

## Legal action against 'false, misleading' reports

### Warns CA's deputy press secy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser's Deputy Press Secretary Azad Majumder yesterday warned that legal action would be taken against anyone publishing "false or misleading" reports that create confusion among the people.

Speaking at a press conference at the Foreign Service Academy, he said news published by several media outlets about the revoking of the recognition of Mujibnagar government President Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and other cabinet members as freedom fighters was "false, baseless, and misleading".

He said the government hoped the news outlets that published "wrong, misleading" reports would correct their mistakes, publish a corrigendum in the same spot where they ran the wrong report, and apologise to their readers and the people of Bangladesh who were misled.

Azad said this was not the first time such incidents had occurred, adding, "We always try to provide you with accurate information to counter misinformation. The current interim government strongly upholds press freedom and welcomes criticism."

"No one has ever been granted a licence to publish false news at their whim. From now on, legal action will be taken against anyone who spreads such misinformation or misleading reports that confuse the people," he said.

## Ukraine attacks Crimean bridge

### Says Kremlin; Russian army captures another village in Sumy region

AFP, Moscow

Moscow said yesterday that a Ukrainian attack on a bridge that links the annexed Crimean peninsula to Russia caused "no damage."

Ukraine's SBU security service said Tuesday it had detonated a bomb on one of the bridge's underwater pillars, publishing footage of a blast coming out of the water and debris flying.

"There was indeed an explosion," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters. "Nothing was damaged. The bridge is working," he said.

Ukraine has targeted the 19-kilometre (12-mile) bridge repeatedly since Russia launched its full-scale military offensive in February 2022.



British High Commissioner Sarah Cooke at a meeting with Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus at the state guest house Jamuna in Dhaka yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

## Spice prices drop ahead of Eid

### Veggies get costlier as rain hits supply

SUKANTA HALDER and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Prices of most spices have dropped in Dhaka's kitchen markets ahead of Eid-ul-Azha, giving some relief to consumers, but rising vegetable prices are putting extra pressure on fixed middle-income people.

Traders say due to adequate imports and sufficient supply in the market to meet demand, the prices of many spice items have dropped this year compared to last year.

On the other hand, due to continuous rainfall over the past few days in various parts of the country, the supply of vegetables in the market has decreased, leading to a rise in the prices of some vegetables.

Mohammad Bablu, a retailer in Karwan Bazar, one of the largest kitchen markets in Dhaka, told The Daily Star that due to higher supply in the market relative to demand, the prices of many spices have decreased compared to last year, and prices of some items have dropped by more than half.

For this reason, there is some relief among consumers regarding spice prices this time, he said.

According to data from the state-run Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) as of June 2, year-on-year prices of several essential spice items have seen notable declines.

Onion prices dropped by 31.25 percent, garlic by 42.86 percent, dried chilli by 26.39 percent, turmeric by 13.33 percent, and ginger by a significant 100 percent.

Other spices also recorded moderate price reductions over the past year. Cumin

prices fell by 14.38 percent, cinnamon by 4 percent, clove by 14 percent, and coriander by 2 percent.

However, according to the TCB market price on June 2, the year-on-year price of cardamom has increased by 31 percent and the price of imported turmeric by 6.35 percent.

At Karwan Bazar yesterday, dried chilli was sold for Tk 220 to Tk 240 per kilogramme, depending on quality. In contrast, before last year's Eid-ul-Azha, its

price had surged to Tk 350-400.

price had surged to Tk 350-400. Last year, imported garlic was priced at about Tk 270 per kg during Eid-ul-Azha, but this year it is selling for Tk 160-170. Ginger, depending on quality, is now available at Tk 120 to Tk 130 per kg, compared to Tk 230-270 last year.

Salam Mia, a wholesale trader at the same market, said he has been doing business there for the past ten years. However, he had never seen spice prices

fall before Eid. "This year, I am witnessing an unusual trend of price declines ahead of the upcoming Eid," he added.

A visit to the kitchen markets in Dhaka yesterday revealed that retail vegetable prices have increased by Tk 10 to Tk 20 per kilogramme. Okra, pointed gourd, eggplant, and yardlong beans were sold at Tk 40 to Tk 70 per kilogramme whereas a week ago, their prices ranged from Tk 30 to Tk 60.



Nokib Hasan, a resident of Mirpur, said when the price of one item drops but the cost of another rises, it ultimately offers no real relief to consumers.

He said the government should pay attention to this issue.

Fahim Hossain, a retail trader in Karwan Bazar, said due to the rains in the past few days, the supply of vegetables in the market has decreased. Due to this, the prices have increased.

## 32 more pushed in through Netrokona

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrokona

At least 32 more people were detained by the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) yesterday after they were allegedly pushed into the country by India's Border Security Force (BSF) through Durgapur upazila in Netrokona.

The incident occurred around 3:00am at the Bijoypur border point of the upazila, confirmed Lt Col ASM Kamruzzaman, commanding officer of BGB 31 Battalion in Netrokona.

According to the commanding officer, the BGB detained them 500 yards inside Bangladesh territory near Jagatkura, adjacent to pillar 1148/6-S of the Bijoypur Border Outpost (BOP).

"In the middle of the night, BSF pushed in 32 Bangladeshi nationals across the border. They have confirmed their identities. They are residents of various districts, including Khulna, Jashore, Narail, Satkhira, Brahmanbaria, and Tangail. They had travelled to India at different times," he said.

The returnees are currently being held at the BGB's Bijoypur camp, and preparations are underway to hand them over to the police, he added.

## 5 killed as bus, human haulier collide in Faridpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Five people were killed and two injured in a head-on collision between a human haulier, locally known as Mahindra, and a bus on Dhaka-Barishal highway in Bhanga upazila of Faridpur yesterday morning.

The accident occurred at Chumurdi Bablatata Bus Stand at 6:12am, according to local Fire Service and Civil Defence.

Two of the deceased have been identified as Mizanur Rahman, 45, from Chowkighata village of Bhanga and Tara Mia, 55, of Madborchar village in Shibchar upazila of Madaripur.

Confirming the accident, Station Officer of local fire service Abu Zafar said the three-wheeler overturned following the collision, leaving four passengers dead and three other injured on the spot.

The injured were admitted to Bhanga Upazila Health Complex where Tara Mia succumbed to his injuries, the fire official said.

Sub-inspector of Bhanga Police Station Rakib Hasan said all the deceased and injured were the passengers and driver of Mahindra. The bus driver fled the scene with the vehicle, the SI said.

## UK nuclear site could leak until 2050s: MPs

AFP, London

Britain's most hazardous building threatens to leak radioactive water until the 2050s unless the clean-up of a former nuclear power plant is quickened, UK lawmakers warned yesterday.

The waste has been leaking into the ground from a storage silo at the Sellafield facility in Cumbria, in northwest England, since 2018 — enough to fill an Olympic-sized swimming pool every three years.

Sellafield, which began operations in the 1940s, generated nuclear power between 1956 and 2003.

## Fund crunch hits Rohingyas hard

FROM PAGE 1

no longer receive sufficient medicine as before," said Badrul Alam, head of Camp 26 in Ukhiya Rohingya camp.

In cases of serious illness, the Rohingyas are having to seek treatment from doctors at their own expense, which is not possible for all refugees, he told The Daily Star yesterday.

The latest sector to be hit by the fund cut is education, leaving at bay the future of 230,000 Rohingya children in Cox's Bazar, where about 1.2 million Rohingyas have been living since 2017 after fleeing a brutal military crackdown in Rakhine State.

On June 2 and 3, hundreds of host community teachers terminated from their jobs in the learning centres of Rohingya camps blocked the Cox's Bazar-Teknaf road, signalling deepening tension between the host community and Rohingyas.

Rohingya children will face serious safety risks with the closure of learning centres, which worked as protection spaces, said Rohingya rights activist TK Aung Myo.

"Our Rohingyas children are among the most vulnerable in the world," said Master Mohammad Zubair, chairman of

the Arakan Rohingya Society for Peace and Human Rights.

For them, education is a beacon of hope during a humanitarian crisis. Through education, they learn discipline and structure.

"It is frustrating that the beacon is now going off," he added.

The disruptions are taking place at a time when the vulnerable refugee camps were hit hard by the monsoon rains last weekend, damaging 1,400 homes.

Communal spaces are being used to temporarily host affected families, said interim UNHCR Representative Juliette Murekevisoni.

However, even before the monsoon, there was not enough space to provide shelter to all, especially as thousands of newly arrived Rohingyas have sought asylum here in recent months, she said.

Over the last few months, according to a WFP update, some 150,000 Rohingyas have fled to Bangladesh and 50,000 more may flee by the year-end, making it challenging for the authorities to provide basic services.

With drastic cuts in services in the camps, it is very likely that the Rohingyas will be desperate to flee the camps, either to engage in local jobs or take risky

journeys to foreign lands, said Rohingya Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC) Mizanur Rahman.

The criminal activities among the Rohingyas — including intra-feud, domestic violence and drug peddling — may rise, he said.

A UN official based in Cox's Bazar said UNICEF, IOM and UNHCR have reduced to around 500 staff — both local and foreign nationals — following funding cut by the US government, which provides more than 50 percent of the total Rohingya funding.

"We have a food guarantee until October but after that what happens is up in the air. The Rohingyas as well as the affected host community remain at serious risk," the official said.

Handicapped International, a specialised non-governmental organisation used to serve the more than 10,000 disabled Rohingyas, but their operations are on halt now. There is none to support people with disability.

"Gender-based violence in the camps is quite high. Services like handling these complaints and providing psychological support are so important for the people who fled genocide, but these services have become thin. We are very worried about

what's going to happen in the days to come," said a UN official on the condition of anonymity.

Funding cuts have led to some basic services like health and education, which is a violation of human rights, said Mohammad Zubair, chairman of the Arakan Rohingya Society for Peace and Human Rights.

The decline of aid is a matter of concern, but more concerning is how efficiently the aid is being used in the management of the Rohingyas camps, said Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, executive director of the COAST Foundation.

"We have always been demanding that local NGOs be deployed to manage the Rohingyas camps, while the UN remains at the policy level. But, we have seen that international aid agencies engaged in the management. This is not cost-effective," he said.

The UN and international aid agencies need to have greater collaboration with the local authorities on effective management of the Rohingyas camps, said RRRC Mizanur Rahman.

"Now it is more important than ever to restore the basic services for the Rohingyas."

he said he got a spot beside the driver.

"I had to wait an hour and paid Tk 600 and still could not manage a proper seat for the long journey."

The Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) fined three bus operators at Sayedabad Terminal in a mobile court drive led by Executive Magistrate Shamim Ara for overcharging and regulatory violations.

Ekushey Paribahan was fined Tk 5,000 for overcharging; Nilchal Paribahan, Tk 4,000 for not displaying the official fare chart; and Unique Paribahan, Tk 5,000 for operating without a valid permit.

"We're taking overcharging allegations seriously. BRTA's mobile court will continue operations to ensure passenger comfort and accountability," said Magistrate Ara.

Passengers welcomed the BRTA action and urged continued vigilance throughout the Eid travel period.

However, some transport officials said they are charging a little higher than the usual rate as they have to make the return trip almost empty.

Limon Mridha, the counter manager of Ekushey Paribahan, told The Daily Star, "Fares have been increased by Tk 100 to Tk 150 to cover the fuel cost on the return trip."

Thousands departed Dhaka by train from Kamalapur station, with all trains leaving on time, Mohammad Mohiuddin Arif, divisional railway manager (Dhaka) told The Daily Star around 7:00pm.

He said most of the 70 trains, including 43 intercity services, left for their destinations on time yesterday. Only a few of them were a few minutes behind the schedule, he added.

However, sources said at least three trains — Ekata Express, Rangpur Express and Kalni Express — were running one to two and a half hours behind schedule.

He said passenger pressure is expected to rise today and tomorrow.

"We are doing our best to stay on schedule," Arif said.

Meanwhile, thousands left the capital by launches from the Sadarghat Launch Terminal.

## Yunus to visit UK

FROM PAGE 1

"The relationship between Bangladesh and the UK is very deep and diverse," he said, adding that the visit would play an important role in further improving bilateral ties.

King Charles III will present the prestigious Harmony Award 2025 to Prof Yunus.

The recovery of laundered money and assets abroad is likely to be among the issues discussed during the visit, he added.

Meanwhile, British High

## Commission finds

FROM PAGE 1

hanging victims upside down, spinning them on rotating chairs, locking victims in toilets for days on end and defecating on victims," said Hussain.

In a separate statement, the Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam revealed that the Commission has identified 1,837 cases of enforced disappearance and has verified and reviewed 1,350 of them.

"The intelligence wing of the Rapid Action Battalion has been identified as the main perpetrator in these cases. Those involved in enforced disappearances will be brought to justice," he said, speaking at a press briefing at the Foreign Service Academy.

Of these cases, about 345 individuals who had been forcibly disappeared never returned, said Hussain.

"The law enforcers had truly abused the Anti-Terrorism Act to persecute victims of enforced disappearance," he added.

While abuses perpetrated by Rab and the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence had been the focus of the Commission's investigation so far, it will thoroughly investigate the police's Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime unit and the Detective Branch in the next phase.

Yunus said a "horror museum" should be established to exhibit the findings of torture and persecution uncovered by the Commission.

"These crimes were committed by members of our own society's 'gentlemen' — our own relatives and

Commissioner Sarah Cooke met Prof Yunus at the state guest house Jamuna in Dhaka, reports BSS.

During the meeting, Cooke extended her congratulations to Prof Yunus on receiving the Harmony Award.

"It is a great honour," the chief adviser said, referring to the award.

Their discussions encompassed a range of mutual interests, including trade and investment, aviation cooperation, migration, and the interim government's efforts in asset recovery.

acquaintances. Based on your findings, there should be a horror museum. These are spine-chilling events. People should be shown what such detention cells are like — the cruelty and brutality of being confined to a three-by-three feet space for days and even months," said the chief adviser.

While submitting the report, one commission member told him, "The incidents are so horrific that many of the involved officials and others suffer from remorse. They have contacted us as an effort for self-purification. Two officers even wrote formal letters, requesting to get rid of it. These letters were found at the Ganabhaban. The then army chief publicly acknowledged these letters."

The commission's chief, Justice Moyeenul Islam Chowdhury, urged the chief adviser to take steps so that the families of the missing can at least carry out financial transactions through their bank accounts.

He said that under existing law, a person missing for seven years can be legally presumed dead. He recommended amending the law to reduce this period to five years.

Yunus welcomed the suggestion and advised the commission to propose concrete measures for immediate action.

Thanking the commission members, the chief adviser said, "You've braved fear, threats, and intimidation to carry out your work. You are an inspiration to the people of this country. You will inspire future generations who work for human rights."