



ROHINGYA REFUGEES

WFP seeks urgent funding to avoid aid deficit

REUTERS, New Delhi

The UN World Food Programme (WFP) yesterday called for urgent funding for its Bangladesh operations, warning that a funding deficit would curb rations for the Rohingya in the world's largest refugee settlement.

Reuters reported on Wednesday that the United Nations would have to cut food rations to Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh from \$12.50 to \$6 per month in April after failing to secure funding.

While the WFP has not specified whether the reduction was due to the Trump administration's decision to cut US foreign aid globally, an official has told Reuters it was likely as the United States had been the top donor in the Rohingya crisis.

"Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh remain entirely dependent on humanitarian assistance for their survival. Any reduction in food assistance will push them deeper into hunger and force them to resort to desperate measures just to survive," Dom Scalpelli, WFP Country Director in Bangladesh, said in a statement.

The WFP said it had already started communicating with the Rohingya community about the potential ration cuts.

Bangladesh is sheltering more than one million Rohingyas - members of a persecuted Muslim minority who fled violent purges in neighbouring Myanmar mainly

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A boy leaps over the construction trench in Ring Road in the capital's Mohammadpur. A part of this busy road has been dug for maintenance of utility lines, causing a bottleneck. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

India wants inclusive polls in Bangladesh

Says Jaiswal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

India favours an inclusive and participatory national election in Bangladesh, said Indian Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesman Randhir Jaiswal yesterday.

During the MEA's weekly media briefing, Jaiswal also expressed concern over the law and order situation in Bangladesh.

When asked about his comments on the recently launched Jatiya Nagorik Party (National Citizen Party), Jaiswal reiterated that India has always supported a peaceful, progressive, and inclusive Bangladesh, where issues are addressed through democratic means, including inclusive and participatory elections.

Asked to comment on Bangladesh Foreign Adviser Touhid Hossain's remark that the plight of minorities is an internal issue and India should not intervene, Jaiswal responded, "We have repeatedly underlined that it is the responsibility of Bangladesh's interim government to protect Hindus, other minorities, their properties, and religious institutions."

ROOPPUR PLANT

PGCB sends clarification on our story

Power Grid Bangladesh PLC (PGCB) has sent an explanation on the report published in The Daily Star on March 3 titled "Rooppur power plant: Incomplete power line delays test run", saying that the news incorrectly attributes the delay in the test operations solely to the unfinished transmission line work, which is inaccurate.

It said the construction work of "Rooppur-Bogra 400 kV Single Circuit Transmission Line" and "Rooppur-Baghabari 230 kV Double Circuit Transmission Line" has been completed in April 2024 and April 2022, respectively. Each of the transmission lines has a capacity to evacuate around 2,000 megawatts (MW) electricity, which was built for the testing and evacuation of the first unit of the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant.

The explanation said it is possible to maintain the highest security of the national grid system and evacuate 600 MW of electricity from the first unit of the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant through these

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Russia launches large-scale attack on Ukraine

Energy facilities hit; Zelensky renews call for air truce; Kremlin rules out ceasefire

AFP, Kyiv

Russia launched a "massive" drone and missile attack on Ukrainian energy facilities early yesterday, just days after President Volodymyr Zelensky and European allies proposed that Moscow and Kyiv halt strikes on critical infrastructure.

The Ukrainian air force said Russia had launched at least 58 missiles and nearly 200 drones, damaging energy facilities across the country from Kharkiv in the east to Ternopil in the west.

Firefighters were battling a blaze on streets lined with debris in the Kharkiv region, images released by the emergency services showed.

Zelensky yesterday called for a truce in the air and at sea, as well as additional pressure on Russia, after the massive attack.

"The first steps to establishing real peace should be forcing the sole source of this war, Russia, to stop such attacks," Zelensky said on the Telegram app.

The Kremlin had responded by ruling out any temporary ceasefire in Ukraine, and yesterday, its defence ministry confirmed it had carried out "precision" strikes on energy facilities, claiming they support the Ukrainian military.

Russia is "targeting facilities linked to Ukraine's military-industrial complex," Russian

President Vladimir Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

US President Donald Trump yesterday threatened new sanctions and tariffs on Russia over its bombardments of Ukraine.

The Ukrainian air force said it had deployed French Mirage fighter jets - delivered to Ukraine last month - for the first time to repel the aerial onslaught. The fighter jets along with air defence units shot down 34 missiles and 100 drones.

DTEK, the largest private energy supplier in Ukraine, said its facilities in the Black Sea region of Odesa were targeted for a fourth night in a row.

And it said that gas facilities in the central Poltava region had "ceased operations" after being struck in the overnight attack.

State gas company Naftogaz also said its production facilities were damaged, without giving details. Authorities in at least five Ukrainian regions said Russia had targeted energy facilities.

The latest Russian air assault came after EU leaders, shaken by the prospect of US disengagement, agreed to boost the European bloc's defences.

And Washington said talks with Kyiv were back on track to secure a ceasefire with Moscow - after a public falling out between President Donald Trump and Zelensky.

119 citizens slam CSA cases against Rakhal Raha, Nahid Hasan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As many as 119 citizens yesterday condemned the cases filed against writers and activists Rakhal Raha and Nahid Hasan under the Cyber Security Act and they also demanded immediate withdrawal of their cases and the complete abolition of the repressive law.

In a statement, they said that although the rule of fascist Awami League government ended through July mass uprising, the shadow of fascism still exists within various layers of the state structure.

"In particular, the repressive laws enacted by the Awami League government, such as the Digital Security Act, are still in effect, which were used to oppress the people. One of the core aspirations of the July uprising is to restore people's dignity by abolishing all oppressive laws, including the Digital Security Act, that curtailed human freedom.

"However, the opposite is happening. The Digital Security Act has been replaced by the Cyber Security Act, keeping the oppressive sections. This allows vested groups and individuals to legally suppress freedom-loving citizens and impose collective resentment upon them."

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Nasa uses GPS on the Moon for the first time

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Nasa has successfully used GPS navigation on the lunar surface for the first time.

The demonstration, which also involved the Italian Space Agency, is expected to signal a new era of exploration and discovery on the Moon.

Using the Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS), the experiment involved successfully acquiring and tracking Earth-based signals from 362,000 kilometres (225,000 miles) away.

"On Earth we can use GNSS signals to navigate in everything from smartphones to airplanes," said Kevin Coggins, deputy associate administrator for Nasa's Space Communications and Navigation (SCaN) programme.

"Now, LuGRE shows us that we can successfully acquire and track GNSS signals at the Moon. This is a very exciting discovery for lunar navigation, and we hope to leverage this capability for future missions."

The Lunar GNSS Receiver Experiment (LuGRE) took place using Firefly Aerospace's lunar lander Blue Ghost, which became the first commercial craft to successfully reach the Moon after landing on its surface this week.

GPS operations are set to continue for the next two weeks in an effort to collect more data and further develop the Moon's first advanced navigation system.

Nasa hopes to use the technology for its upcoming Artemis missions, which will attempt to return astronauts to the Moon for the first time in more than 50 years.



2018 POLLS

ACC to probe SPs, DCs over 'midnight voting'

DIPAN NANDY

The Anti Corruption Commission (ACC) will launch an investigation against former deputy commissioners (DCs) and superintendents of police (SPs) over their alleged irregularities during the 2018 national election.

Complaints have been filed with the ACC against them over nighttime voting, ballot fraud, falsely reporting voter turnout above 90 percent in certain centres, large-scale illegal financial transactions, and abuse of power to ensure the victory of specific candidates.

Based on these complaints, the ACC has started an investigation, which includes probing officials found to be involved in the irregularities committed during the 2018 election, ACC Director General Akhtar Hossain told The Daily Star.

"A five member ACC team is conducting the investigation into allegations of abuse of power, criminal misconduct, forgery, midnight voting, and financial transactions to influence the 2018 parliamentary election."

To investigate these allegations, the ACC has already started analysing various videos, reports from domestic and international media, and election result sheets.

"They are also reviewing the income tax records of the officials and have already discovered significant illegal assets owned by many of them. More details will emerge

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A heavy traffic in front of New Market in the capital yesterday as more people went shopping on the first weekend of Ramadan.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

'Want to live freely, safely, and with dignity' Women stage silent protest

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PRAYER TIMING		MARCH 8			
Fajr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha	
AZAN 4:59	12:45	4:30	6:05	7:30	
JAMAAT 5:09	1:15	4:45	6:20	8:00	
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION					
SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING					
RAMADAN	MARCH	SEHRI	IFTAR		
7	8			6:05	
8	9	4:57	6:06		
9	10	4:56	6:06		