



## ROHINGYA REPATRIATION

Is Bangladesh falling for Myanmar's ploy?

PAGE 6

## 'GOAL NOT WAR'

Mattis talks diplomacy on N Korea ahead of Trump's Asia tour

PAGE 8

# Imported LNG to end gas crisis

But govt may have to hike energy prices in all sectors to cover the huge LNG import bill

LNG import to cost	Current gas production	Gas supply shortfall around	LNG import	First installment of LNG supply is expected to begin in April
\$3b a year	2,700 mmcf	800 mmcf	1,000 mmcf	

SHARIER KHAN

Good news: Annual Import of US\$3 billion Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) is to ease the decades-long gas crisis of the country. Import will start in April, 2018 and by October more than one third of the country's gas needs would be imported in the form of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG).

Bad news: to cover the cost of the pricy LNG import, the government may have to hike the gas price by as much as double—which would result in cost hike in all sectors: power, captive power, fertiliser, industry, commercial, CNG, tea gardens and domestic.

The annual US\$3 billion import bill for the LNG would also take out a sizable chunk from the country's foreign currency reserve.

According to an analysis of Petrobangla, the bulk price of per million cubic feet per day (mmcf) gas for power, fertilizer, industry or commercial sectors would have to be

increased by one third to double.

Such an increase would make life costlier, as the overall production cost would go up at all levels.

In spite of this burden, the overall result is going to be positive as the import of 1000 mmcf gas could help produce almost 5000 megawatts of power—which is about half of what the country produces today. Petrobangla concludes that the contribution of this gas to the GDP is equivalent to Tk 2,76,000 crore.

In simple terms, the supply of gas would result in full swing production at the industries, power plants, fertiliser factories and any other economic activities.

The country presently produces and supplies around 2700 mmcf of natural gas which is 800 mmcf short of actual demand, according to Petrobangla. Many power plants cannot run in full capacity, many industrial units cannot function optimally and many

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

## 'All for money and love'

Detectives unravel mystery of chilling murder in April

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Shamim Mirdha and Sadhin lured their friend Abul Kalam into the capital's Botanical Garden for a hangout on April 13 around 8:00pm. A little later, two more youths joined them.

The three friends took marijuana and started playing with a ball made of waste paper. Sadhin suddenly threw the ball in a nearby pond and asked Kalam to collect it.

As Kalam, a 21-year-old lathe machine worker, swam in the pond to bring the ball, Sadhin along with the three others jumped into the water body and hacked Kalam with a machete, leaving him dead. They dumped the body in a bush of the garden and returned home.

The following day, they went back to the garden, put the body in a sack and carried it to Shamim's Mirpur home in a rickshaw-van. They buried the body under the floor so

SEE PAGE 12 COL 2

## Khaleda goes to Cox's Bazar today to visit Rohingyas

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia leaves the capital for Cox's Bazar today to distribute relief supplies among the Rohingyas, her party is all set for a massive showdown on her way to Cox's Bazar.

Thousands of party activists and supporters will assemble at different points on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway to welcome Khaleda who will be travelling in a motorcade.

However, the party high-ups have asked the leaders and activists not to set up any arches on the highway or block the traffic, said BNP leaders.

On Wednesday, BNP

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

# Catalans declare independence

Madrid imposes direct rule dissolving regional parliament, calls snap polls; EU, world powers rally behind Spain; rebellion charges filed against Catalan leader



People gather as they watch, on giant screens, a plenary session outside the Catalan regional parliament in Barcelona, Spain, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

AFP, Madrid

Catalan lawmakers yesterday voted to declare independence from Spain but Madrid immediately moved to quash the breakaway bid in a sharp escalation of a crisis that has caused jitters in secession-wary Europe.

Hours after the declaration, Spain dissolved Catalonia's parliament and called new elections imposing direct rule over the region.

In a televised address after an emergency cabinet meeting, Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy said he had also removed secessionist Catalan leader Carles Puigdemont and his executives.

Rajoy moved swiftly after the Senate gave his government sweeping powers to impose direct rule on the semi-autonomous region to quash its drive to break away from Spain.

He called for regional elections on December 21 as part of efforts to "restore normality" after the vote in the Catalan parliament plunged Spain into uncharted waters.

After a months-long standoff with Madrid, regional lawmakers voted 70

to 10 in the 135-member parliament to declare Catalonia "a republic in the form of an independent and sovereign state".

Demonstrators in Barcelona broke out in ecstatic shouts of: "Independence!" as the result was announced, while separatist MPs cheered, clapped and embraced before breaking out in the Catalan anthem.



But any cause for joy was soon nipped in the bud with Rajoy's announcement.

"We Spaniards are living through a sad day in which a lack of reason prevailed upon the law and demolished democracy in Catalonia," he said.

Madrid's allies in the European Union and the United States rallied behind Rajoy, voicing alarm over the latest developments in the deep constitutional crisis, and expressing support for a united Spain.

Analysts say Catalonia's government, now dissolved, would have had no legal power to execute the independence vote.

Dozens of opposition MPs had walked out before the secret ballot in the Catalan parliament, one lamenting "a dark day" for democracy.

Shares in Spanish companies, particularly Catalan banks, dropped sharply after the vote.

Catalonia, a region of some 7.5 million people, accounts for about 16 percent of Spain's population, a fifth of its economic output and attracts more foreign tourists than anywhere else in the country.

The measures were approved by the Senate under Article 155 of the constitution, designed to rein in rebels among Spain's 17 regions.

Spain's prosecuting authority also announced it would file charges of

SEE PAGE 12 COL 5

# Methodical crimes against Rohingya

UN investigators say of the killing, rape; Tillerson calls Myanmar army chief, expresses concerns

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

United Nations human rights investigators said Rohingya refugees fleeing the military crackdown in Myanmar have testified about a "consistent, methodical pattern" of killings, torture, rape and arson.

After a first mission to Bangladesh, the team of investigators, led by former Indonesian attorney-general Marzuki Darusman, said that the death toll from the government-backed crackdown against Rohingya Muslims since August 25 was unknown, but "may turn out to be extremely high".

"We are deeply disturbed at the end of this visit," said Darusman, who chairs the UN Fact Finding Mission.

"We have heard many accounts from people from many different villages across northern Rakhine state. They point to a consistent, methodical pattern of actions resulting in gross human rights violations affecting hundreds of thousands of people," he said in a statement yesterday.

The UN Human Rights Council appointed the Fact Finding Mission last March to "establish the facts and circumstances of alleged human rights violations by military and security forces, and abuses, in Myanmar, in particular in Rakhine State".

If the Mission concludes that there have been violations, it will seek to ensure full accountability for perpetrators and justice for the victims, a senior official at the Bangladesh foreign ministry told The Daily Star yesterday.

TILLERSON CALLS GEN HLAING

US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson spoke with Myanmar's

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2



Mohsin, a one-year-old Rohingya boy who crossed the border from Myanmar this week, cries on the floor of the Seagull Primary School in Kutupalong refugee camp in Cox's Bazar yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## Malnutrition acute among Rohingya kids

Unicef warns of potential catastrophe for children

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The UN children's agency yesterday said it found high levels of acute malnutrition among children in the Rohingya refugee camps, and warned that the combination of malnutrition, sanitary conditions, and disease in the refugee settlements, is potentially catastrophic for children.

"We are working to get a clear understanding on the extent of acute malnutrition among Rohingya child refugees and a nutrition survey is underway which will give us this data in November," Unicef Spokesperson Marixie Mercado told a press briefing in Geneva yesterday.

Among refugees who have arrived in Bangladesh since August 25, Unicef and partners had screened 59,604 children as of October 25, with 1,970 identified as severely acutely malnourished, and 6,971 as moderately acutely malnourished.

SEE PAGE 12 COL 4