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AVATAR SEQUELS

Kate Winslet to reunite with James Cameron

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MATTIS BACKS IRAN DEAL

The Pentagon chief lends support for the pact amid opposition

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WITH TODAY'S ISSUE

SHOUT *Leading for the Best*

\$4.5B FRESH INDIAN CREDIT

\$1b for Rooppur nuke power plant



- 17 projects to get fund boost under new loan
- \$500m for special economic zones
- India wants to use Mongla Port
- Revival of rail network set up during British period

REHAM KARIM BYRON

Dhaka and New Delhi have signed a \$4.5 billion credit agreement with a provision for spending nearly one fourth of the amount on Bangladesh's first nuclear power plant at Rooppur.

Through this deal, India becomes a party to the civil nuclear programme to be implemented by Russia.

At the signing ceremony of the third Line of Credit (LoC) at the finance ministry yesterday, visiting Indian Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said this is the biggest-ever credit New Delhi has given to any country.

Seventeen projects have already been identified for implementation under the third LoC.

Of the amount, around \$1 billion would be spent on infrastructure development for power evacuation facilities of Rooppur plant. When the power plant goes into production, a transmission line will be set

up to connect it to the national grid.

Russia is building the plant and also providing a credit of \$12 billion for the project.

Finance Minister AMA Muhiith and his Indian counterpart oversaw the deal signing in the morning.

"We are passing through an era where the Indo-Bangladesh relations are at its very best. And in the spirit and environment that exist between our governments, our people and our prime ministers, we have been able to resolve a lot of issues of the past," said Jaitley.

"India sees Bangladesh not merely as a neighbour and a friend... we deeply appreciate the kind of progress and the pace of progress that Bangladesh has been making in the last several years."

Before the signing ceremony, the delegations of the two countries, led by the finance ministers, held a closed-door meeting for an hour.

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An exhausted Rohingya girl falls asleep while riding on the back of a truck heading towards Nayapara refugee camp in Cox's Bazar. She along with the others had crossed the border from Myanmar on Tuesday.

PHOTO: AFP

AGRICULTURAL CREDIT, EXTENSION SERVICES

Marginal farmers have least access

REAZ AHMAD

The country's farm sector is dominated by smallholders but the small and marginal farmers have the least access to the credit and agricultural extension services provided by the state.

A recent nationwide household survey found that the farmers get half the access to state-run Bangladesh Krishi Bank's loans comparing to the large and medium farm owners.

They also get half the attention from the agricultural extension services against the well-off farmers.

In spite of the obstacles, the per unit output from the small and marginal farmers is much higher than the per unit yield from the richer farmers, the survey found.

Over 76 percent of the country's farmers are small and marginal. They either toil in their own small farms (up to 1.49 acres of

Type of Farmers	Access to farm credit	Access to agri extension service	Gross value of crops produced per hectare
Small & marginal (76.6% of total)	7.15 %	10 %	Tk. 94,679
Big & medium (23.4% of total)	13.35 %	21.5 %	Tk. 79,793

land) or in others' lands, says the survey.

On the other hand, less than a quarter of the farming community belongs to the category of medium and big farmers who own at least above 1.5 acres of land each.

Over a third of the farmers (36 percent) are pure tenant, who do not own any arable land.

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RETURN OF REFUGEES

Govt seeks UN support

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka yesterday sought support from the United Nations to ensure repatriation of Rohingyas who have fled to Bangladesh following persecution in Myanmar's Rakhine State.

This development came days after Bangladesh proposed signing a bilateral agreement with Myanmar on the repatriation.

Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali sought the UN support when visiting Mark Lowcock, under-secretary-general of the UN office for the coordination of the humanitarian affairs and the emergency relief coordinator, and Anthony Lake, executive director of UNicef, met him at the foreign ministry, a ministry press release said.

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Stronger global solidarity needed

Mark Lowcock, head of UN OCHA, tells *The Daily Star*, says Bangladesh exceptionally generous to refugees

PORIMOL PALMA

The international community's solidarity must match Bangladesh's efforts in dealing with the Rohingya refugee crisis, said the chief of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

"We will be encouraging the donor countries to be generous in financing the response plan," said OCHA head Mark Lowcock in an interview with two newspapers at the UN office in the capital following his two-day visit to the Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar.

In a meeting in Geneva tomorrow, the heads of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the UN Migration Agency, and UN Refugee Agency, would formally ask member states for assistance he said.

The UN has appealed for \$434 million to scale up relief operations for the Rohingya refugees over the next six months.

Earlier in September, the UN appealed to the international community for \$77m for immediate relief efforts, against which it received



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Ensure voluntary return of Rohingya

Amnesty urges global community; UN calls for end to violence

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The international community must help ensure that Rohingya refugees are not forced back to Myanmar as long as they remain at risk of serious human rights violations following the army's vicious campaign of ethnic cleansing, Amnesty International said yesterday.

The governments of Bangladesh and Myanmar on Monday announced plans to establish a joint working group for the repatriation of Myanmar nationals to their homeland in Myanmar.

More than 500,000 Rohingyas fled a military operation in Rakhine State since August 25. Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali yesterday said the presence of over 900,000 forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals is a serious humanitarian challenge for Bangladesh.

"While it is positive that Myanmar and Bangladesh are discussing options for the

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Fisherman rows past a tiny fishing station in Arial Beel, a vast wetland between the Padma and the Daleshwari rivers. Fishermen say fish are hard to get now because the canals connecting it to the rivers have been filled up.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

CJ forced to go on leave

Alleges BNP, law minister says no scope for politics over the issue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP yesterday alleged that Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha was forced to refrain from carrying out his duties on the pretext of illness.

"Having failed to get a judgment [in 16th amendment case] in its favour, the government has forced him to go on leave," BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir claimed at a press briefing at the party's Nayapaltan headquarters.

"We condemn such an action by the government against the chief justice of the country," Fakhrul said, giving the party's formal reaction for the first time since the CJ went on a month's leave on Tuesday.

The BNP leader also urged the office of the CJ to come up with an explanation about his leave and illness.

However, Law Minister Anisul Huk has insisted

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GOING AGAINST TRAFFIC

Drivers still try to pull rank

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

While hundreds of commuters remained stuck in traffic on Hare Road yesterday evening, a car with flag pole took the wrong side of the road.

Stopped by police, its driver Rafiqul Islam nonchalantly said the car belonged to a member of Public Service Commission. "Sir asked me to go quickly."

When police asked whether his "sir" asked him to take the wrong side, he just smiled.

As officers asked for the licence and registration, he took out his mobile phone and called his "sir" and approached a senior officer.

But when a group of journalists present there asked him to let them talk to his "sir", Rafiqul cut the line.

Hundreds of commuters subjected to tailbacks around 6:40pm, cheered on the other side of the road, "Catch him, catch him, do not let him go."

Rafiqul was fined Tk 1,200 for flouting traffic rules.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police filed cases against 41 others and fined them during a two-hour special operation from around 5:00pm to curb driving on the wrong side. Drivers of microbuses of a PDB assistant commissioner and an assistant superintendent of police of CID, a Rajuk bus, two microbuses of private TV channels, a car, 23 motorcycles and eight three-wheelers were penalised.

Moshel Uddin, additional commissioner (traffic) of DMP, who was present there, said similar operations have been taking place at different points since last year. On an average, 300 to 350 cases are filed every day for driving on the wrong side.

He added they may not be able to stop driving on the

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