



## Nat'l Action Plan for employment of women at all levels soon

By Staff Correspondent

A National Action Plan for employment of women at all levels including top management positions is going to be taken up shortly, according to official sources.

The NAP aims at enhancing management role and capacity of women and will provide for 'lateral entry' at senior levels from within the government and on contract service from outside.

All other ministries and government agencies concerned would bear the responsibility for women's development and the role of the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs would be focused on communication, coordination, monitoring and implementation of the plan, the sources said.

The plan emphasises the

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## 'Refrain from debate on deceased leaders'

By Staff Correspondent

Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday made a fervent appeal to all MPs to refrain from debates on the national leaders who have passed away.

"We spent much time in the past by debating on late leaders like Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Ziaur Rahman. Let's not repeat this. Rather, let's discuss how we can do good to the people," Begum Zia told the House.

The BNP Chairperson also urged lawmakers belonging to both the Treasury and the Opposition benches to restrain themselves from attacking each other and shun the practice of character assassination.

## HC hearing on writ against FAP-20 begins

By Staff Correspondent

The hearing of a writ petition challenging the legality of implementing the Flood Action Plan-20 in Tangail began yesterday in the High Court Division of the Supreme Court.

The Writ Bench comprising Justice Kazi Ebadul Haq and Justice AK Badru Haq is hearing the petition.

In August '94, the High Court had rejected the same petition filed by Dr Mohiuddin Farooque on behalf of Bangladesh

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## HSC exams

## Injured teachers to get financial assistance

The government will provide financial assistance to the teachers injured or affected by unruly examinees or outsiders during their duties at the examination centres, reports UNB.

Education Minister ASHK Sadique made the announcement.

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New chairman elected: 3 councillors co-opted

## DSE chairman removed in no-confidence motion

By Staff Correspondent

The Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) Council yesterday removed its chairman, Imtiyaz Hussain, in a no-confidence motion and elected MA Huq Howlader as new chairman.

The decisions were taken at a meeting of the DSE Council at a local hotel yesterday morning.

Howlader has already taken over as DSE chairman, a DSE press release said last night.

The meeting earlier co-opted three new councillors to fill up the posts which fell vacant after the resignation of council members Raquibur Rahman, MG Azam Chowdhury and DSE

vice-chairman Ahmed Iqbal Hasan. The new councillors are Dewan Suhel Afzal, AMM Iqbal Ali and Abdul Haque.

Meeting sources said a critical situation emerged at the meeting when the incumbent DSE chairman refused to resign at the request of other council members.

After the three council members were co-opted, a proposal was submitted to the chairman asking him to resign. But Hussain refused and walked out of the meeting.

The council members then selected Khwaja Abdul Quddus to preside over the remainder of

the meeting in the absence of the chairman. They unanimously elected Abdul Huq Howlader as the interim chairman.

The new council is to hold an extraordinary general meeting at the soonest possible date to organise the next council election.

As he left the meeting venue, Hussain reportedly said he would not accept the change and would go to court if necessary. However, he was not available at the DSE during the day and could not be reached by telephone.

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## Unscheduled debate over independence of judiciary

By Staff Correspondent

The Jatiya Sangsad yesterday witnessed a lengthy unscheduled debate over the independence of the judiciary and power of the legislators, especially in terms of 'immunity' of the MPs as regards commenting on judgements passed by the High Court.

The debate began when former Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali on a point of order claimed that speeches of some Awami League legislators, delivered in the Sangsad on Saturday, were aspersive of the High Court judges who asked the government to financially compensate four BNP leaders arrested earlier under the Special Powers Act.

Claiming that no MP can criticise the High Court judges except 'on a substantive motion', Razzak Ali said that the ruling party MPs had violated certain provisions of the Constitution and JS Rules of Procedure by casting aspersions on the HC judges concerned. In this regard, he demanded a ruling from the Chair.

However, after almost three hours of discussion on the subject, Deputy Speaker Abdul Hamid, who was in the Chair, said that the entire debate was subjudice.

Earlier, Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Abdul Matin Khasru also said the 'subject of the discussion was subjudice' as a part of the said judgement was awaiting a decision of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court.

He also said: "As Law Minister, as a member of parliament and as an advocate of the Supreme Court, I am really embarrassed to witness a debate on a subjudice matter." He also called on his colleagues belonging to both the High Court.

The report said the time had come for Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis and Sri Lankans because the age of their population was right for economic growth.

In countries where an in-

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## Govt borrowed over Tk 1167cr from banks in 9 months

last year.

"Borrowing from the banking system is quite normal and many countries borrow from the banking system to meet their financial requirements," he told the House.

In a written reply to another question, Finance Minister Shah ASM Kibria said the government has waived agricultural credit amounting to Tk 72.62 crore, so far, during the current fiscal year.

An amount of Tk 11.89 crore was waived by Sonali Bank, Tk 1.52 crore by Janata Bank, Tk 33.42 lakh by Agrani Bank, Tk 26.43 crore by Bangladesh Krishish Bank and Tk 32.44 crore by Rajshahi Krishish Unnayan Bank.

Responding to another question, the Education Minister said the government has taken up a commercial reorganisation project to modernise the services and management of the nationalised banks. The government

is once again changed yesterday.

Thin plastic-coated folders were reintroduced in the House, replacing the heavy hardboard-made ones as the opposition BNPF members used the files to register their protests by hitting those on the desks on Saturday.

The plastic-coated folders were first introduced in the present parliament following a similar situation on the past.

In the face of criticism by the Treasury Bench of Saturday's walkout by his party, former Speaker and BNP MP Shaikh Razzak Ali reminded the ruling Awami League leaders of doing

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### BAF acquires training jets

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said the government would take all possible steps for modernising the airforce, including procurement of latest aircraft, reports UNB.

"We know that a well-equipped airforce is very expensive. Yet, our airforce will have to be modernised, as far as possible, keeping consistency between the demand of time and the resource constraint," she said.

She was addressing a ceremonial parade on the occasion

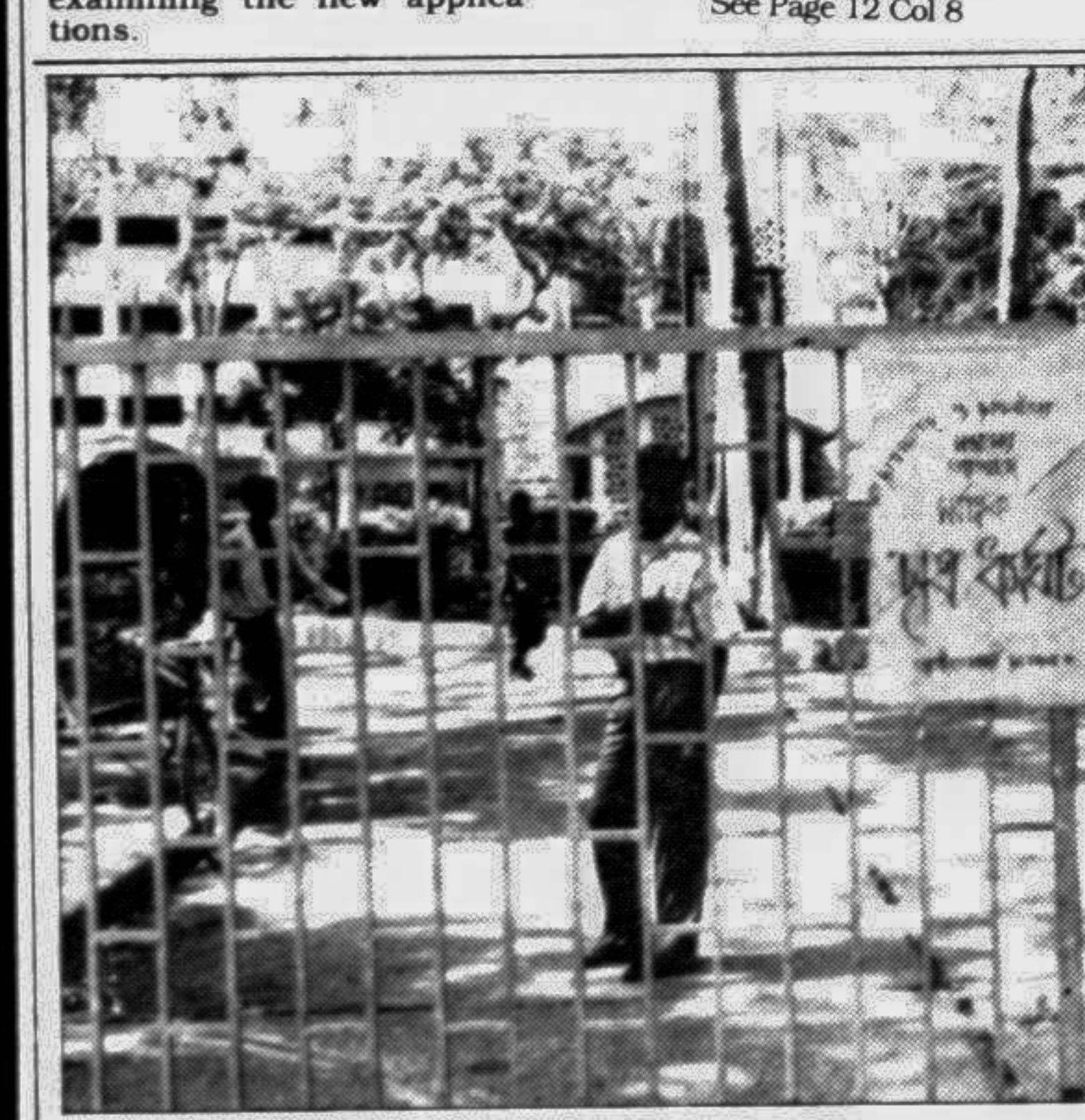
of 40 applications for setting up private banks.

Finance Minister SAMS Kibria yesterday told the House that the government has so far received 40 applications for setting up banks in private sector, reports BSS.

Replies to a written question by BNP member Mohammad Rezaul Karim (Narayanganj), he said at present 18 banks are now operating in the private sector.

A standing committee is now examining the new applications.

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The Dhaka University campus during the strike yesterday. — Star photo

### JCD strike: No classes held at DU

By DU Correspondent

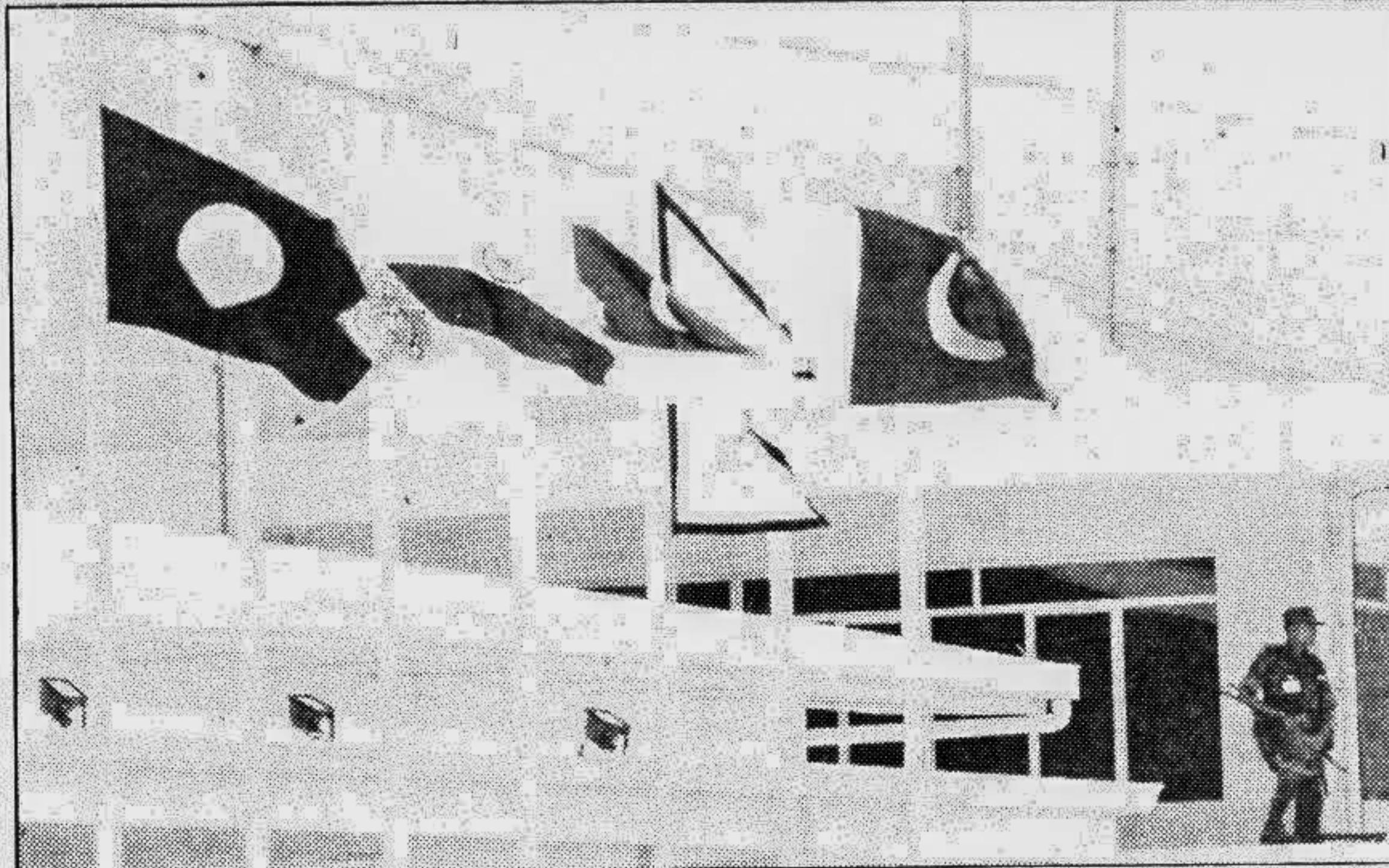
Classes were not held at Dhaka University and offices at the administrative building remained closed yesterday as Jatiyatabadi Chhatra (JCD) called a day-long strike on the campus protesting Friday's violence and demanding resignation of the proctor of the university.

No scheduled examination except that of masters course (traditional) was held.

On Friday, activists of JCD and Gantantrik Chhatra Oikya (GCO) clashed with those of Jatiya Chhatra Samaj, student wing of Jatiya Party, leaving ten persons injured.

JCD brought out a procession on the campus in support of its strike and later it held a rally at the Aparajeo Bangla. The rally was addressed by among others.

According to sources, the PCJSS delegation reiterated its five-point demand which in-



A security guard is positioned on a ledge beside the flags of the seven SAARC nations yesterday at Male International Airport. — AFP/UNB photo

### SAARC summit opens in Male today

## Goal is to catch up with ASEAN, EU trading blocs

SAARC nations representing one-fifth of the world's population, meet here tomorrow morning to lend impetus to a fledgling campaign to catch up with powerful trading blocs in Southeast Asia and Europe, respectively.

The heads of government of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) gather on this tiny Indian Ocean island nation for a three-day summit.

The leaders of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka began arriving today at a resort on one of the 1,190 small coral islands that make up the tropical archipelago in the Indian Ocean.

The first to arrive was King Jigme Singye Wangchuck of Bhutan who was followed by Indian Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral and Bangladesh Premier Sheikh Hasina Wajed.

In countries where an in-

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12-year-old bloc's priorities away from geopolitical rivalries and towards business.

The acceleration of economic cooperation has emerged as the core concern," said Kamlesh Sharma, a senior Indian foreign ministry official.

Annual per capita income in South Asia is \$309 billion of Sub-Saharan Africa and \$255 billion in East Asia excluding China, a recent human development report said.

SAARC has increasingly concentrated its energies on promoting trade among its disparate members, which range from the tiny Himalayan kingdoms of Bhutan and Nepal to the world's largest democracy, India.

The region took the first steps towards forming a trade bloc in 1995 with the creation of the South Asian Preferential Trade Agreement (SAPTA), vowing to form a free-trade zone by 2005.

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### Death toll 2400: Iran appeals for aid 2000 die in Qayen district of Khorasan alone

QAYEN, (Iran) May 11: Iran appealed for international assistance today after a powerful earthquake killed nearly 2,400 people in the east of the country and destroyed some 10,000 homes, reports AFP.

The Iranian Red Crescent said 200 villages had been flattened in Khorasan province, the richest and most fertile region of the country. In Saturday's quake, which registered 7.1 degrees on the Richter Scale.

About 130 aftershocks shook what was left standing, forcing tens of thousands to

### DMP to have 'dog squad'

By Masud Arif

Bangladesh Police is going to raise a 'dog squad' for specialised handling of crimes and other related activities.

Initially twenty dogs will be bought for the squad to be placed under Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP), according to police sources.

The squad will be trained up for carrying out various duties. Half of the squad will be involved in tracking and guard duties and the rest for detecting narcotics, arms and explosives.

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Most of the devastation occurred around the towns of Qayen and Birjand but the Iranian Interior Ministry reported that there had also been major damage across the border in the western Afghan province of Herat.

Hamid Mahalati, the head of the Red Crescent crisis team in Mashhad, the capital of Khorasan province, told the official IRNA news agency that 2,000 people had died in the Qayen district of Khorasan province alone.

He added that 394 people were killed in the town of Birjand and two in Kaf, near the

border with Afghanistan. thousands were injured in the Qayen region, which is home to 40,000 people.

Aid agencies in the Afghan capital Kabul said the extent of the damage or casualties inflicted in the Herat town of Ismail Qila and Kalat-e-Nazr Khan was unclear.

The Pakistan-based Afghan Islamic Press Agency said at least two people were killed and two injured on the Afghan side of the border.

In a statement, the Interior Ministry here appealed to the international community, the public and to Iranians abroad to provide aid to cope with the aftermath of the quake.

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Most ideally located commercial Plot Nos 3, 5 and 7 on Road No 2 measuring more or less 652.42 sqr metre (9.75 katha), 679.37 sqr metre (10.15 katha) and 637.91 sqr metre (9.53 katha) respectively at Motijheel (Extension