

Inside Today Article Not Untouchables, but 'Huggables' by Prof Muhammad Yunus Page 4

Focus Caring for the mentally retarded: Achieving more than envisaged; Violence against women; Army doctor puts her faith in the firing line; and A story-telling creative therapist Page 5

International US to oppose UNSC reform if Bonn, Tokyo not given permanent seats Budget crisis hits US diplomatic missions in Pakistan, Philippines Page 8

Business UAE entrepreneurs urged to invest in Bangladesh Budget dispute: US government winds down non-essential operations Pages 6, 7

CSE MARKET CSE price index 427.37 (+0.007%) Market capital Tk 2113.73 cr Transactions in volume 3190 Transactions in value Tk 543.18cr Metropolitan Dhaka Day by Day Page 3

NEWS BRIEFS Khaleda will visit Khagrachhari today From Staff Correspondent

Special prayers for Ershad By Staff Correspondent Special prayers and milad mahfils will be held at mosques tomorrow seeking early recovery of former president H M Ershad from ailment, says a Jatiya Party press release. The leaders and workers of the party have been asked to arrange prayers and milad mahfils.

BCS (Edn) Assoc calls strike Nov 20 The BCS General Education Association has called for a day-long strike in government colleges throughout the country on November 20. The association will enforce the strike to register its protest against the government move to increase in the pay-scale of a particular BCS cadre and realise its some other demands, reports UNB.

Heroin seized in Barisal From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Nov 15: Police today seized 200 grams of heroin worth about Tk 15 lakh from Shekarpur launch terminal under Uzirpur thana of the district and arrested two persons in this connection.

## Gas reserve found near Bhola

By Sharier Khan and Inam Ahmed A gas reserve was discovered yesterday at Shahbazpur in Bhola, official sources confirmed. Experts of Bangladesh Petroleum Exploration Company (BAPEX) struck gas at the field — the country's 18th. This is the first gas discovery during the last 14 years. The lucky strike came after two years of continued efforts. The last discovery was in 1981 in the country's northern part. Natural gas flowed out of a well on the site at around 6:00 am yesterday. Two separate wells were drilled over a period of two years. The initial 6 hours of gas flow was "unclean and unstable," but soon it became stable and the experts became sure of striking gas. Experts are constantly monitoring the pressure and flow of gas and is hopeful about determining the actual quantity of the gas reserves within the next three days, according to official sources in Dhaka, who are keeping hourly telephone contact with Shahbazpur, located 35 km north of Bhola town. "This is the first time Bangladesh has struck gas in the south west region. It can be transmitted to the gas-starved eastern part of the country if the well is proven cost effective," a source, requesting anonymity, said. But the officials are maintaining a "cautious optimism" about the newly found field as a previous effort to drill for gas from the same field had failed. The drilling of the Shahbazpur well began on December 7, 1993 but it came to a halt on April 21, 1994 when a drilling string got stuck inside the well at a depth of 3,630 metres due to unforeseen sub-soil pressure. As this well was in danger of exploding, the experts sealed it with cement near the high pressure zone at around 3000 metres, the sources said. See Page 12 Col 8

## 6-day hartal ends today Bomb blasts, clashes at Farmgate

By Staff Correspondent The fifth day yesterday of the six-day hartal, called by the major opposition political parties, passed off by and large peacefully excepting sporadic bomb blasts and clashes at a few places in the city that left four people injured. There was relatively less picketing on the city streets and alleys during the dawn to noon hartal. Attendance in offices increased. Rickshaws came out on the streets in greater number since early morning. Pickets were seen reluctant to stop rickshaws during the hartal hours. The major opposition parties — Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami — called the hartal to press their demand for holding elections under a neutral caretaker government. Flood-hit Rajshahi Division has been exempted from the hartal. Today will be the last day of the countrywide six-day programmes that began with a dawn to dusk shutdown on November 11. During yesterday's hartal hours, a series of bomb explosions and chase and counter-chase between pro-hartal activists and police took place in Farmgate area of the city from about 9 am to noon. Two passengers of a rickshaw, Masud Kabir and Sharif Hussain and rickshawpuller Sobhan Mia were wounded when a bomb was hurled at them at around 9:30 am at Farmgate. They were admitted at a local clinic. See Page 12 Col 1



Police picking up a child injured in bomb blast at Farmgate in the city during hartal hours yesterday. — Star photo

## Most widows 'oppressed, denied of rights'

By Staff Correspondent Widows are an 'oppressed and marginalised lot' in the family, community and society in Bangladesh, a study reveals. The study, jointly conducted by Prof Ishrat Shamin and Dr Khaleda Salahuddin under the title 'Widows in Rural Bangladesh: Issues and Concerns' has been published by the Centre for Women and Children Studies. Both Muslim and Hindu widows were covered by the study, conducted in four villages of Manikganj district. The study points out that a large number of widows have been denied of their rights to property and land. Proper application of law could have protected their right, it added. Of the Muslim widows, 78.82 per cent did not get their share of property and land and among the Hindu widows none was found to have inherited parental or husband's property, it added. According to the study 5.88 per cent Muslim and 20 per cent Hindu widows got some assistance under the programmes for destitute and landless women sponsored by the government and some non-government organisations. The most interesting feature, as pointed out by the study, was that widows of all ages were quite aware of such assistance programmes, it added. According to the study, 70 per cent of these widows did not perform any income generating activities, although all

## Our demand is clear : Hasina

By Staff Correspondent Awami League president Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the people would not accept any move by the government to hold an '88-style election'. "Our demand is clear — parliamentary elections must be held under a neutral caretaker government," Hasina reiterated while addressing a group of members of the Krishak Bank Karmachari Sangsad, who joined her party's labour wing. Over 300 members of the Karmachari Sangsad, led by its President Badrul Alam, Executive President Emadul Haq and General Secretary Mobarak Hossain, met Hasina at the AL central office at Farmgate. See Page 12 Col 4

## Menon, Inu meet Hasina

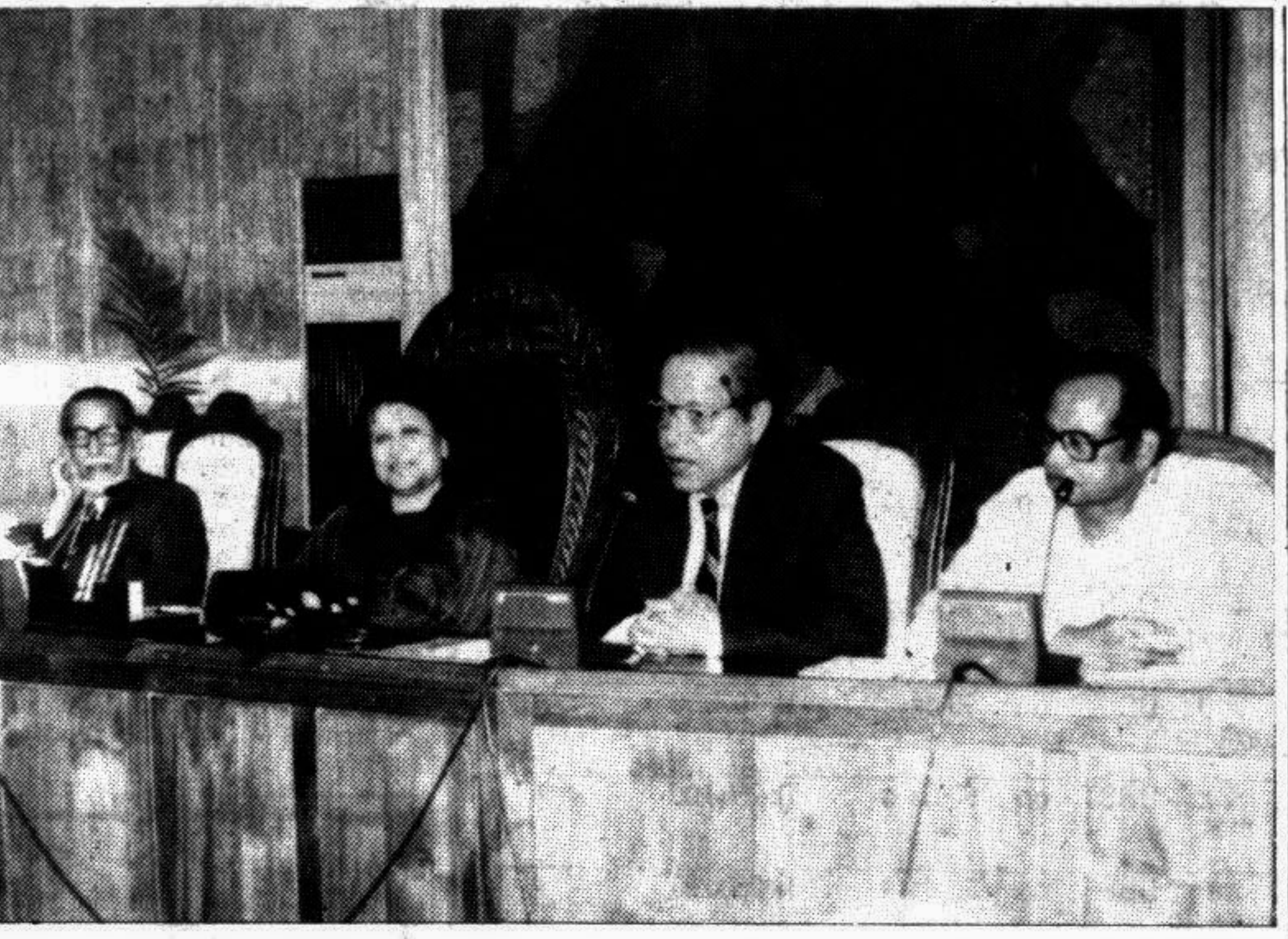
Awami League president Sheikh Hasina along with senior leaders of her party held an hour-long meeting with Workers' Party General Secretary Rashed Khan Menon and JSD General Secretary Hasanul Huq Inu yesterday, reports UNB. The meeting reviewed the latest political situation of the country and discussed various forms of caretaker government the Opposition has been demanding to conduct next general elections. Awami League and two other major opposition parties met Inu yesterday. See Page 12 Col 7

## JP procession lathicharged

By Staff Correspondent At least 10 persons were injured when police resorted to lathicharge to disperse rampaging Jatiya Party demonstrators at Bijaynagar Road yesterday evening, demanding shifting of Ershad to hospital for treatment. Witnesses said, at least 50 vehicles were damaged by the JP activists. Police arrested 11 JP activists from the spot. Earlier they brought out a procession after a rally at the south gate of Baitul Mukarram Mosque to press the demand for the release and proper treatment of their party leader. Police said the demonstrators became violent and hurled bricks and coconuts at vehicles and police.

## US embassy curtails services

The American Embassy in Dhaka — like many government offices in the United States — will operate at minimum levels until an appropriation has been passed by the Congress and signed by the President, says a press release. The Embassy's consular section will be closed. Because a number of American officers at the Embassy have been furloughed. The Embassy will be unable to accept applications for visas, passports or transportation letters until further notice. Visas will be issued only in cases of extreme medical emergency. Emergency services for US citizens in Bangladesh will remain available. At the United States Information service office in Dhaka, a spokesman said.



BNP Chairperson and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia presiding over the BNP Parliamentary Party meeting at the Sangsad Bhavan yesterday. —PID photo

## BNP MPs favour early general elections

By Nazmul Ashraf The ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) is planning to go for early general elections under an interim administration in case its latest move to settle the continued political impasse fails. Senior BNP leaders, addressing a meeting of the party's parliamentary wing at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhavan last night, communicated the idea to the party MPs. They also favoured dissolution of the present Parliament to avoid by-elections to 147 Opposition-vacated seats. Several MPs, attending the meeting, told The Daily Star late last night that Prime Minister and BNP chief Begum Khaleda Zia reiterated her previous stand to go by the Constitution if all efforts for a negotiated settlement with the opposition over the issue of a caretaker government failed. Begum Zia, however, did not mention the possible schedule for the coming general elections but instructed the MPs to get prepared for the polls. She also assured that the MPs having good performance in their respective areas, would be nominated for the next elections. Asked by some reporters at the Parliament lobby about the dissolution of parliament, the Prime Minister said, "Time is yet to come" for an announcement in this regard. Replying to another question, she said that she would continue her efforts to solve the political problems through talks. "We're always in favour of dialogue to solve all problems." Commenting on Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina's demand for early general elections, she said that she would continue her efforts to solve the political problems through talks. "We're always in favour of dialogue to solve all problems." Commenting on Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina's demand for early general elections, she said that she would continue her efforts to solve the political problems through talks. "We're always in favour of dialogue to solve all problems." See Page 12 Col 7

## 8-year backlog in printing JS proceedings

By Morshed Ali Khan There is a seven to eight-year backlog in printing the proceedings of the parliament sessions due to lack of equipment and manpower, according to a top official of the Parliament Secretariat. Proceedings of every session is recorded, but it has not been possible to print anything for the public over the last eight years, he said. "This has not been possible because we were not given priority by the government printing press to print the proceedings," the official added. "Although the law does not specify any time limit in which we have to make it available to the public, but it is a must to circulate the proceedings." He noted that a project was now underway to overcome the problem. "We are going to have a small printing facility plus all the network of recording the parliamentary sessions would be computerised in the near future." Another official of the Secretariat said that the library, housed in the parliament building, keeps records of proceedings and one may consult it whenever required.

## Beijing allows Dhaka to repay loans thru' goods

China has agreed to accept commodities in lieu of cash as the mode of debt servicing against all its interest-free loans to Bangladesh, reports UNB. Sources in the Economic Relations Division (ERD) said the Chinese response, communicated recently, followed repeated pleas in recent years for allowing Dhaka to repay its dues to Beijing through commodity and thus reduce the widening gap in bilateral trade. China has so far provided Bangladesh with 10 interest-free loans totalling 453 million yuan (one yuan equals about Tk 8.50) and 8.5 million US dollars. Repayment in respect of three of the loans became due in 1993 while the grace period for another expired last June. Although Dhaka got the opportunity to repay the current year's dues to China — an estimated 17 million yuan — through commodity, slow progress in following up the agreement appears to have slimmed the chance. Officials in Dhaka, however, said that half-hearted response from the local private sector exporters as well as Beijing's conservative choice of products have made the implementation of the commodity-based debt servicing difficult. China showed interest only in Bangladeshi jute goods and tea, restricting majority sectors from any initiative. Private exporters are learnt to have been reluctant in doing business with China which still conducts trade only through its state trading organisations. Moreover, a comparatively high tariff regime in China makes export to Beijing always difficult. According to latest available figures, import tariff for jute goods in China is 30 per cent while rate for fixed fabric ready-made garments is as high as 80 per cent. Official sources, however, said nearly a dozen export houses, including the Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC), Bangladesh Jute Spinners' Association and Bangladesh Cha Sangsad (Tea Association), have shown interest to export commodities to China against debt. Sources also hinted that a buying mission from China might also arrive in Bangladesh in the near future to choose products.

## Riyadh blast: \$ 8 lakh reward for information about bombers

RIYADH, Nov 15: Saudi Arabia today put up a 800,000-dollar reward for information leading the authorities to anti-US bombers who killed six people in an attack here Monday, reports AFP. An interior ministry spokesman said the reward of three million Saudi riyals would be given for "any information which will help investigators discover the identities of the perpetrators." The offer is open to both Saudis and foreign nationals, and those living abroad can contact Saudi embassies to offer information, the spokesman said. Five Americans and an Indian were killed in Monday's bombing of the US office for the programme manager of the Saudi Arabian National Guard. Another 60 people were wounded. An FBI team joined the Saudi authorities in the hunt for the bombers today, as the official Al-Bilad newspaper said the attack could have been carried out by a "stray" Saudi minority. The bombing was claimed by two little-known groups demanding US forces leave Saudi Arabia. "The Tigers of the Gulf" and "The Islamic Movement for Change." Meanwhile, four Americans wounded by a bomb that blasted a US run military centre in Saudi Arabia fought for their lives today as an FBI team began investigating the explosion. "Four Americans are still critical and one is in very serious condition," a US embassy spokeswoman said. An Indian maimed in Monday's blast died on Tuesday night, bringing to six the death toll from the explosion which has sent shock waves through the desert Kingdom's large expatriate community. More than 60 people, mainly Americans, were wounded. Earlier reports said five Americans and a Filipino were killed but the US embassy identified the six dead as five Americans and the Indian. Saudi security forces were deployed around foreign compounds to calm fears raised by the blast, the bloodiest against Americans in the Middle East since 241 US servicemen died in a 1983 Beirut suicide bombing.

## Second one-dayer with WI today

Sports Reporter The Visiting West Indies Under-19 team, who began their brief tour of Bangladesh on the wrong foot on Tuesday, will take on their hosts in the second limited-over exhibition match at the Dhaka Stadium today.

It will be a day-night affair with the 50-over-a-side match commencing from 1 pm. Radio Bangladesh will air the running commentary from the big bowl. The youngsters of the 'mighty' West Indies, who suffered a 'stinging' six-wicket defeat at the hands of Bangladesh Youth in their inaugural match of the three-day event, will be hoping to see a different side today. See Page 12 Col 5

## Bill for separation of judiciary to be placed before cabinet

A draft Bill seeking separation of the judiciary from the executive will be placed before the cabinet for its approval, the Law Minister told parliament yesterday, reports UNB. Mirza Golam Hafiz, in reply to Mohammad Neyamatullah during question hour, said the Law Ministry had earlier prepared the draft of the Bill and placed before the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Law Ministry. After 46 sittings, examining various aspects of the Bill, the standing committee was set to table its report. See Page 12 Col 8

## N'ganj BNP chief jailed for 120 days

From Our Correspondent NARAYANGANJ, Nov 15: President of Narayanganj district BNP Rokon Uddin Mollah was sentenced to jail for 120 days today for violating court order. Additional District Judge Mohammad Moinul Ahsan sentenced Molla to jail for building a wall violating an injunction issued by the district sub-judge earlier. M A Hashem, Managing Director of the Partex Group had filed a case with the district sub-judge court alleging that Rokon Uddin Mollah, chairman of RM Oil, was erecting a boundary wall at Kuripara area under Bandar thana causing inconvenience to the pedestrians. The district sub-judge had issued an injunction on erecting the wall but Rokon Uddin Mollah built the wall violating the court order. The case was shifted to the judge court later.

## Raushan begins hunger strike today

Begum Raushan Ershad and members of the Ershad family will go for hunger strike today to protest what they called the government's negligence to proper treatment of former President Ershad, reports UNB. Deposed President Ershad is suffering from acute jaundice in Dhaka Central Jail. Begum Ershad and other will start hunger strike at 6 pm after holding a press conference at the Banani office of the Jatiya Party. Meanwhile, the medical board formed for the treatment of Ershad yesterday reported that he was not fit for release. See Page 12 Col 1

## 783 of 15th BCS batch join cadre service

By Staff Correspondent Seven hundred and eighty-three new entrants, selected through the 15th BCS (Bangladesh Civil Service) examinations, joined 16 cadre services under different ministries and departments of the government yesterday. Of them, 118 joined the administration cadre, 15 foreign affairs, 28 taxation, 15 audit and accounts, 50 information, 69 police, 29 agriculture, 32 economic, 6 cooperatives, 16 ansars, 26 public works, 24 general education and 269 in the health cadre.