545 acres of arable land lost a day

Speakers tell view exchange meeting

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a view exchange meeting yesterday said that within 2088 there would be no cultivable land in Bangladesh if the present rate of conversion of farmlands into noncultivable ones remains so.

adopt a master plan for using the land of the country for cultivation people to this end. Hanif also sugto achieve food security.

'Recovering farm land, stopping non-farming use of farmlands and national food security' was organised by Forward Party at the Jatiya more people in a fewer space. Press Club in the city.

AL founding

anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 59th founding anniversary of

the Awami League (AL) is being

Pakistan Awami Muslim League

was formed at the historic Rose

dropped from the name of the

all democratic movements starting

from the Language Movement of

1952 to the Liberation War of

Bangladesh in 1971 under the lead-

ership of Bangabandhu Sheikh

place wreaths at the portrait of

Bangabandhu at Bangabandhu

Memorial Building on Road No 32 in

Dhanmondi in the capital, and hold

Bose, Col (retd) Faruk Khan,

Habibur Rahman Siraj and Talukder

Abdul Khaleque will visit

Bangabandhu's graveyard at

Tungipara in Gopalganj and place

wreaths there on behalf of the party.

discussion on June 25 at the

Institution of Engineers,

AL acting president Zillur Rahman

said the country experienced many

developments in different sectors

during the AL regime from 1996 to

2001, but "the BNP-Jamaat alliance

came to power through rigged polls

in 2001 and hampered the develop-

The country retreated in all

sectors, he said, adding that the

situation would have to be

changed, and people's fate would

"To this end, Awami League will

Prior to her departure for the

Zillur and AL acting general

USA on June 12 for medical treat-

ment, AL President Sheikh Hasina

asked the AL leadership to observe

secretary Syed Ashraful Islam have

also urged all party leaders and

ment of the country."

have to be improved.

lead the country," said Zillur.

the day in a befitting manner.

workers to observe the day.

In a statement marking the day,

Bangladesh to mark the day.

The AL will also organise a

An AL delegation led by Mukul

a special prayer there at 8:00am.

To observe the day, the AL will

Later, the word 'Muslim' was

The AL played a pioneering role in

On this day in 1949, East

today

observed today.

Garden in Old Dhaka.

party to make it secular.

Mujibur Rahman.

paper said the available government statistics say that everyday the country loses about 545 acres of cultivable land and if the rate continues then there would be no cultivable land within the next 77

He in his paper recommended They urged the policymakers to imposing strict laws on using lands and creating awareness among the gested not building houses, indus-The view exchange meeting on tries, educational or religious institutions in farmlands and creating environment-friendly housing system to accommodate

In the paper Hanif said in 1974, Hanif Mahmud, a former 66 per cent of the total lands of the researcher of Grameen Bank, in a country were farmlands but in 1996 leaders.

that was reduced to 59 per cent and now the figure is even lower.

Forward Party Member Secretary Abdul Munim said the country needs unity to ensure selfsufficiency in food.

He also urged the political parties to focus on agriculture to achieve food security and invest more on agriculture, recover grabbed farmlands, stop conversion of farmlands into nonfarming lands and bring reforms in land management.

ABM Mostafa Amin, convener of Forward Party, presided over the meeting that was also attended by agriculture experts and party



president arrives in city today

Helen Keller International (HKI) President and CEO Kathy Spahn arrives in the city today for a fiveday official visit to observe the 30th anniversary of the organisation's work in Bangladesh, says a press release.

A seminar on 'Food and Nutrition: Field, Food and Family will be organised by the HKI as part of the celebration programme.

The HKI president and CEO is scheduled to meet President Iajuddin Ahmed and Health Adviser AMM Shawkat Ali. She will also visit the HKI's Homestead Food Production Programme in Barisal.

Spahn has been serving as the president and CEO of HKI since March 2005. She works in the organisation's headquarters office in New York.

The HKI boss provides direction and overall management for all of its programmes and initiatives to prevent blindness and malnutrition in 23 countries in Asia, Africa as well as in the US.

Four new OCs take office in Ctg

CU CORRESPONDENT

Four new officer-in-charges (OCs) took their offices while another seven officers were posted at different branches and stations under Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) yesterday.

The OCs took their offices after their predecessors were stand released at a time on June 10.

Of the new OCs, Mohammad Shah Alam was posted at Kotwali Station while Masudul Alam at Pahartan, Mezbah Uddin Ahmed at Bayezid and Zabedur Rehman at

Bandar Station, CMP sources said. The stand-released OCs were Nurul Alam of Kotowali Station, Majibur Rahman Majumder of Pahartali, Kazi Matiul Islam of Bayezid and Md Jahangir Alam of

Bandar Station. On the other hand, four Inspectors also joined different branches of the CMP. Of them, Chitta Ranjan Pal at Airport immigration while Shahabuddin Chowdhury at Special Branch and Abdul Baset and Abdur Razzak at Detective Branch.

Petrol Inspector (PI) Mohammad Habib Ahsan, Farukur Rahman and Nazrul Islam were posted at Airport Immigration, Chandgaon and Kotwali stations respectively, said the

Roadside blast kills 2 police commandos in Sri Lanka

AFP, Colombo

Tamil Tiger rebels yesterday set off a roadside mine killing two police commandos in eastern Sri Lanka, the defence ministry said.

(Dhaka Wasa), the Armed Forces The fragmentation mine was placed on a parked bicycle in the ment agencies are implementing district of Batticaloa and targeted the Special Task Force police comcrore, LGED Tk 175 crore and mandos, the ministry said.

Fighting meanwhile continued across the northern territories of Jaffna, Vavuniya, Mannar and Weli Oya, with security forces reporting they killed 15 Tamil Tiger rebels for the loss of two soldiers on Saturday, the ministry said.

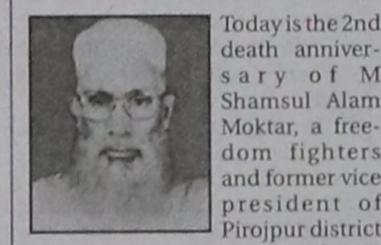
There was no immediate comment from separatist Tiger rebels. Two days of clashes raises the number of rebels killed by security

forces to 4,354 while 403 government troops have died in combat since January, according defence ministry figures. Casualty claims cannot be

verified as the military prevents journalists from travelling to rebel-held areas. Fighting has worsened since

Colombo pulled out of a six-year truce with the Tigers in January.

Death anniversary



death anniversary of M Shamsul Alam Moktar, a freedom fighters and former vice president of Pirojpur district

Awami League, says a press release. On the occasion, a doa mahfil will be held at his residence at Mathbaria in Pirojpur.

Relatives and admirers are requested to pray for peace of the departed soul.



Rainwater remains stagnant beside the Aganagar main road at Keraniganj upazila causing untold suffering to the local people. The photo was taken yesterday.

COUNCIL OF ADVISERS MEET HELD Ombudsman (Amend) Ordn sent back for further examination

UNB, Dhaka

The Council of Advisers yesterday discussed the Ombudsman (Amendment) Ordinance 2008 and sent it back for further examination ing. pending approval.

advisers with Chief Adviser (CA) Fakhruddin Ahmed in the chair approved in principle another draft ordinance designating the responsibility of the president of managing committee, governing body or ad hoc committee of the government and non-government schools, colleges, madrasas and institutions of technical education.

"The new ordinance is likely to bring diversification in managing

committees, governing bodies or private and individual lands and ad hoc committees of the govern- establishments alongside eviction ment and non-government educational institutions," it is stated in the objective of the law in the mak-

After the provisional approval, A meeting of the council of the ministry concerned was asked to place it again before the council "as soon as possible". The meeting also approved a

proposal cancelling proposed amendment to the Government and Local Authority Lands and Buildings (Recovery of Possession) the meeting. Ordinance 1970.

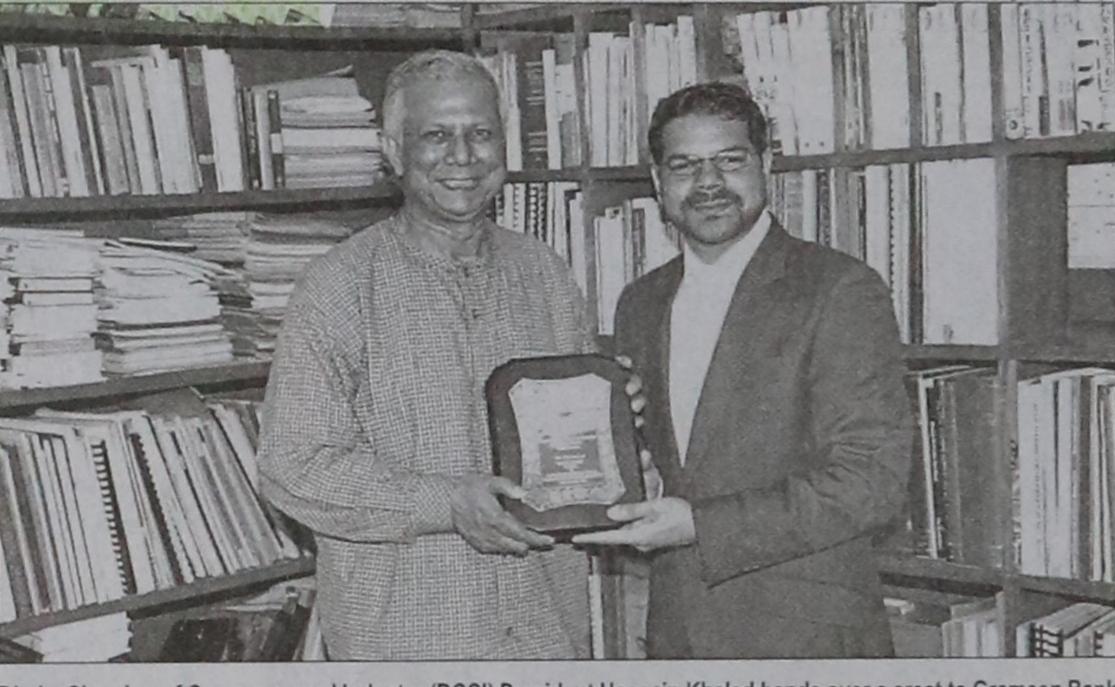
could evict illegal ownerships of also present.

of illegal possession of government lands and buildings. Besides, the meeting approved

in principle a proposal for the government's ratification of the Cape Town Convention and Related Aircraft Protocol. So far, 21 countries, including India and Pakistan, have ratified the convention and aircraft protocol.

CA's Press Secretary Syed Fahim Munaim briefed newsmen about

Members of the council of The amendment proposal was advisers attended the meeting at for incorporating in the ordinance the CA's office. Cabinet secretary a provision so that the government and secretaries concerned were



Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) President Hossain Khaled hands over a crest to Grameen Bank Managing Director Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus at Grameen Bank Bhaban in the city yesterday. DCCI president called on Prof Yunus to inform him about the forthcoming International Business Conference (IBC) and share ideas to make the conference a better international event.

Indian girl-boy ratios at 'all-time low

AFP, London

The number of girls to boys in India has hit a record low, British charity to take "sustained action" to pre- ing, the report said. ventalost generation of women.

"In a country with a long history of discrimination against women, the preference for sons over daughters has led to the which is titled "Disappearing the number and sex of offspring. number of girls under the age of Daughters". six hitting an all-time low," said ActionAid in a report.

Vitti Sthapati, RAOWA sign agreement

Vitti Sthapati Brinda Ltd has been appointed consultant for the preparation of detail master plan, drawing, design, soil test and complete supervision of the construction of Retired Arms Forces Officers' Welfare Association (RAOWA) Complex at VIP Road, New DOHS in the city, says a press release.

A signing ceremony was held at

RAOWA office to this effect. RAOWA Secretary General Col (Retd) Md Shah Jahan Molla and Vitti Sthapati Brinda Managing Director Md Ehsan Khan signed the agreement on behalf of respective statistics with national census data. organisations.

(Retd) Md Moazzem Hossain and Technical Committee for Construction of RAOWA Complex President Maj Gen (Retd) Mustafa Kamaluddin were present.

Ratios of boys to girls aged 0-6 in sites in four out of five states it studied in north and northwest India were now lower than at the ActionAid said on Saturday as it time of the last nationwide census urged the government in New Delhi in 2001 -- and the gap was widen-

> Both rural and urban areas showed similar declines and the phenomenon cut across class and in better-served urban areas was wealth lines, added the report, down to parental choices about

government for tougher enforcement of laws banning pre-natal girls among second-born children; sex detection and sex-selective in three sites there were fewer than abortion, describing their efforts 750 girls for every 1,000 boys. to implement the legislation so far as "woefully inadequate".

Attitudes towards girls as financial burdens for families because of dowry pressures also need to be challenged, while the quality of and access to public health care and state-run schools had to improved, it added.

"It is clear that without sustained action on many fronts, millions more women will go missing in India," it said, citing figures from medical journal The Lancet that more than 500,000 female foetuses are being aborted per year.

Members of ActionAid and Canada's International Development Research Centre interviewed families in more than 6,000 households and compared

The researchers said that nor-RAOWA Chairman Brig Gen mally, there should be about 950 girls born for every 1,000 boys, but found that already low ratios of girls to boys from 2001 in the sites surveyed were now even lower,

except for Rajasthan.

Kangra, in Himachal Pradesh state, saw the steepest fall, from 900 to 789. Although there was an increase in Dhaulpur, Rajasthan, from 819 to 871, the rates were still low.

The report said neglect in poorer areas with less access to public health facilities affected survival rates, but declining ratios

Birth order also affected girls' The report called on the Indian survival rates: all survey sites showed a decline in the number of

Pakistan reports new bird flu outbreak

AFP, Peshawar

Pakistani authorities yesterday reported a new outbreak of avian flu at a commercial poultry farm in the country's northwest, killing thousands of birds, officials said. Tests conducted at a govern-

ment-run laboratory in Islamabad confirmed the presence of the deadly H5N1 strain of bird flu at a farm in Swabi district, local livestock department chief Ibrahim Khan told AFP.

"The virus was detected after the owner of the farm informed us on Friday that some 4,000 birds had died within the past few days," he said.

"We got the confirmation on Saturday, sealed the farm and culled around 2,000 birds," he said.

BSF returns 24 Bangladeshis

A CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) handed over 24 Bangladeshi citizens, who served different terms in Indian jails after being trafficked across the border, to Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) through Benapole check post yesterday afternoon.

Police said the returnees, including 11 women and five children, had been trafficked to India through different borders by manpower brokers who deceived them by saying they would be getting better jobs. Indian police caught these people and sent them to

Kolkata Presidency Jail. Bangladesh Mahila Ainjibi Samity brought them back by contacting the jail authorities. Its members formally received them from the Benapole land port police

They had taken measures to send them home.

Of the 24 returnees, 17 people are from Bagerhat, four from Gopalganj, two from Satkhira and one from Barisal.

Release of 5 indigenous people demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jativa Mukti Council (JMC) in a statement yesterday demanded release of five indigenous people, including Gonotantrik Jubo Forum leader Alokesh Chakma, says a press release.

The other arrestees are Ani Bikash Chakma, Pulak Chakma, Shantimai Chakma and an identified person.

JMC President Badruddin Umar and General Secretary Faijul Hakim in the statement said, "Plain cloth police arrested them from Hathajari on June 21 while returning from Chittagong University. But Hathazari police failed to say anything about their whereabouts."

They said arrests of leaders of democratic organisations in Chittagong Hill Tracts unveil the fascist character of the govern-

DHAKA TODAY

Seminar

Bangladesh Institute of Development

Studies (BIDS) organises a seminar on 'Diversification of Bangladesh export: The case of shrimp sector of Bangladesh'. Venue: Hotel Sheraton. Time: 10:00am.

Discussion

Bangladesh Awami League organises a discussion to mark its 59th founding anniversary. Venue: Engineers Institution auditorium. Time: 3:00pm.

Workshop

Bangladesh Government, World Bank, DFID, ADB and AusAid jointly organise a regional workshop on 'Asia regional workshop on implementing procurement reforms and improving performance'. Venue: Westin Hotel. Time: 9:00am.

Discussion

Chiranton Bangladesh Kendrio Sangsad organises a discussion on Palashi tragedy, colonial aggression and present perspective. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 10:00am.

Moni Singh-Farhad Trust executives Dr Fauzia Moslem and Dr Rabiul

Haque were elected president and treasurer of Moni Singh-Farhad Memorial Trust, says a press release. They were elected at a board

meeting of the trust on Friday.

The meeting also decided to create an information bank on the struggles of the political leaders,

and an archive on political, social

and cultural movements.

BEGUNBARI CANAL

Sebastian Paust, team leader of a delegation of Board of Directors of Asian Development Bank, calls on Chief

Drive against illegal structures continues

Dastagir.

"We are bringing down the

structures as part of our ongoing

drive against illegal encroachment

to implement the Hatirjheel-

Begunbari Integrated

Development Project," said

structures in the area due to a writ

petition in the High Court filed by

"We could not pull down many

Since March, Rajuk so far has

The Rajuk on June 1 brought

down about 75 structures

including the site office of the

proposed Hilton Hotel on the

Begunbari canal on Tongi

the Tk 1,473.59-crore project

along the Hatirjheel-Begunbari

canal on February 7. The project is

jointly financed by the govern-

ment and Japan Debt

Department (LGED), Dhaka Water

Supply and Sewerage Authority

Division and various city develop-

Rajuk is to spend Tk 1,218.69

Bangladesh University of

Dhaka Wasa Tk 77.98 crore for their

Local Government Engineering

The government undertook

Diversion Road.

Cancellation Fund.

the project.

part in the project.

Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed at the latter's office in the city yesterday. (Story on page one)

Development Project.

robbed of Tk 64000

Gazipur

unconscious state.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT The Raidhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk) yesterday demolished around 10 shanties on the Begunbari canal near Rampura

A Rajuk team, led by Magistrate ASM Emdadud Dastagir, started tearing down the shanties at around 11:00am to make the way for a road network under

At least 50 workers, police personnel and a bulldozer took

Father, son

Members of 'Ogyan Party' yesterday robbed a man and his son off Tk 64,000 and snatched two cellphone sets from their posses-

Following the incident, Zaman Khandakar, 65, and his son Selim Khandakar, 32, were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital

(DMCH) in the afternoon in an

the owners," he added. Hatirjheel-Begunbari Integrated removed over 650 illegal structures from the Hatirjheel-Begunbari area to implement the road netpart in the drive that continued till

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

sion from a Dhaka-bound bus in

Talking to reporters at DMCH last night, Selim said they were coming to Dhaka to pay the money to a recruiting agency at Motifheel

Engineering and Technology (Buet) will spend Tk 1.92 crore for conducting a survey there. in the city.

Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at a few places over all the six divisions in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy rainfalls are also likely at places, Met Office said, predicting slight rise in day temperature over the country. Highest temperature 34.8 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessore and lowest 23.0 degrees Celsius at Sitakundu.

tomorrow. Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were: Humidityin Temperaturein City/Town Celsins percentage

The sun sets in the capital at 6:49pm today and rises at 5:13am

	COSTAG		bereering	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	33.4	27.3	80	75
Chittagong	30.8	24.7	89	
Rajshahi	33.8	25.6	84	83
Khulna	32.6	27.0	80	73
Barisal	32.2	26.2	87	78
Sylhet	31.7	23.7	91	
Cox's Bazar	31.4	23.9	97	80