: 05/02/2024 ,11-40 A.M. (BST)	
12. Name & Address of the offices		
(i) Selling Tender Document	: i) Liaison Office, Jalalabad Gas Transmission & Distribution System Ltd, Petrobangla, Petrocenter (13 th floor), 3 Kawran Bazar C/A, Dhaka-1215, Bangladesh. ii) Cash Counter, Gas Bhaban (1 st floor), JGTDSL, Mendibag, Sylhet, Bangladesh.	
(ii) Receiving Tender	: Committee Room, Gas Bhaban (4 th Floor), JGTDSL, Mendibag, Sylhet, Bangladesh.	
(iii) Opening Tender	: Committee Room, Gas Bhaban (4 th Floor), JGTDSL, Mendibag, Sylhet, Bangladesh.	
13. Eligibility of Tenderer	: (i) The Tenderer shall have a minimum of 10 (ten) years of overall experience in the supply of goods and related services. (ii) The minimum specific experience as a Supplier in the supply of gas pipeline materials of at least Two (02) contracts completed successfully within the last Five (5) years, with a value of at least USD 1,80,000.00 (USD One Lac Eighty Thousand) under a single contract. (iii) All other detailed Terms & Conditions are given in the Tender Document.	
14. Brief description of Goods	: Different sizes & class of Insulating Joint, Long Radius Bend, Elbow, Reducer, Weld Neck Flange, Tee, Gasket, End Cap, Stud Bolt with Nut & Washer, Socket, Hexagonal-Head Plug, M.S. Nipple, Needle Valve, Screwed Ball Valve, Thinsulator; Casing End Seal, SS Tube, S. S. Coupling, S.S Compression Coupling, S.S Coupling Tee, S.S Coupling Converter, S.S Screwed Ball Valve and Pressure Gauges.	
15. Price of Tender Document	: BDT 5,000 (Non-refundable)	
16. Location	Tender Security Amount	Delivery Period
Sylhet, Bangladesh	BDT. 7,00,000.00 (Taka Seven lac) or USD 6,300.00 (USD Six thousand Three hundred) or equivalent currency.	90 (Ninety) days from the date of opening LC.
17. Name, Designation & Address of the official inviting tender	: Engr. Md. Masud Rana Deputy General Manager (Procurement Department) Gas Bhaban (5 th Floor), Mendibag, Sylhet. Email: jgtdsldgmpurchase@gmail.com	
18. The purchaser reserves the right to reject all tenders or annul the tender proceedings.		

(Engr. Md. Masud Rana)
Deputy General Manager
Procurement Department

CD-1998

SINGLE USE PLASTIC

Canada bids farewell to straws, checkout bags

AFP, Canada

Canadian restaurants and cafes were no longer permitted as of Wednesday to offer plastic straws, food containers, checkout bags or cutlery to customers – despite a court ruling that such restrictions are unconstitutional. The regulation banning single-use plastics was introduced last year and was to be phased in as part of Ottawa’s commitment to achieve zero plastic waste by 2030. But it hit a snag in November when a Canadian court ruled in a case brought by oil and chemical companies that it was “unreasonable and unconstitutional.” The government went ahead anyway, asking the court to stay an order quashing the ban while it appeals the decision, and the prohibition against the manufacture, sale or in-store distribution of single-use plastics came into force. According to Ottawa, Canadians throw away three million tonnes of plastic waste each year – including a staggering 15 billion bags annually. Only nine percent of it is recycled.

‘SILENCING PRO-PALESTINIAN VOICE’

Rights group slams Meta

AFP, Beirut

Human Rights Watch accused Meta yesterday of restricting pro-Palestinian content on Facebook and Instagram, decrying “systemic online censorship” since Israel attacked Gaza. “Meta’s policies and practises have been silencing voices in support of Palestine and Palestinian human rights on Instagram and Facebook in a wave of heightened censorship of social media,” the New York-based group said in a report released yesterday. “Meta’s censorship of content in support of Palestine adds insult to injury at a time of unspeakable atrocities and repression already stilling Palestinians’ expression,” said Deborah Brown, acting associate director of HRW’s technology and human rights division. HRW pointed to “systemic online censorship”, reporting more than 1,050 “takedowns and other suppression of content” on Instagram and Facebook from over 60 countries during October and November.