DU CONVOCATION

BCL ransacks

makeshift

construction

DU CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Chhatra League

(BCL), student wing of Awami League (AL), yesterday allegedly

vandalise and set fire to make-

shift construction for holding the

Unicef Report on Children Released

Gender equality brings 'double dividend' to women, children

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Women themselves are the most important catalyst for change and men can play a vital role in eliminating discrimination against women. reducing poverty and ensuring their empowerment, said a Unicef report issued on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the UN agency.

Gender equality in all spheres -household, empowerment, politics and government -- produces the "double dividend" of benefiting both women and children, according to the report titled 'The State of the World's Children 2007

The Bangladesh national launch of the report was held at a city hotel yesterday.

The report showed that 62 percent of women in a region in Bangladesh have experienced physical or sexual violence by their intimate partners and that the rate of selective abortion of female foetus and infanticide remained high in Asia, especially in India and China.

A study by the International Food Policy Research Institute found that there is a clear link between regional differences in children's nutritional status and women's decision-making power, the report said, adding that over a

of the World's Children 2007' at city hotel yesterday.

Victory Day

celebrated

in Sydney

press release.

they stand united.

on December 17.

I he enduring lesson of the Victory

Day is that Bangladesh can

achieve anything when the people

are united for that cause, says a

Australia can also contribute both

to Australia and to Bangladesh if

The Bangladesh community in

Bangladesh High

Commissioner M Humayun Kabir

made this comment during a func-

tion for the Victory Day celebration

organised by the Bangladesh

Association of Australia in Sydney

ous process, he said Bangladesh,

during the course of last 35 years,

has remained engaged in its fight

against poverty, hunger, illiteracy,

malnutrition and natural disaster

and has been able to achieve

success in a number of areas.

which has been recognised by the

award of Nobel Peace Prize to

Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus

Ahmed Khan, president of the

Bangladesh Association of

Australia in Sydney, the meeting

was addressed among others, by

Michael Daley, MP and Christina

Kenally, MP, Honorary Consul

General of Bangladesh in Sydney

Anthony Khouri and the former

President of the Association Gama

attended the "Bijoy Mela" organised

by the Lakemba Bangla School and

Bangladesh Community Council in

Sydney on December 16.

Earlier the High Commissioner

Abdul Quader.

and Grameen Bank, he added.

The recent example is the

Presided over by Farooque

international community

Terming the victory as a continu-

third of Bangladeshi women feel excluded from household deci-

In South Asia, between 40 percent and 60 percent of women are underweight and approximately 45 percent of children were born with low birth weight in 2005 -the highest incidence of underweight births in the world.

It further explained that the prevalence of under-nutrition among children under five in female-headed households compared with male-headed households was significantly lower in Bangladesh.

Although significant progress in engaging women in labour force was witnessed in recent decades, there has been considerably less advance on improving the conditions under which they work, the report said, emphasising the need to ensure equal opportunities to generate and manage income. which is a must to establish women's rights

The report reveals the lack of awareness among women about their employment rights. "Fifty percent respondents from South Asia, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan agree or strongly agree that when jobs are scarce men

Women's parliamentary representation has increased in recent times that reinforced, the rights of women and children in Egypt, France, the Netherlands, the Russian Federation, Rwanda, South Africa and Sweden, the

But in most cases women are underrepresented -- only 17 percent in parliaments worldwide, 14 percent of ministries and just 6 percent of the world's heads of government. In Bangladesh, 50 percent of women respondents think men make better political leaders than women.

Zafrin Chowdhury, senior communication officer of Unicef Bangladesh, presented the report.

Appreciating the present ratio of gender parity in primary education, Unicef Representative Louis George Arsenault said discrimination against women in the household and in politics has a direct and positive effect on children.

Prof Ferdous Azim of Brac University lauded the holistic approach of the report and urged the people to put pressure on the government to implement international conventions to establish women's rights and ensure gender

Lifer goes missing after jumping from ship

One of the three life-sentenced prisoners in a bid to flee away umped into the river from the rocket steamer on Sunday night while the police escort who also jumped mmediately to nab him was rescued in unconscious state from a

Police Super Mashrukur Rahman, Assistant Police Super Shakiluzzaman and District nspector of Police of Barisa Rezaul Huq acknowledged the

ment in Dhaka Central Jail.

At around 3:00am, Safizuddin who was in chain wanted to attend nature's call and while advancing towards the toilet he suddenly jumped into Gazaria river at

To nab him Constable Delwar also jumped into the river and both of them went missing.

Delwar was rescued in unconscious state yesterday morning by local people from a shoal at Darirchar Khazuria and sent to Barisal in critical condition.

The other two convicts were handed over to Barisal Central Jail and a police team with speedboats and divers of fire service was sent to the spot in search of missing

Prof Cravioto new executive director of



this on behalf of the Centre's Board of Trustees. He will replace Prof David A

Sack, who has been in Bangladesh for more than 13 years

Prof Hull stated. "The Board of Trustees believes Prof Cravioto is the right person to lead ICDDR,B in its continuing mission to develop and promote realistic solutions for the major health, population and nutrition problems facing the disad-

EDUCATION FOR ALL DAM, EC sign Tk 77cr deal

Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) has signed a contract with European Commission (EC) to contribute to the national programme in achieving UN MDG goals for Education for All Programme.

Ambassador Stefan Frowein Head of the Delegation of the EC and DAM President Kazi Rafiqul Alam signed the contract on behalf of their respective sides at the office of the Delegation of the European Commission in the city on Sunday.

The project will be implemented in four years with a total investment of 8.86 Million Euro, equivalent to Tk 77 Crore, DAM will implement the project with five other national NGOs-- viz.-Plan- Bangladesh, CCDB, DOROP, PMUK and SUROVI-- in 68 upazilas under 24

It will specially cover coastal islands, haors, remote hilly areas in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), including slums in Dhaka, Narayanganj and Gazipur.

Under the project, 88,000 children, who do not go to school and dropout children, will be brought under non-formal primary education and 36,000 slow learners of the schools will receive remedial les-

Besides, 36,000 minor children will be covered under a pre-school

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

shoal in the morning.

They said Safizuddin Mridha, his brother Akbor Ali Mridha alias Liton and cousin Abdul Goni Sannayamat of Hosnabad and Dhulia villages under Baufal upazila in Patuakhali district were sentenced to life in cases filed with Kafrul and Khilgaon Police Stations in Dhaka and serving their punish-

In order to appear before Barisal Speedy Trial Tribunal on January 18 to face the trial in two other cases, the convicts under armed police escort eft Dhaka for Barisal evening by boarding MV Shela.

Mehendiganj.

ICDDR, B



Cravioto has been appointed director of ICDDR,B with effect from June 2007, says a press

Prof Alejandro

Prof Terence H Hull announced

vantaged people of the world

especially Bangladesh." Prof Cravioto is a pediatrician with degrees in microbiology and public health from the University of London, who has been involved in research and teaching activities in his distinguished career. He has conducted research on the impact of diarrhea due to E Coli and its effect on the growth and nutrition in poor children in different areas of



BNP Nomination Board headed by party chief Khaleda Zia interviews nomination seekers of Dhaka at her Banani office in the city yesterday.

Study links bird's brain cells to singing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Formation of brain cells in male birds is different than in female birds, which makes it possible for the male birds to sing, according to a scientific research by Timothy DeVooged, a professor of Cornell University,

The research found that the male birds start practising sounds while matured in a different way than the female one. On the other hand, the brains of female birds are developed in such a way that they can judge the quality of songs of the male ones before choosing their mates. Prof Timothy DeVooged, who

has been studying the singing in songbirds and the brain regions responsible for learning, remembering and expressing song, revealed the findings at a presentation at the zoology department of University of

"In baby birds' brains, song production areas are the same in both males and females. However, brain cells in these areas die in young females, thereby creating a difference with males. These cells remain in male birds throughout their lives," said Timothy.

When a young bird is one or two months old, it hears the songs of its father and other adult birds and memorises many of the sounds, he

If baby male birds are raised by females and never hear or learn a song, neurons in a major song production area only grow about 80 percent of their normal quota of Timothy and his team have

studied many birds, including tiger

finch and black-capped chickadees. Prof Timothy said the level of male hormone goes up in adult male birds in the spring, causing neurons

in the song production areas to grow more synapses, but these are lost when the breeding season is over. Adult female birds of many species can compare the songs of

different males and finally chooses its mate whose song is very attrac-

As females keep choosing males on the basis of quality of songs, the males gradually sing better and better songs, which not only thrill the female birds but also enthral the people, said the professor.

Presided over by Prof Latifa Gulshan Ara, the lecture session was also attended by Prof Anawar Hossain and Prof Kazi Zaker

Bangladesh: Responsibility to Flag

and Map' at the National Press Club

Justice Abdur Rauf, former chief

election commissioner, said "There is

no need for 90 days. Only nine days is

enough to hold a fair election if all

He also said institutions of democ-

racy, including the Parliament, the

Supreme Court and the Election

Commission, are at stake due to

Journalist Sadek Khan said

"Polls day can be only deferred

ignoring the three-month stipulated

time of the caretaker government

after announcing an emergency

situation, which is unexpected to all".

chancellor of Bangladesh Open

University, said polls date could be

deferred violating the stipulated time

of the caretaker government if the

country faces national disasters like

the dialogue where Daily Nava

Diganta Editor Alamgir Mohiuddin,

University Grants Commission

(UGC) Member Dr Mohammad

Mahbub Ullah, Dhaka University

Professor Dr Sukamal Barua

Jahangirnagar University former vice

chancellor Prof Jasim Uddin Ahmed

Khulna University former vice chan-

cellor Prof Golam Ali Fakir. Journalist

Azizul Haq Banna, Dr Hasan

Mohammad and Dr Rajia Akhtar

Poet Al Mahmud presided over

flood and earthquake.

Banu also addressed.

Prof Dr M Ershadul Bari, vice

conflicts among political parties.

political parties agree".

construction at around 6:00pm. They did this so that the convocation is not held with the present controversial President as well as the Chief Adviser to the Caretaker Government in the chair, sources

However, university employees at the playground told reporters that a group of unruly youths vandalised some chairs and a number of electric lights and tried

to set fire but police barred them. Proctor Prof AK Firoz Ahmed said the incident was unwarranted and he did not believe that the BCL had done it.

held on schedule and all is set for the convocation Security will be tightened to

He said the convocation will be

avert any further untoward incident, the proctor added.

Khulna Girls' College student succumbs to burn injuries

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A student of Khulna Govt. Pioneer Girls' College who tried to commit suicide by setting her on fire at the college hostel succumbed to her injuries at Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday morning.

Shampa Nandi, 18, had suffered severe burn injuries when she set her on fire after pouring kerosene on her body at the toilet of the hostel on

She was brought to Dhaka from Khulna Medical College Hospital on

The police seized an empty small bottle of kerosene found in the toilet and a hand-written letter found under the pillow of her bed.

Police have launched a probe into the incident, said the principal of

Obituary Barrister Salimul Hug Khan Milky

constitution expert and chairman of National Awami Party (NAP-Bhasani) passed away at Holy Crescent Hospital in Chittagong yesterday at the age of 82, says a press release.

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan expressed deep shock at the death of Salimul Hug.

Md Shamsuddin Ahmed

Md Shamsuddin Ahmed, a former officer of General Insurance Corporation and Muslim Insurance, passed away in the city at the age of He left behind his wife, four sons

three daughters and a host of relatives to mourn his death. Shamsuddin hailed from Gidari

Village of Gaibandha district.

Death anniversary

Today is the 22nd death anniversary of Nurul Islam Patwari (Nuipa), former editor of the Dainik Bangla and the Ittefag says a press release.

Today is the 5th

milad mahfil at his residence at 1133/a Baitul Aman Housing Society at Shyamoli in the city.

Abdul Khalek

death anniversary of Abdul Khalek, a freedom fighter and founding president of Agrani Bank Employees

On the occasion, relatives and

admirers are requested to attend a

Union, says a press release On the occasion, central com-

mittee of the union will hold milad mahfil and discussion at its office in the city today. Family members will also

organise similar programme at his residence at Maniknagar in the city tomorrow. Colleagues and admirers have

been requested to attend the programmes.

Around 3000 people participated in the daylong Mela, which

was rounded off with an attractive

cultural programme in the evening

The annual picnic of the Siddheswari Boys High School (1967 batch) Old Students Association will be held in the Roads and Highways rest house compound near Navarhat Bridge on December 22, Friday, says a

Annual picnic

press release. Interested members have been requested to contact Khilgaon office of the Association or Nasir member-secretary, over 01715150552.



2m euros to fight human

The European Commission and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) signed an agreement vesterday to contribute two million euros (equivalent to Tk 15.20 crore) to boost the fight against human trafficking as a pivotal part of the Police Reform

UNICEF Bangladesh Representative Louis-Georges Arsenauilt launches UNICEF's flagshiwp publication 'The State

Programme in Bangladesh. The home ministry and Bangladesh Police are implementing the programme. The anti-trafficking component will be implemented from 2007 to the end of 2008.

The agreement was signed at the office of the Delegation of the European Commission in the city. 'I am delighted that the European Commission and UNDP are working together to tackle

human trafficking," said

Ambassador Stefan Frowein, Head

of the Delegation of the EC, at the signing ceremony. He said: "It is a crime that has destroyed the lives of countless women and children in Bandladesh. The police force is in the front-line of efforts to fight

trafficking and it is therefore vital that the

police are well-resourced and welltrained in this field

This project with the UNDP will contribute to ensuring that this is the

The purpose of "Anti trafficking of Human Beings" component is to substantially reduce the trafficking of human beings by developing a welltrained and responsive police force.

The EC-supported component will focus on various areas which include development of national trafficking of human beings strategy and action plan, building policing capacity to analyse trafficking networks and operations, improving investigative capacity and prosecution effectiveness, developing effective victim support mechanisms and building communitypolice partnership to combat human

trafficking. Although the exact scale of human trafficking is unknown in Bangladesh, stakeholders agree on its significance, the gravity of the offence and the necessity to treat it as a crime, and to prevent and combat it.



Dry weather likely

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky over the country, having chances of light remain or drizzle at one or two places over Rajshahi and Sylhet divisions and the regions of Mymensingh,

Tangail, Jessore and Kushtia in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today. Light to moderate fog may also occur over the river basins of the country during early morning, Met Office said in a forecast. It said night temperature may rise slightly over the country. Highest temperature 29.2 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday

The sun sets in the capital at 5:15pm today and rises at Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some

at Cox's Bazar and lowest 13.0 degree Celsius at Jessore

major cities and towns yesterday were:

Humidity in Temperature percentage Evening Morning Dhaka 26.5 17.0 28.0 79 Chittagong 16.6 Raishahi 27.4 15.2 72 69 27.0 15.6 Khulna 79 Barisal 27.6 15.6 28.5 18.4 69 Sylhet Cox's Bazaı

Election in 90 days a must to avoid constitutional crisis

Speakers tell dialogue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The next general election must be held within 90 days of the caretaker government in order to safeguard the national flag and map, said speakers

at a dialogue in the city yesterday. They also said the country would olunge into deep constitutional crisis

Fidel Castro is not terminally ill and

would make a public appearance shortly, but is unlikely to return to

governing Cuba on a day-to-day

basis, Cuban government officials

told a visiting delegation of members

"The party line is that Fidel is coming back. He does not have

California Democrat, told reporters

But Rep. William Delahunt. a

Massachusetts Democrat and one of

the leaders of the delegation, told The

New York Times that he had con-

cluded after discussions with officials

that the 80-year-old Cuban leader,

who has undergone intestinal surgery

would not return to running his country

"The Cubans were empathetic,

and I believe them, that Fidel does

not have cancer and that the illness

he does have is not terminal,

Delahunt told the Times after return-

Castro, who has not been seen in

public since July 26, was planning to

make a public appearance shortly, and

if he did resume a political role, it would

probably be setting broad policy

"The functioning of the govern-

ment, that transition has already

Delahunt told the newspaper.

Rep. Jane Harman, a

of the US Congress.

on a day-to-day basis.

ing to Washington.

on Sunday.

hold the general election by the stipulated 90-day.

Blaming a vested quarter for

Jatiya Nagarik Forum, a pro-BNP civil society organisation, organised

creating anarchy in the country, they said democracy would be inactive if the election date is deferred violating the dialogue titled 'Present f the caretaker government fails to



Jatiya Nagarik Forum organises a dialogue titled 'Present Bangladesh: Responsibility to Flag and Map' at the National Press Club in the city yesterday.

Castro unlikely to govern reported on Saturday that Fidel

> Castro did not appear at celebrations of his 80th birthday this month, prompting rumours that he had died The 10-member US congressional

alive and recovering.

Fidel sitting at his desk," Delahunt told

the Times. "This will be Fidel Castro is

delegation was the largest to go to Cuba since Castro's 1959 revolution. The three-day visit was aimed at improving ties between Havana and Washington. But the delegation's efforts to launch a new dialogue with Cuba on the assumption that Castro was out of the picture were rebuffed

by officials who insisted he was

"What dialogue?" one Cuban official told Reuters. "The ball has been in the US court for a long time.' The American legislators also

failed to get a requested meeting with acting President Raul Castro, who took over the government temporarily on July 31 after his brother's Cuba has closely guarded information on Fidel Castro's medical condi-

President Hugo, has said that although Castro does not have cancer. he is fighting a "great battle" against a very serious" illness

tion. But his closest ally, Venezuelan

The Communist Party newspaper

Castro had telephoned several Cuban lawmakers The visiting US legislators, who favour easing restrictions on trade and travel to Cuba, said they were told that

with or without Fidel Castro, the island

nation would continue to be a one-

party communist state. "Cuban officials made every effort to convince us that ... the potential demise and health issues of Fidel Castro do not change the nature of the government or the policies of this country," said Rep. Jerry Moran, a

Kansas Republican.

The delegation met separately with the three most senior Cuban officials in charge of policy towards the United States -- Foreign Minister Felipe Perez Roque, the ruling Communist Party international relations secretary Fernando Remirez de Esternoz and Ricardo Alarcon, president of Cuba's National

McGovern said that, despite assurances that Fidel Castro is recovering, the Cuban leader's advanced age meant that even if he did return it would only be for a short time. "It would be a mistake to sit

around and not do anything," to change US policy, which he called a "Cold War relic" that had failed to bring change to Cuba in almost half a

convocation of Dhaka University The 43rd Convocation of the DU is scheduled to be held at the central playground of the university on December 24. Two BCL leaders claimed over phone that a group of BCL men led by DU unit President Sohel Rana Tipu and General Secretary Sazzad Sagib Badsha conducted the vandalism and set fire to the