

**CHANGING FOOD HABIT**

Wheat import soars as many move away from rice

PAGE B1

**CHARLIE'S ANGELS REBOOT**

Twilight saga star Kristen Stewart could play one of the female private detectives

PAGE 9

**CATALANS HEAD TO POLLS**

Fiercely disputed referendum on separation from Spain is today

PAGE 8

Ashura today

UNB, Dhaka

Holy Ashura, commemorating the martyrdom of Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA), is being observed across the country today with due religious fervour and solemnity.

On this day in the Hijri year of 61, Hazrat Imam (RA), the grandson of Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (SM), along with his family members and 72 followers embraced martyrdom in the hands of Yazid's soldiers at the Battle of Karbala to uphold the teachings of the Prophet (SM).

The day is a public holiday.

President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina have issued separate messages on the occasion.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

**\$3 BILLION INDIAN CREDIT**

## Half a billion used in 7 yrs

Agreement on \$4.5b more this week

**REASONS FOR SLOW UTILISATION**

Delay in every stage -- project selection, approval, signing of loan deal, bidding process -- and complexities in land acquisition

LINE OF CREDIT

**FIRST \$1B****SECOND \$2B**UTILISATION SO FAR **\$576M**

REJAU KARIM BYRON

Bangladesh's utilisation of Indian lines of credit has been nothing more than a sorry state of affairs in the past seven years.

Over the period, Dhaka has witnessed renewed vigour in New Delhi's commitments to financing projects with credits doubling and redoubling.

On top of two LoCs involving \$3.06 billion that India already committed, a third one amounting to \$4.5 billion is now in the pipeline.

But since 2010, Bangladesh could use only \$576 million until last month.

A grim picture of the LoC utilisation surfaces at a time when India is all set to open the third and biggest yet LoC for Bangladesh through signing of an agreement during Indian Finance Minister Arun Jaitley's three-day Dhaka visit beginning on Tuesday.

Bangladesh finance ministry officials attributed the sluggish fund utilisation to delays in project selection, approval process, tender procedure, project design finalisation and loan agreement signing with Indian Exim Bank and complexity in land acquisition.

Economic Relations Division Secretary Kazi Shofiqul Azam told The Daily Star on Thursday, "On our part, if we can speed up the work, the implementation will be faster."

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

## EC goes for new smart NID scheme

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The Election Commission has decided to take up a state-funded project to distribute smart NID cards among voters following a failed attempt to get the work done through joint finance with the World Bank.

The proposed Tk 1,600-crore project would run from January 1 next year to 2022, said EC officials.

The move comes after the commission scrapped a deal with a French company -- Oberthur Technologies (OT) -- for its failure to complete the production and supply of all cards on time, added the officials.

After extending the deadline twice, the EC has been able to distribute only 2.86 percent of the total smart NID cards. Under the around Tk 800 crore project, some 90 million voters were supposed to receive the cards by June.

The commission has already spent a third of the project money.

The EC started the distribution in October last year, long after OT won the tender bid in January 2015 for production, personalisation, and supply of the 90 million cards up to upazila level.

Now, the commission has decided to do the job on its own under a new work plan as the World Bank is unlikely to fund the new project after unsuccessful ending of the previous project, said EC officials.

The EC worked out the plan to provide the smart cards to voters under the Identification System for Enhancing Access to Services (IDEA) project in 2011.

The EC acting secretary Helaluddin Ahmed told The Daily Star, "The IDEA will not be renewed. The EC will personalise [add voters' data on] the smart cards on its own at state-owned Bangladesh Machine Tools Factory

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Rohingya women with their toddlers, suffering mostly from fever, on Ukhia Upazila Health Complex premises yesterday. They began to gather there since daybreak and waited for the service that started at 9:00am. Inset, children receive plates, jugs and dry food.

PHOTOS: ANISUR RAHMAN

## WFP to help feed 5 lakh Rohingyas

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The World Food Programme will provide food support to the five lakh Rohingyas, who have fled to Bangladesh to escape violence in Myanmar's Rakhine state, until they are repatriated, Relief and Disaster Management Minister Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya yesterday said.

It will also give special food for children and pregnant women, he told reporters after a meeting with WFP Executive Director David Beasley at Westin Hotel in the capital.

For the time being, the displaced Myanmar nationals will be sheltered in Cox's Bazar, but if their repatriation is delayed, they would be shifted to Bhashanchar of Noakhali where Bangladesh Navy is developing land.

"Cox's Bazar is a tourist area. We have to protect it. Besides, there are safety issues," Maya said, explaining why

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

MYANMAR TEAM ARRIVES TODAY -- PAGE 16

## Weighed down by age, anguish

WASIM BIN HABIB and MOHAMMAD ALI JINNAT, from Cox's Bazar

As the sun's first light fell across the hills of Balukhali in Ukhia, a frailly built Mohammad Syed could be seen trying his best to walk quicker with the help of a wooden stick.

Barefoot and slightly stooped, the man in his late seventies made it to the muddy ground in front of the temporary shelters, which dot the lands as far as the eyes can see. There, he joined the queue for relief with several hundred other Rohingyas. Amid the sweltering heat, Syed was profusely sweating and coughing.

"If I don't come here, I won't get any food," said the elderly man, a resident of Bolly Bazar of Maungdaw. After a while, he requested his fellow Rohingyas to allow him to sit ahead.

Syed took a pause and said, "My wife is sick. I have to go back to her." His sun-baked face, criss-crossed with wrinkles, slowly turned gloomy.

His ailing wife, Manjura, 65, had stayed back at their tent where his seven-member



family has been living for the last 15 days. An asthma patient, she fell sick during the perilous journey through jungles and hills of Myanmar. Four days ago, she caught a fever and has had a severe cough.

"She took medicine, but her condition has remained unchanged. I also had a fever seven days ago and am still weak," he said.

Elderly people like Syed and his wife are suffering immensely, living in squalid

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2  
UN HUMANITARIAN CHIEF DUE TOMORROW -- PAGE 13

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



BSS, Dhaka

The five-day Durga Puja, the biggest religious festival of the Hindu community, ended yesterday with immersion of Devi Durga.

The annual festival began on September 26 with the incarnation (Bodhon) of the goddess Durga on the day of Maha Shashti at temples across the country.

Maha Saptami puja was observed on Wednesday, Maha Ashtami, Kumari Puja and Sandhi Puja on Thursday and Maha

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



Bangladesh batsman Mahmudullah looks to guide one on the off-side during his 66-run knock against South Africa on the third day of the first Test in Potchefstroom yesterday. The hosts, with two second-innings wickets down, lead the Tigers by 230 runs.

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## Proteas keep bossing Tigers

SAKEB SUBHAN from Potchefstroom

On a pitch that they described as unexpectedly flat, Bangladesh's batsmen were shot out for 320 in response to South Africa's mammoth 496 for three on the third day of the first Test at Potchefstroom's Senwes Park yesterday. From Bangladesh's perspective it would be optimism of a foolhardy bent to mention the obscure stat that it was the first time that Bangladesh strung together four consecutive half-century partnerships, but the reality is that none of those passed 69 and that

SEE PAGE 13 COL 3

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

In Fond Remembrance of  
Ittekhur Uddin Ahmed (Ifti)



(August 27th 1950- October 2nd 2015)  
Founding Chairman Bonanza Group of Companies and Raj Overseas Ltd.

"The void left by your passing can never be filled  
Your smile and indomitable spirit within us is forever instilled.."

Our prayers, deeds and actions will forever be dictated by the template of his integrity, discipline and fair mindedness. May the Almighty Allah in His Infinite Compassion grant him Eternal Peace. We request all friends and family members to pray for his departed soul.