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## Grameen Bank wings clipped

REJAUUL KARIM BYRON

The government has not approved in the last three years an amendment proposal of Grameen Bank whose poverty-alleviation schemes through microcredit in rural areas have been successful to start similar activities in urban

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

## Global press sings Yunus song

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A poverty-stricken nation, natural disasters, corruption, political violence and recent terrorism by Islamist militants are regular issues about Bangladesh that are

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

## Hail Yunus

STAR REPORT

Foreign leaders, NGO activists, diplomats and Bangladesh expatriates poured in their felicitations yesterday on Dr Muhammad Yunus being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

Indian political leaders, led by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, has hailed the Nobel Peace Prize to Grameen Bank founder

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## Prof Yunus for EU-type Saarc union

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Nobel Peace Prize winner Muhammad Yunus has forcefully suggested the creation of a European Union (EU)-type union in South Asian Association for

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

## Nation parties on Nobel win

Prof Yunus calls for similar unity among politicians, pins hope on reform talks, pays tribute to martyrs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Grameen Bank head office at Mirpur in the capital wore a festive mood yesterday as hundreds of people from all walks of life gathered there to greet Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus.

Colourful processions were also brought out in different parts of the country in celebration of the glory Prof Yunus and his Grameen Bank earned the nation by winning the Nobel Peace Prize 2006 on Friday. People danced and sang in joy and happiness to celebrate the country's first ever Nobel Prize.

"Amid today's unity and happiness, we are looking forward to a similar unity among the politicians," Prof Yunus said while addressing a press conference at the Grameen Bank head office in the afternoon.

He urged the political leaders to wrap up the ongoing dialogue quickly and come to a solution in one sitting, and tell the people that "we have agreed to go for a fair election and we do not have any complaints against each other".

Earlier, Prof Yunus paid tribute to the martyrs of the Language Movement and the Liberation War at the Central

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## Yunus changed her life

Says now solvent first borrower of microcredit

NUR UDDIN ALAMGIR, back from village Jobra, Ctg

Mariam Bibi doesn't know what the Nobel Prize is, but she realises that Dr Muhammad Yunus, who had played a vital role in altering the course of her life, has received something extraordinary.

The 70-year-old woman was the first recipient of the small loans by Dr Yunus's Grameen Bank in 1976, through which a destitute Mariam managed to build a prosperous life later on.

"Back then, I was very poor and had been leading a miserable life with my five sons," she said while talking to The Daily Star at Bazal Master Bari premises at village Jobra near Chittagong University under Hathazari upazila yesterday morning.

"I was one of those who took loan from the Grameen Bank in the first batch that was divided into 11 groups, comprising six to seven people in each one of them," Mariam said recollecting her early days of struggle.

"We had to take loans from the local money-lenders

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5



Nobel Peace Prize winner Dr Muhammad Yunus waves as he and his wife Afrozi Yunus leave the National Memorial in Savar yesterday after placing wreaths there.

## Passport seekers pay Tk 21cr in bribe a yr

Reveals TIB report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police, middlemen and a section of government officials illegally collect Tk 21 crore a year from the citizens as massive corruption and irregularities occur in issuing passports, a Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) research report said.

Of the amount, the officials and employees of the passport department get Tk 13.81 crore, while police of Special Branch get Tk 7.02 crore, revealed the report titled 'Providing passport services: An investigative research' at a roundtable at the National Press Club in the capital yesterday.

Termining having passport a

citizen's right, the report suggested elimination of bureaucratic tangles, modernising the department with technologies, enhanced budget and trained manpower to curb cheating and harassment in issuing passport.

An evil syndication of middlemen, police and officials of passport offices harasses and charges the passport seekers illegally, said TIB trustee board Chairman Prof Muzaffer Ahmad, who presided over the roundtable on 'Corruption and harassment in providing passport services: Way to overcome'.

"If all the citizens of the country could be provided with passports without harassment and at low cost, these could be used during

elections," he said. He suggested institutionalising 'middlemen system', if needed, stopping police enquiry and introduction of biometric passport.

According to the research findings, an individual has to pay on an average Tk 930 to a middleman that is shared among the officials and employees of passport offices and police, who, in many cases, do not properly enquire the addresses of the passport applicants.

Mohammad Wahid Alam and Shahnoor Rahman of TIB conducted the research during July 2005 and May 2006 that said 60 per cent of the respondents who underwent police enquiry said

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## UNSOLICITED DEALS

### Another coal zone leased out to Hosaf

SHARIEF KHAN

In early 2003, the alliance government in keeping with its tilt for striking unsolicited deals in energy sector secretly leased out Khalashpir coal zone in Rangpur to Hosaf group, the company that played a vital role in plundering Barapukuria coal mine and power projects.

The way the deal was made is much more opaque than that with Asia Energy. There was no involvement of government experts in awarding the lease to Hosaf and no explicit justification for selecting

such an inexperienced company with dubious records in coal sector.

The Geological Survey of Bangladesh (GSB) in 1962 discovered the coal zone and in 1988 re-discovered it, expanding over a 25 sq km area with an estimated reserve of 685 million tonnes of coal. The coal is worth tens of billions of dollars.

According to sources, the Hosaf contract was made by copying the terms and conditions of the deal with Asia Energy (originally with BHP). But in case of Asia Energy, there were negotiations at expert

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## PM, family off to Saudi Arabia for Umrah

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Accompanied by her family members and relatives, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia left for Saudi Arabia yesterday to perform Umrah.

During her seven-day official visit as guest of the Royal Saudi government, the prime minister will have talks with the Saudi leadership on a number of issues of common interest.

She is scheduled to return home on October 21 while some members of her entourage might stay back for a few more days, sources said.

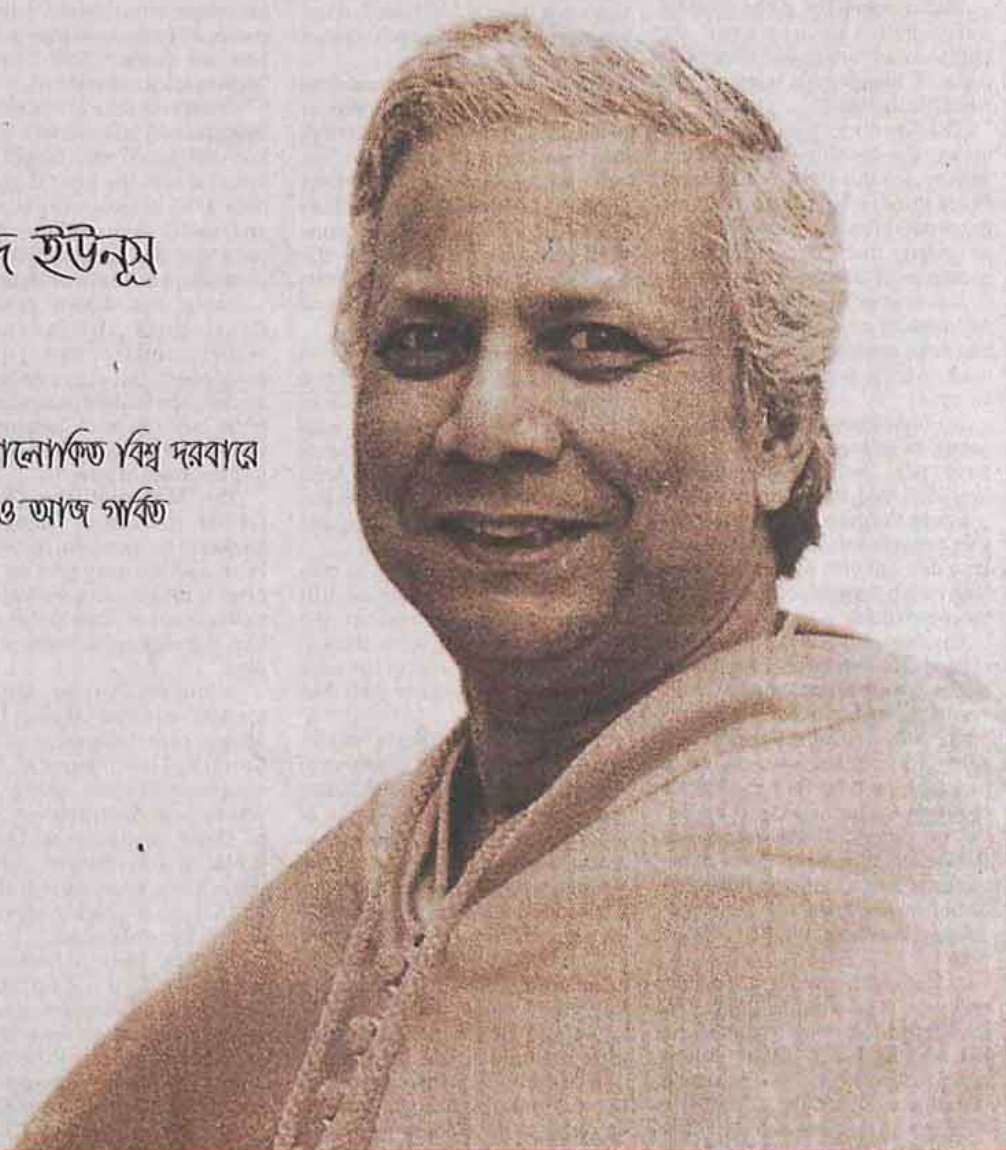
A VVIP flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines carrying the PM took off from Zia International

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TOSHIBA

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একটি দেশ  
একটি পতাকা  
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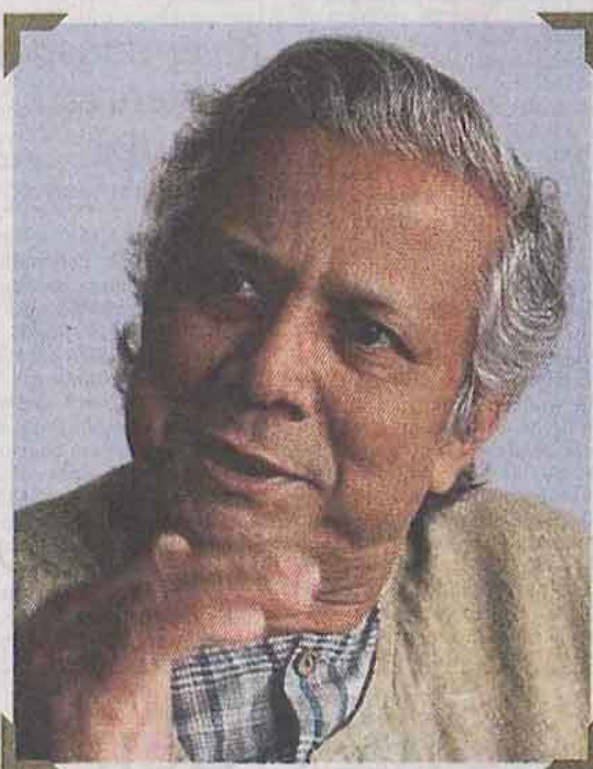
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ও গ্রামীণ ব্যাংক-কে

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Professor Muhammad Yunus  
The Nobel Laureate for Peace 2006

You have made us all proud by taking Bangladesh to a new height



Heartiest congratulations to you and your beloved organization Grameen Bank.

"Muhammad Yunus has shown himself to be a leader who has managed to translate visions into practical action for the benefit of millions of people, not only in Bangladesh, but also in many other countries"

- Nobel Prize Committee



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