JULY 22 TRUST VOTE

# Split in Samajwadi Party: Manmohan seeks JD-S support

PTI, New Delhil Bangalore

A meeting of Samajwadi Party MPs held in New Delhi yesterday ahead of the crucial July 22 trust vote saw 16 of the 39 Lok Sabha members turning up amid splits.

The meeting, addressed by party chief Mulayam Singh Yadav and General Secretary Amar Singh, has assumed importance as the SP has become a crucial ally of the Congress-led coalition at the Centre ahead of the confidence motion.

While MPs Ateeq Ahmed and Afzal Ansari are in jail, Raj Babbar and Beni Prasad Verma have been suspended from the party.

Munawwar Hasan is a known rebel, who has announced that he would vote against the motion.

Same is the case with Rajnarain Budholiya, MP from Hamiripur, and Jai Prakash, who represents Mohanlalganj.

Kirti Vardhan Singh, Mohan Singh and Revati Raman Singh, who had not attended the last Parliamentary Party meeting of SP, were present at the two days delib-

Moreover, the party has issued a three-line whip asking its members to be present in the Lok Sabha on July 21 and 22 and vote in favour of the confidence motion.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh yesterday had a telephonic conversation with former prime minister and JD-S chief HD Deve Gowda and sought his party's support to the trust vote in Lok Sabha on July 22.

Prime Minister this morning spoke to Gowda over telephone seeking three-member JD-S support to the UPA government during vote of confidence," Karnataka unit JD-S spokesman YSV Datta told tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

reporters in Bangalore.

meeting in Bangalore on Friday to decide on the party's stand on whether to support Manmohan | tal Singh-led government or vote

In another development, breakaway faction leader MP Veerendra Kumar has decided to return to JD-S and would attend a meeting of the top party leaders to be held in Delhi

Kumar had revolted against Gowda after JD-S joined hands with BJP and formed a coalition government in Karnataka in 2006. Sources in JD-S said Gowda has been pressing for nationalisation of mining activity as a condition to extend support to the UPA government.

on the mining lobby, which is accused of politically being active, especially in the BJP camp. Two JD-S MLAs recently defected to the BJP.

#### **DMCH**

native arrangement to conduct test at the time of power outage.

Electricity Supply Authority (Desa) said they had earlier informed the hospital authorities about the outage during repair of the electric-

After repairing, the power supply at the hospital was restored but went off again at around 2:08pm due to technical fault in the Ring Main Unit (RMU). The supply was restored at around 2:45pm.

owner at Karwan Bazar said a

The prices of both the brand and

non-brand milk increased by Tk 5-

10 per kg in the last month. A litre of

packet milk was selling at Tk 45

while a litre of non-brand milk was

selling at Tk 45-50, which was sold

Polling centres

include Bangladesh Small and

Cottage Industries Corporation

(BSCIC) office centre in Kawania,

School-1, Mathura Nath Public

School-2, Sagardi Union

Khan Sayeed Hassan, BMP

selling at Tk 23-25.

at Tk35-40 last month.

# Protein becomes pricey

FROM PAGE 1

takes at least Tk 500 to Tk 600 to purchase a kg of fresh fish whereas it was possible for a five-member family to run a week with this money, said market sources.

Prices of almost all varieties of fish, which is considered as the favourite food item, have also increased by Tk 20-100 per kg in a

family to buy half a kg of fish while it takes at least Tk 100 for a fivemember family to buy fish.

Visiting Karwan Bazar and Fakirerpool fish markets, The Daily Star correspondent found the prices of small fish like mola, kaski ranging from Tk 180-200 per kg yesterday, while prices of shrimp and foli (small size fish) were between Tk 250 and 400 perkg.

selling at Tk 160-200 while tilapia at Tk 100-140 per kg.

who came to Karwan Bazar kitchen market from Tejgaon rail station that he did not find any fish below the price of Tk 100.

gram at Tk 60. I could have purchased a medium size pangash fish with this money, but my children have became fed-up with the fish since we have long been eating it,"

shop, said he dared to enter the fish market after a week due to price spiral.

weighing 600-gram at Tk 50 whereas I should have purchased at least a kg for my six-member family. I've to manage two days with this fish," he said.

Beef was selling at Tk 200-220 per kg while mutton at Tk 260-300 per kg yesterday. It took Tk 100 to Tk 110 to buy a battery-chicken weighing a kg while prices of local chicken were between Tk 100 and

Tk 250 yesterday. Different varieties of pulses were sold between Tk 100 and Tk 115 per kg yesterday while the price was between Tk 70 and Tk 95 a

Pulses retailers at Karwan Bazar said the sale plummeted significantly with the price hike of the RAJSHAHI

Tofail Ahmed, a grocery shop

### Dhaka condemns

FROM PAGE 1 Iftekhar said the home ministry will carry out an investigation and submit a report to the foreign ministry, but he did not give any timeframe for that.

A group of BSF soldiers intruded into Bangladesh territory and shot dead two BDR personnel when they challenged the Indian border guards for illegal

trespassing. The killings took place soon after Bangladesh and India following a foreign-secretary level bilateral talk in New Delhi on Thursday gave highest importance to extending more cooperation in (1st floor) in Ward- 20, Dasmari enhancing trade between the two Govt Primary School in Ward-29 neighbouring countries and in and Budpara Govt Primary School fighting terrorism.

He, however, said he was not aware of the nature of issues both the leaders discussed during their conversation.

Earlier local JD-S leaders are against the motion.

on Saturday, Datta said.

Gowda wants to bring controls

FROM PAGE 1

told The Daily Star there is no alter-

Another official of Dhaka

customer who used to buy two kgs of pulses a week last year is now purchasing one kg. Prices of eggs also soared by Tk 5-8 per hali (four pieces) in the last one-month. A hali of eggs was

month, fish market sources said.

It costs at least Tk 50 for a small

Prices of vegetable rose by Tk 3-8 per kg in the last week. Dr Ataur Rahman, a teacher of Development Studies at Dhaka University, told The Daily Star that people of limited and middleincome groups are suffering from malnutrition with the price hike of essentials.

A kg of ruhi, katla and nola was

Day labourer Zakir Hossain, area, yesterday told The Daily Star

Sayeda Mojidunnesa Secondary School-1, Sayeda Mojidunnesa "I purchased puti weighing 250-Secondary School-2, Alhaj Dalil Uddin Registered Primary School-1, Alhaj Dalil Uddin Registered Primary School-2, Khawja Moinuddin Chisti Senior Madrasa, Nuria Kindergarten, Nuria High he said. School, Mathura Nath Public

Mokles Uddin, a salesman of a

Secondary School, Sagardi Islamia "I've purchased a pangash fish Kamil Madrasa -1 and Sagardi Islamia Kamil Madrasa - 2 centres. commissioner, said there should not be criminal's domination on polling centres while state of emer-

gency has been relaxed for the SYLHET SMP has prepared a list with 65 most vulnerable and 25 less vulnerable polling centres.

SMP Commissioner Syed Toufique Uddin Ahmed told The Daily Star yesterday that the list is based on previous violent incidents, and location of the centres, month ago. especially whether those are near the houses of candidates.

> Law enforcers have listed 15 polling centres in RCC as most vulnera-

ble, reports our RU correspondent. These include Kashiadanga centre in Ward -1, Daspukur Baharampur Private Junior School, Daspukur Baharampur Registered Primary School and Hazrat Shah Mukhdum Rupos Madrasa centres in Ward-3, PTI School and Julfia Govt Primary School in Ward-4, Mahisbatan Darus Salam Madrasha and Mahisbatan Govt Primary School in Ward-5, Upashahar Model Govt Primary School and Upashahar Model Govt Primary School (Old Building) in Ward -14, Annada Govt Primary School in Ward-18, Rani Bazar Girls' High School (Ground Floor) and Rani Bazar Girls' High School

centre in Ward-30.

### CA to attend dialogues in Sylhet

The Chief Adviser is to attend two citizens' dialogue in Srimangal of Moulvibazar and in Jalalabad Gas Auditorium in Sylhet city tomorrow before holding the cabinet meeting in Sylhet Monday, the first time since 1981 and the second time in Sylhet's history

This would be the third time the Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmedled cabinet meets outside the capi-

The chief adviser is also scheduled to visit the shrines of Hazrat Shahjalal (RA) and Hazrat Shah Poran (RA) in Sylhet city Sunday.

The cabinet may make announcement, after the meeting, about the establishment of the much-awaited Special Economic Zone (SEZ) as well as the Sylhet Development Authority, sources said.

The government for over a year has been studying the feasibility of were also preliminarily chosen for the purpose.

There will be opportunities for non-resident Bangladeshis (NRBs) to make investments in the SEZ and a seminar on the issue was held on December 12 last year in Sylhet. The foreign affairs adviser, Board

of Investment (BoI) officials, the British high commissioner and a good number of NRBs had joined the seminar. The cabinet is likely to put

improvement of Osmani International Airport, programme for the improvement of tea sector, setting up of a shooting academy and Haor Development Board in Sylhet and tourism development projects on its agenda Monday, an official source said.

### Illegal shops

He said shops irrespective of their size have to pay Dynamic Tk 6,500 a month to run business in the sector 7 of Dhanmondi lake.

Naimuddin of Dynamic Food said they know that setting up chairs and tables are not allowed by the DCC. But they can't help disregarding the terms and conditions of the lease since having no chairs and tables in front will cause inconvenience to customers and adversely affect the shops' income.

Abu Naser Khan, chairman of Save the Environment Movement, said even an inch of the lake should not be filled up no matter what the

The encroachers always start filling up water bodies on the pretext of development work and at the end they grab those.

Referring to the new stalls on the opposite of Medinova, he said it is not at all necessary to keep more space beside the walkways.

He said the DCC should not allow food shops in lake area in the name of perking up its revenues. "They take taxes from the city dwellers, but what they do in

### Costly mistake

return?" he asked.

FROM PAGE 1 They alleged that even though the surgery was supposed to be on his left foot, a two-inch-long cut was

found in his lower abdomen. Sources said two hours into the surgery power went out leaving the clinic in the dark. There were no arrangements for backup electric-

Relatives who were waiting outside said Karimullah left the OT and entered a room next to it soon after the power cut.

During the 30-minute outage, he even treated himself to a massage by a 12-year-old girl, they

With power supply restored, the surgery recommenced and continued till 12:30am. At one stage, the doctor asked the family members to get four bags of blood, relatives

Shortly afterwards, an anaesthetist hired by Karimullah came in and declared Sirajul dead.

The relatives immediately informed the police. They also filed a case with Paltan Police Station, blaming the doctor and a nurse for Sirajul's death.

#### Aman target

FROM PAGE 16 2,882 tonnes of TSP and other fertilis-

ers for Aman cultivation in about 73,000 hectares this season. They had asked for allocation of 15,008 tonnes of urea and 8,243

tonnes of TSP along with other ferti-DAE Deputy Director in Joypurhat Abul Hayet told this correspondent that they are trying to face the shortage of chemical fertilisers by

applying compost fertiliser. Lalmonirhut DAE office sources said the department's target is cultivating Aman on 84,000 hectares, 895 hectares more than that last year.

The government has allocated 13,670 tonnes of urea and 910 tonnes of TSP along with other fertilisers for Aman cultivation in the district. Local DAE office had sought 15,846 tonnes of urea and 1,940 tonnes of

substitute for TSP but in some cases compost fertiliser may be helpful in place of other fertilisers including "If required quantity of TSP is not supplied in the food surplus northern part of the country, crop production is likely to fall," he said when

contacted.

In Rajshahi, DAE Additional

Director Abul Bashar said there is no

# BSF intruders

reported our Chapainawabganj

Two BSF bullets hit Hannan while six hit Lance Nayek Krishnopodo Saha as BSF men suddenly opened fire on them, killing them instantly.

upazila in Magura.

Chapainawabganj Sadar Hospital.

Our staff correspondent from Rajshahi reported quoting a villager Atul Gani that the bodies were recovered from a pool of blood. "Blood marks were also on the trail of BSF men's escape path," said the

BDR retaliated with full force trading over 200 rounds of shots with BSF for about an hour.

setting up the SEZ and several sites | told a hurriedly arranged news Dhaka

attack, the BSF men fled leaving their speedboat behind," Halim said adding that they also arrested an Indian national from the spot.

"We've been informed that a BSF member also died in the gunfight," he told reporters. "The incident could have been prevented had the BSF not opened

Kibria Md Neyamatullah, combattalion, told The Daily Star. BDR members seized the

cap, and bullet casings from the scene.

dent, Foreign Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury said Dhaka will protest to Delhi after getting a full probe report.

Daily Star yesterday afternoon. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in a statement condemned the

Mohammad Iqbal, and the CO of the 39th battalion visited the spot yesterday morning.

other frontiers valso where BDR deployed reinforcements ordering them to remain on high alert. Our correspondents from bor-

shoulder with BDR personnel. BDR also warned villagers and

farmers of border areas to refrain from going to zero point areas for cultivation. An uneasy calm has been prevailing at the frontiers. BDR said BSF continues to fire

unarmed civilians despite repeated commitments in different forums for showing restraint and maintaining peace and harmony at the border. FLAGMEETING At the flag meeting between sector commanders of BDR and BSF held at Masudpur border point in the

into the incident. mander Col Mohammad Iqbal and

mander DS Sidhu led their respec-

tive sides. BSF also did not admit

that they had violated the interna-

tional border but agreed to reduce

tension on the borders, meeting

reported that BSF expressed regret

Chandra told BBC that two BDR

men were killed during a shootout

between BSF and the cattle smug-

der guard was also seriously

injured in the shootout. Echoing

the story by BSF, India High

Commission in Dhaka also claimed

that the BSF exchanged fire with

retaliated. A BSF constable sus-

tained bullet injuries during the

incident," said a press released

issued by the Indian High

friendly to the indigenous commu-

"It is a matter of political will and

commitment. When indigenous

people are not recognised with their

distinguished cultural identities

even in the constitution then ensur

ing the rights of indigenous women

seems like wandering in the wild,

Indigenous leader Sanjib Drong

said, "In a greater sense the word

'woman' can cover the indigenous

women, but in reality it does not. Life

is different in the hills, the language is

different and lifestyle is different. So

special provision is to be made in the

national development policy to

ensure rights to indigenous women.

the Women Development Policy

2008 does not incorporate any provi

sion to ensure indigenous women's

rights considering their geographical

positioning and socio-economic

underprivileged and deprived

women of indigenous communities,

they said, recommending amend-

ment to the constitution in this

regard and inclusion of indigenous

women in the mainstream women

uncertainty over the fate and credi-

bility of the women development

policy in the wake of protest by reli-

the religious fanatics to do politics,'

said Dr Dipomoni, women affairs

secretary of Awami League. "Our

political system is patriarchal as is

our society. But the issue of minority

communities must be included in

Guhathakurta said, "There is nothing

called indigenous act in our constitu-

tion. And the existing law does not

apply to the culture and lifestyle of

minority communities living in both

and the Bangalees must appreciate

or be aware of their deprivation to

understand the life of indigenous

people who have been exploited over

introducing primary education for

the children of minority communi-

ties in their mother tongues, long

term work plan to develop the life of

indigenous people, stopping mili-

tary harassment in the hills, perma-

nent land commission, separate

provisions in the national women

development policy for indigenous

women, reserved seats for them in

national parliament and local

administration, special employ-

The speakers recommended

"The inhabitants of plain land

the hills and plain land.

theyears," she added.

Human rights activist Meghna

the manifesto of political parties."

The speakers also expressed

"The policy has made scopes for

The policy ignores the issue of the

The speakers also observed that

"Smugglers fired at BSF who

for the killings at the flag meeting.

BBC Bangla Service, however,

BSF spokesman Bikash

Bikash also said an Indian bor-

sources said.

cattle smugglers.

Commission last night.

Trapped

FROM PAGE 16

nity," he said.

Barakat said.

condition.

gious fanatics.

glers.

correspondent.

Forces from the 39th rifles battalion later recovered the body of Hannan, 55 of Kritunia Durgahat vilage under Gabtoli in Bogra, and of Saha, 28, of Kholabari Shimakhali village under Shalikha

The bodies of the slain BDR soldiers were sent to their homes after post-mortem in

Immediately after the killings,

"BSF intruded illegally and opened fire without any provocation," Director (Operation and Training) of BDR Col Abdul Halim briefing at BDR Headquarters in

"In the face of BDR's counter

BDR strongly protested the incident. "It's a serious border violation by BSE," Lt Col Golam manding officer (CO) of the 39th

speedboat left by intruding BSF personnel, a walkie-talkie, a BSF Terming the killings of BDR personnel by BSF a serious inci-

"We consider the murders a serious incident," Iftekhar told The

killings BDR high officials including Commander of Rajshahi Sector Col

The killings stirred tensions at

dering districts said reinforcements were made at the borders and were kept alert since the morning. Residents of border areas were also seen on guard shoulder to

on Bangladesh border guards and

actions and rejected Bangladesh proposal for a joint investigation Rajshahi BDR sector com-

afternoon, BSF defended their

#### BSF returns body of Bangladeshi

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

The body of a Bangladeshi cattle trader, shot dead by Indian Border Security Force (BSF) at a frontier village on Indian territory on June 27, was handed over to BDR on Thursday, 21 days after the incident.

The BSF personnel gunned down the cattle trader, Mithu Haque, 28, son of Abdur Razzak of Gobindakati village under Satkhira Sadar upazila, at Hakimpur under Swarupnagar Police Station of 24 Parganas district while he was returning home with cows purchased from India at around 4:00am.

BDR sent a letter to BSF protesting the killing and asked its Indian counterpart to return the body. But the Indian border guards did not pay heed to the demand.

Following a company com mander-level flag meeting held at zero point on Bhomra border Thursday afternoon, BSF handed over the body to BDR.

When contacted, Major Kamrul Hasan of 41 Rifles Battalion confirmed it.

#### Shamim Iskander

FROM PAGE 1

abroad. He will fly to Bangkok today. ACC Deputy Assistant Director AM Javed Hasan, also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, told The Daily Star last night that Shamim amassed wealth worth Tk 20.47 lakh beyond his known sources of income. His wife Kaniz Fatema is also an accused in the case.

He said Shamim will be produced before court today.

Talking to The Daily Star, Anwar Hossain, deputy commissioner (DC) of police, Mirpur Zone, said police helped the ACC and others arrest Shamim Iskander. After the arrest, Shamim was

taken to the custody of Kafrul police.

Shamim Iskander's name was on the second list of 50 corruption suspects. Name of BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman was also on the same the list. Besides, the Central Intelligence Cell (CIC) of the NBR on June 21 last

and 60 others. The banks were also asked to provide transaction reports of his sons

year sent letters to the banks seeking

account details of Shamim Iskander

Fayek Iskander and Fasbir Iskander. It is alleged that Shamim Iskander was involved in financial irregularities while in service. He was also involved in hiring planes and other purchases for Biman Bangladesh Airlines.

Shamim Iskander went into voluntary retirement at the fag end of the BNP-led alliance government

professor of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU), at his cantonment residence yesterday morning. His condition remains

Khaleda, Tarique

FROM PAGE 1

unchanged, Dr Meshkat told reporters. He added that Koko who has long been suffering from various medica conditions might be taken to another country if proper treatment

Insiders say BNP will take part in both the dialogue with the government and election after release of its chairperson. Brig Gen (retd) Hannan Shah, an

talks and election." He was talking to reporters at his Mohakhali residence.

Lawyers of Khaleda Zia said they hope their client will be released through a legal process. Referring to the release of Jamaat-e-Islami chief Motiur Rahman Nizami, Nasiruddin Asim, BNP chairperson's counsel, told The Daily Star, "I hope the government won't create any obstacle to her

Her [Khaleda Zia] release will make the ongoing dialogue between the government and political parties fruitful, which in turn will help create an atmosphere congenial to holding a free and fair election, he

Khandaker Delwar Hossain in a statement yesterday welcomed the release of Koko.

"I hope good sense will prevail and the government will release Khaleda Zia and Tarique without delay," he said.

FROM PAGE 16

and replaced the burst wheels. Biman Managing Director and CEO MA Momen told The Daily Star last night that the aircraft suffered technical glitches in the ball bearing.

Earlier on May 4, a Biman airbus went onto the grassland beside the

#### HRC chief

FROM PAGE 1 smuggling money out of the coun

try and enjoying properties bought in other people's names.' Shahidullah said, "He was arrested under section 16/2 of the EPR [Emergency Power Rules]."

bail petition filed by his lawyer. jail authorities to arrange for facilities for him according to the jail

appealed for division status.

## Talks with US possible on outpost, says Iran

AFP, Ankara

Iran is open to the idea of talks with the United States on establishing a US interests section in Iran and launching a direct air link, Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki said here vesterday.

He also welcomed as "positive" US participation in international talks in Geneva at the weekend on Tehran's nuclear programme and said he expected progress in the negotiations. "In my opinion, talks and a deal

on an American bureau in Iran and direct flights between Iran and the United States is possible," Mottaki told reporters after talks with Turkish Foreign Minister Ali

He said Tehran knew through media reports of a US plan to open an interests section in Iran, the first such link between the two foes in nearly 30 years.

reported Thursday, without identifying its sources, that Washington would announce in the next month plans to establish an interests sec tion staffed with diplomats in Iran, similar to its outpost in Cuba. "In recent years, there are many people from the United States --

London's Guardian newspaper

support such a development between the two peoples," Mottaki He said several US companies were already operating in Iran but

refused to identify them "because of

students, academics, businessmen,

artists -- who want to visit Iran. We

### Workers Party

the delicacy of the issue."

FROM PAGE 16

a press release. Meeting at the party's headquarters in the capital, the politburo however called on people to give verdict against those involved in fanaticism, militancy and corrup-

It also observed that the present government and some political forces are trying to establish a "controlled political arrangement" in the name of reforms. "Workers Party has maintained a

clear stance against such arrange-

ments from the outset. It believes

religious fanatics and imperialists will benefit from the controlled arrangements," the press release Against this backdrop, unity of the democratic and non-communal

Party will continue to strive for such "Only mutual trust can make this unity effective. The politburo meeting also stressed the need for strengthening the ties between the leftist organisations," continued the

The meeting announced that the

party will organise a "mass-

forces is crucial and the Workers

deputation" programme on July 28, instead of July 20, to protest the price spiral of essentials and refixing of the fuel prices. Party's General Secretary Birnal Biswas, politburo members Nurul Hasan, Fazle Hasan Badsha, Anisur Rahman, Azizur Rahman,

Shafiuddin Ahmed, Igbal Kabir

Jahid and Noor Ahmad Bakul were

among those present.

Iran and the United States have not had diplomatic relations since 1980 after Islamist students stormed the US mission in Tehran and held its diplomats hostage for more than a year.

ahead of Saturday's Geneva talks between Iran and six world powers, which, in a major policy change for Washington, will be attended by US Undersecretary of State William Burns

Mottaki's comments came

The US participation is "a new positive approach," the Iranian

minister said. negotiation format) will also reflect

#### AL to observe 'mass hunger' strike today

DU CORRESPONDENT

Working Committee, Advisory Council, joint-secretaries of the central sub-committee will take part in the prorgamme at AL's Besides, Dhaka City AL and

Members of the AL Central

at Bangabandhu Avenue. In a statement yesterday, acting AL President Zillur Rahman and acting General Secretary Mukul Bose urged the AL leaders and activists to observe today's

### programme.

trol over the steering and fell into a ditch, killing six passengers on the spot and injuring 27 others. Of the injured, two succumbed to their injuries on way to

admitted to the hospital. In another accident, an ambulance collided head-on with a covered van on the Dhaka-Chittagong Highway at Shuagazi under Comilla district at around 2:45pm yesterday, leaving a physi-

cian couple and the driver of the

husband Apu, 32, physicians of

They are Tahmina, 28, and her

ambulance dead.

the collision.

Chouddagram General Hospital,

tube wells.

release.

FROM PAGE 16 other small animal organisms get hindered, and the same also happens if lands are not ploughed at

But when rainwater of a certain volume is harnessed for about a month and a half, it seeps into the ground helping to replenish the level of groundwater depleted by irrigation during dry seasons through use of shallow or deep

"This method of soil and water

management is of top importance

because farm irrigation during dry seasons has become very difficult,' Eftekharul Alam said. According to the Survey and Monitoring of Groundwater Project and the groundwater zoning map, shallow tube wells now cannot pump out water for 46 percent of croplands that need

irrigation during dry seasons

because of receding level of

groundwater. The zoning map prepared by BADC in 2006 says about 3 lakh shallow tube wells out of a total of 11 lakh are unable to lift groundwater for irrigation. According to a 2006-'07 irrigation survey report, over 10 million farmers of the country depend on shallow tube wells for irrigating almost 70 percent of the 47.8 lakh hectares of croplands in the rabi season between November and April.

"After implementing the ploughing and rainwater management method in 1997 and 1998 in Sherpur, irrigation by shallow tube wells was not a problem anymore there during the dry season in 1999," Eftekharul Alam said. He said by implementing the

method, it is also possible to partly solve the problem of increased salinity in the groundwater in the coastal zone of the country. Saline water seeps into the ground as the seawater level remains high compared to the level of the groundwa-

unnecessary chemical fertilizers and imbalanced proportions of them. Lack of soil fertility is also

Fertility and Fertilizer Management Project (SFFP), Bangladesh, conducted by Danida in 2000, states that nutrient deficiencies in the soil had increased. The observation is also true for

Chief Scientific Officer of Soil Resource Development Institute (SRDI) Jalal Uddin Mohammad Shoaib said tests of soil samples recently found that acidity in soil is also increasing. "This means plants are not

being able to collect necessary

nutrients from soil. If this acidity

disastrous for agriculture and vegetation," he warned. Agreeing with Eftekharul Alam's observations, Jalal Uddin said SRDI is also trying to advocate the new method of ploughing fields after

between March and April. "Production of crops will increase by 10 percent, while use of chemical fertilizers will also come down," he said adding, "We are talking a lot about producing hybrid varieties, but not thinking enough about the health of the

a massive programme to educate farmers about maintaining the health of soil, Jalal Uddin said.

Jamalpur, Sherpur, Tangail, Chittagong Hill Tracts, and in northern Barind region have features of highlands with slopes, croplands and harnessing rainwa-

#### ment and stopping harassment to Bahrampur BSF sector comindigenous women immediately. A day at Dhamrai

Grameen Bank

"My house was in such a bad condition that I showed a neighbour's house as mine while applying for loan," says Fazila. She also started with only a Tk 3,000 loan from

"Now I lead the people in my

area," says Fazila, now a union

parishad member. Monwara and Fazila are just two of many successful women in South Kelia and adjacent villages who defeated poverty and changed the course of not only their own lives but also their children's. "There can be no better example

in the world than these valiant

women's stories if we look for instances of women empowerment," Prof Mjøs said during his visit to the village. Nobel Peace Centre Director Bente Erichsen and Norwegian Ambassador to Bangladesh Ingebjørg Støfring accompanied Mjøs with Nobel laureate Prof

Muhammad Yunus to Dhamrai to

see how the borrowers of Grameen

Bank are doing.

much enthused about the visit. "It's fantastic to see how these grassroots women have defeated poverty. Stories of from-nothing-tosomething and then to almost everything are amazing examples of fighting poverty," Mjøs said.

Khukumoni of ward-7 of the

"When my husband failed run-

same union is another example of

becoming a successful entrepre-

The people of South Kelia looked

ning our grocery shop after receiving loan on high interest, he agreed to let me take Tk 6,000 loan. We now have goods worth Tk 10 lakh in our shop, fixed deposit of Tk 50,000 in bank, and a DPS (deposit pension scheme) bank account for Tk 1,500 a month," she said. Her two sons read in class five honour of the visiting guests.

their families. The way they have shouldered the responsibility of their families, it can be a lesson for other nations of the world," the Nobel Committee chairman said. After listening to the success

"The women who do not have any education at all have taken loan to ensure a better future for their children, many of whom have completed university study while many

used to be beggars. After quitting begging, Saleha of Sharifbagh village took Tk 500 loan and started selling tooth powder, chocolate and judicial stamp. After she paid off the first loan, she took Tk 1,000, later Tk 2,000 and lastly Tk

decent way of living. "The loan was very helpful because we do not have to pay any interest and we can take a long time to repay it," said Bulbuli. The Grameen Bank members

dance performance to popular Bangla songs including "Takdum takdum baje Bangladesher dhol" in

and six. She had to build a separate depot to keep her goods. "They've not only become selfreliant but are now also supporting

stories of Fazila, Monwara, Ferdousi, Basaton, Rowshan Ara, Rokeya and Zaheda, Prof Mjøs talked with some college and university students whose parents have drawn study loan.

are continuing now," he said. The Nobel Committee chairman became emotional when he met the Grameen Bank members who once

3,000 in loans. "As I have no relatives to look after me, I had to choose a way to survive," Saleha told The Daily Star. Sahera, Bulbuli and Ramisa also abandoned begging to look for a

prepare at home with jute, bamboo, brass and leather. Little schoolgirls presented a

displayed different products they

### is not available at Bumrungrad International Hospital in Thailand.

adviser to Khaleda Zia, vesterday said, "With the release of Koko, the party has moved a step closer to the

getting freed on bail with no strings attached.'

BNP Secretary General

#### Biman's aircraft wheels and engineers to Bangkok

tarmac at ZIA after the pilot reportedly lost control of the aircraft when it was entering the taxiway from runway. The passengers and crew onboard flight BG-118, however, escaped injuries.

Gulshan police also said they produced Sayeed before a court around 3:30pm and Metropolitan Magistrate Julfiker Hayat ordered him to be sent to jail denying the The magistrate also ordered the

ter, the irrigation expert said.

code after Sayeed's lawyers cies of soil remain a matter of concern also because farmers use terwill be a wise choice.

"I hope this progress (in the on the content of the talks," he said. "If the negotiations continue in this way, I hope there will be a positive

Awami League (AL) will observe countrywide five-hour "mass hunger strike" today demanding permanent release of party President Sheikh Hasina, introduction of rationing system and distribution of more VGF and VGD cards among the poor people in the country.

Dhanmondi office. others associating units will join the programme at the party office

Road mishaps bound bus from Comilla lost con-

Debidwar Upazila Health Complex, whiles the mestuwere

and ambulance driver Kamal, 35. They were returning to the district town from Chouddagram. The ambulance caught fire after

# Two wise ways

caused by mono cropping like the beginning of monsoons, he producing only rice in a field, and by washing away of nutrients by rainwater, agriculturists say. A study titled Integrated Soil

> micronutrients, for example there was boron deficiency in wheat and mustard, magnesium deficiency in potato and maize, and zinc deficiency in rice, the study found.

continues to increase, it will be harvests of Boro and other crops

The government should launch The soil scientist also said vast areas in Sylhet, Moulvi Bazar,

Fertility and nutrient deficien- where the new method of tilling