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# The Daily Star

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VOL. VII NO. 323 REGD. NO. DA 781 POUH 4 1404 BS. DHAKA THURSDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1997 SHABAN 17, 1418 HIJRI 20 PAGES PLUS RISING STARS: PRICE TAKA 9.00

## US for greater ties with South Asia including Bangladesh

WASHINGTON, Dec 17: President Bill Clinton said on Tuesday he will visit India and Pakistan next year despite their political troubles in the hopes of improving ties between the two countries, reports AFP.

"What I'm trying to do is to develop constructive relationships with both of them and hope that they will have constructive relationships with each other," Clinton told a press conference.

The White House has delayed Clinton's trip — originally scheduled for February — because of India's mid-term elections, which were ordered after the coalition government was toppled last month.

But the President insisted the trip was still on for 1998.

"There are difficulties in each country which make it difficult for us to resolve everything and to have every kind of relationship we'd like to have. But I still intend to go there next year," he said.

The United States has an enormous national interest in having greater positive involvement with all of South Asia, with India, with Pakistan, with Bangladesh, the other countries in the region, Clinton said.

## Cabinet okays steps to identify children of freedom fighters

The Cabinet has approved a proposal for selection of a process to identify the children of freedom fighters, reports BSS.

The approval was given at a meeting held at the PM's Office on Monday with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

The meeting also approved a proposal to amend the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh, (ICDDR,B) Ordinance, 1978.

The cabinet was apprised of the discussions in the Aid Group meeting held in the city from November 4 to 5.

## 80 die as Kazakh plane crashes

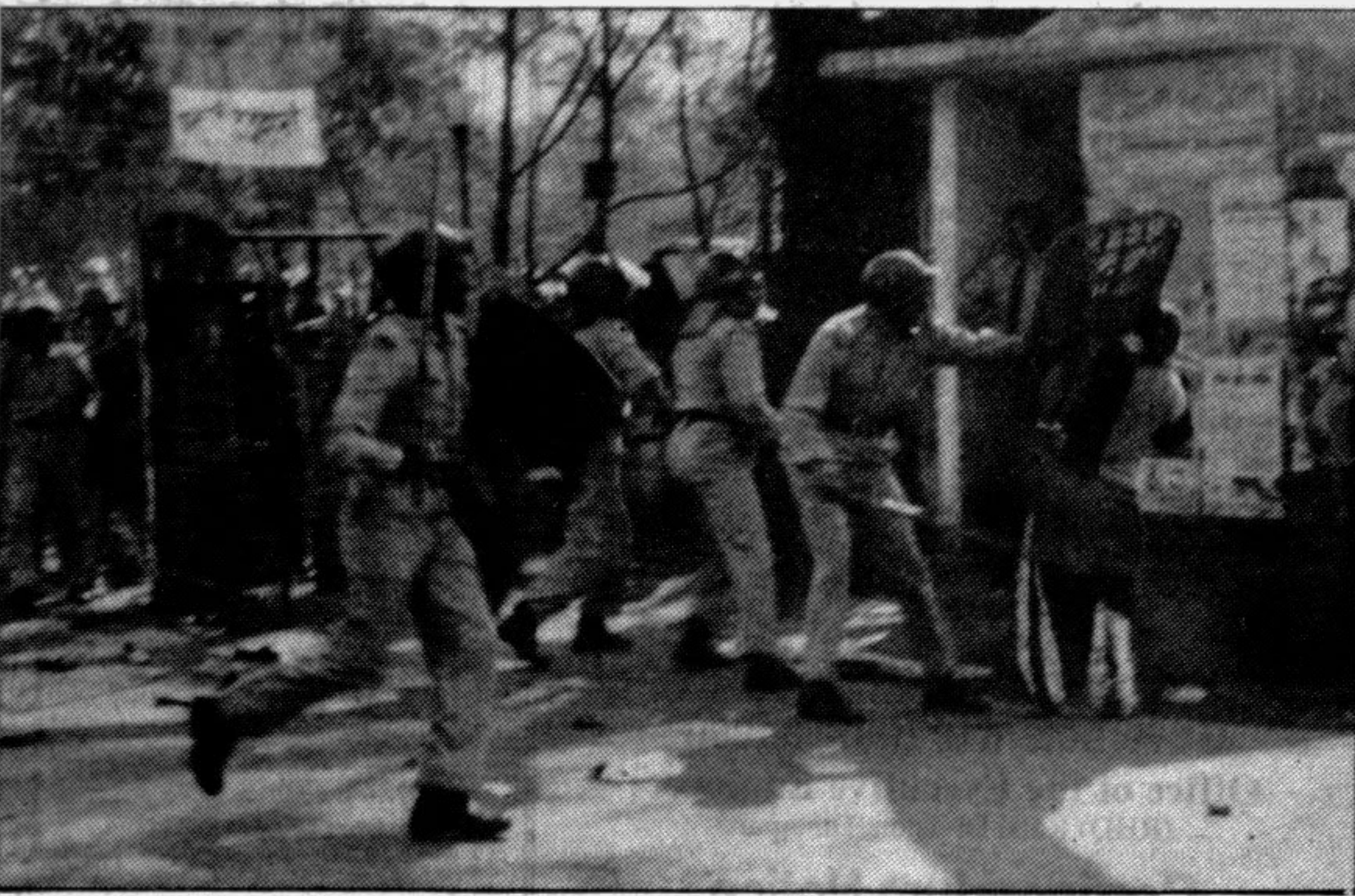
DUBAI, Dec 17: At least 80 people died when a passenger plane on a flight from Kazakhstan crashed on Monday in the desert near Sharjah Airport in the United Arab Emirates, an airport source said, reports AFP.

The plane, a Russian-built Tupolev was carrying 77 passengers and nine crew members, the source said.

An official at the airport confirmed that a plane belonging to Tajikistan airlines crashed around 12 kilometres (seven miles) from the airport, but did not say if there were any victims.

## 200 injured at JU: Syndicate condemns action

# Police baton teachers, students in presence of Home Minister



Police using the shield and the baton on a girl student at the Dairy Farm Gate of the JU yesterday. The photo was taken by Ms Rehnema Ahmed, a JU teacher who was also injured in the police action.

By JU Correspondent

At least 200 students and 11 teachers of Jahangirnagar University (JU) were injured when riot police indiscriminately fired rubber bullets and tear gas shells and used batons on hundreds of students in presence of Home Minister Rafiqul Islam at the Dairy Farm gate of the university yesterday.

Police swooped on the students at about 10:15 am, not even sparing girl students and female teachers. About 450 baton-swinging policemen also used their boots freely during the action, witnesses said.

The Home Minister went there responding to demands of the students to assure arrest and punishment of the persons involved in a December 11 attack on a JU bus which left at least 50 students injured. Transport workers made the attack at Amin Bazar near the city.

The Syndicate of JU at an emergency meeting, chaired by Vice Chancellor Prof Amirul Islam Chowdhury, condemned the police action on the "peaceful gathering of students on the main entrance of the campus" See Page 12 Col 3

## 2 US oil cos quit bidding, talks with another fall flat

Star Report

US Oil companies Chevron-Texaco apparently quit the oil and gas exploration block bidding on Sunday following a very short discussion with the Negotiation Committee of the Energy Ministry.

Besides, discussion with US company Union Texas ended without any result yesterday.

Chevron-Texaco had jointly submitted a proposal for Block 9, but were not invited for any negotiation till last week.

Sources concerned said that the Negotiation Committee asked Chevron-Texaco representatives Sunday to join Irish company Tullow as partners in Block 9.

In response, representatives of the two companies asked the negotiators to give the proposal in writing. The negotiators said that they did not have the mandate to give such a written proposal and that the proposal was okayed by the high-powered investment Committee comprising four secretaries.

After this, executives of the companies left the negotiations. Most of the 12 persons who came for the negotiations representing the 'joint venture' left the country on Sunday, the sources said.

When contacted, a local representative of the joint venture declined to comment on the issue.

Yesterday, the negotiators told the Union Texas representatives that their proposals for blocks 9 and 10 were not up to the mark but were being re-evaluated. The oil company representatives were also told that they might be contacted in future.

Tullow, having an annual turnover of 5.8 million Irish pounds, was offered Block 9 on the first day of negotiations which began on October 22.

Tullow's proposal for this most sought after block was to drill 10 wells in the initial investment Committee comprising



## Mustafizur Rahman new army chief

Major General Muhammad Mustafizur Rahman, Bir Bikram, ndc, psc, C, has been appointed Chief of Army Staff, with effect from December 24, according to a notification issued by the Ministry of Defence yesterday, reports BSS.

Major General Mustafiz has also been promoted to the rank of Lieutenant General with effect from the same date, according to another notification.

Meanwhile, Lieutenant General Muhammad Maibubur Rahman, psc, Chief of Army Staff, on completion of his See Page 12 Col 4

## Renewed pledge, festivity mark Victory Day

By Staff Correspondent

The nation celebrated the 26th anniversary of Victory Day on Tuesday with a renewed pledge to uphold the spirit of Liberation War and materialise the martyred freedom fighters' dream for a happy, prosperous and exploitation free Bangladesh.

On December 16, 1971, the people of Bangladesh achieved victory after a nine-month bloody war against the Pakistani occupation forces. Some 93,000 Pakistani soldiers surrendered to the joint command of MuktiBahini and the Eastern Command of the Indian Army in the city.

From day break on Tuesday, people in their thousands thronged the National Memorial at Savar to lay wreaths in homage to the freedom fighters who sacrificed their lives for independence of the motherland.

The capital wore a festive look with its air filled with joy and merriment. People from all strata of life hopped from one place of festivity to another all day long. Youngsters along with their guardians also came out on the city streets to take part in the programmes amid great joy and euphoria.

President Justice Shaha buddin Ahmed placed wreaths at the National Memorial at around 6:40 in the morning, followed by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. The Prime Minister also garlanded the portrait of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Bangabandhu Memorial Museum at Dhanmondi in the city.

Leader of the Opposition in Jatiya Sangsad and BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia, flanked by her party colleagues, placed wreaths at National Memorial at around 10:30 am.

Different political parties including Awami League, BNP, Jatiya Party, JSD, Gano Forum, Workers Party and CPB also placed wreaths at the National Memorial.

An impressive march past by the Army, Police, Ansars, VDP and other forces at the National Parade Square at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in the city was one of the main attractions of the Victory Day's programmes. The President took salute at the march past. The Prime Minister, her cabinet colleagues, high civil and military officials and diplomats witnessed the march past.

Various socio-cultural and political organisations organised cultural programmes at different places in the city. Ruling Awami League and opposition BNP brought out separate victory processions in the city yesterday on the occasion.

## Where V-Day dawned with service to humanity

By Nazmul Ashraf, back from Raipura

The Victory Day appeared with a difference for the people of Paratoli, a remote Char in Raipura thana of Narsingdi district.

They had a mobile hospital at their doorstep on the bank of Meghna river.

As the day dawned, people in their hundreds started thronging the Paratoli Kalimuddin High School ground where the hospital was organised.

"I've never seen so many big doctors together in the Char where a quack is seldom seen", commented Halim Mia, 55, a heart patient. Halim is among those Char people who could never afford to see an MBBS doctor in the thana headquarters, not to speak of a specialised physician in a big city See Page 12 Col 7

## DSE Council: 16 bow out of race finally

By Toufique Imrose Khalidi

After a week-long wrangling, mighty stock dealers reached a 'compromise', choosing 12 members for the 18-seat policymaking Council for the Dhaka Stock Exchange. The deal, which came following intervention from politicians, business leaders and other power brokers, forced 16 others out of the race.

The 16 who failed to pass through the 'compromise' formula formally 'Jute godown gutted'

NARAYANGANJ, Dec 17: A huge quantity of raw jute were gutted on Sunday when a fire broke out in Jamal Jute Baling Company at Nabinagar under Bandar thana, reports BSS.

Firemen from Bandar, Hajiganj and Narayanganj brought the blaze under control after three hours of fighting.

"communicated their decision to retire from contesting the Council election" yesterday and were not all that happy. Some of them, reached by The Daily Star, called the whole exercise "an interference by the top political authority".

Dr S A Malek, Political Adviser to the Prime Minister, whose name was implicated denied his involvement. "Why should I interfere? I am not a broker," he told The Daily Star. But he admitted he met leaders of the two groups who had gone to him to discuss the issue.

Today's election, which will still go on as a formality, is the first after the DSE had adopted changes to its articles to draw a line between policymaking and management. The new Council will appoint the first chief executive officer and carry forward the crucially-important automation work for which the bourse has been blamed by the See Page 12 Col 5

## One killed, 100 hurt in polls violence

By Staff Correspondent

At least one person was killed and around a hundred were injured in the electoral violence yesterday, the eleventh day of the on-going union parishad election.

Besides, polling at at least three centres was suspended due to violence while clashes between the supporters of rival candidates took place in six more centres before and during the polls yesterday, the Election Commission sources said.

Elections were held at 1030 centres of 112 unions under 16 thanas of 16 districts.

A man was killed in Rangati under Feni district as supporters of rival candidates clashed early in the morning. Many other people were also injured in the clash.

However a top-ranking official of the Election Commission said that the law enforcing agencies brought the situation See Page 12 Col 6

## Uneasy calm at Matiranga: Barricade resumes

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Dec 17: An uneasy calm prevails in Matiranga thana under Khagrachhari hill district following Sunday's clashes there that left two persons killed and over 100 injured, reports received here said.

A large number of police and BDR personnel were deployed there to prevent further outbreak of violence.

Meanwhile, movement of vehicles to and from Khagrachhari remains suspended as Parbatya Sarbadaliya Oikya Parishad (PSOP) continued its barricade programme, police and other sources said.

## Girl locked in for 16 days and raped repeatedly

By Staff Correspondent

A teenage girl who came from Rangpur had been locked in for sixteen days in a city slum where she was allegedly violated several times.

Police, quoting the FIR filed by the victim, said she came to Dhaka on December 1 with one Rafiqul Islam as he promised to marry her.

But Rafiqul locked her in a shanty at the Kalapani slum in Pallab. When the girl gave him See Page 12 Col 3

## Under-trial prisoner dies of diarrhoea

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Dec 17: An under-trial prisoner died of diarrhoea at the Narayanganj General Hospital on December 16, jail and hospital sources said.

The prisoner was identified as Kazi Sabuj, son of one Kazi Sirajul Islam of Satura thana under Manikganj district. He was accused in a murder case under Ruppaganj thana of Narayanganj district.

Police arrested Sabuj on June 6 and sent him to the Narayanganj sub-jail on June See Page 12 Col 5

## Industrialist sued as two cheques bounce

By Staff Correspondent

The IFIC Bank has filed a criminal case against Mohammad Ali, a former BNP member of parliament and an industrialist, for issuing cheques which were dishonoured for lack of funds.

The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's court has fixed January 4 for framing of charge in the case.

Ali, who is a loan defaulter with five banks for Tk 122 crore, had given two cheques for Tk 2.78 crore to IFIC as 10 per cent down payment of his loan to reschedule it.

But when the bank sent the cheques for encashment, those were dishonoured.

Later, IFIC Bank filed a complaint case with the CMM's court against Mohammad Ali on August 19.

The bank also filed a Title Suit with Artha Rin Adalat against AB Vegetable Oil Industries Ltd on July 7 to realise the defaulting loans from him.

In addition, the bank has instructed its legal adviser to file another Title Suit against Ali for recovery of term loan liability. The suit is likely to be filed immediately on reopening of the Civil Court after winter vacation.

IFIC Bank had sanctioned Tk 11 crore loan to Mohammad Ali for purchase of shares. This was done in violation of banking rules. Ali had neither mentioned the reason for taking loan nor did he mention any loan amount in his application. The loan was sanctioned before taking necessary collateral or completing documentation for the loan, which a Bangladesh Bank (BB) investigation had revealed.

## U-13 cricketers lift title in West Bengal

Bangladesh emerged unbeaten champions in the all-Bengal Sub-Junior Cricket tournament trouncing Agramami Cricket Coaching Centre by nine wickets in the final at the Shiliguri Dada Bhai ground yesterday, reports UNB.

The promising Bangladeshi players scored a glorious record in the Indian under-13 meet winning all six matches.

Sent in to bat, Shiliguri See Page 12 Col 7

Owners of the fish processing plants are optimistic about lifting of the ban. "We are optimistic about resumption of fish export to the EU countries from middle of February," Anjad Hossain, managing director of Lockpur Fish Processing Plant at Khulna told this correspondent over telephone last night.

Hossain, one of the major fish exporters with a Tk 200 crore annual turnover claimed that a member of the inspect team told him, "Your's is a quite excellent plant." Lockpur plant spent more than Tk 2 crore for renovation works in the last three months. This is one of the six plants which the government See Page 12 Col 6

## EU to review ban on fish export next month

By Staff Correspondent

Officials of the European Union are expected to review next month its temporary ban on export of Bangladesh frozen fish to EU member countries, sources concerned said.

A three-member EU team yesterday completed its 7-day inspection of the fish processing plants and quality control laboratories in Khulna and Chittagong, officials said. The team will sit today with fisheries officials in Dhaka to discuss quality control arrangements in the country.

The EU Veterinary Committee is expected to call a meeting in Brussels next month to review quality of Bangladesh's exportable fish.



Jubilant youths brought out a colourful procession in the city on the Victory Day. — Star photo

## Malnutrition biggest child killer

By Staff Correspondent

Some 56 per cent of Bangladeshi children under five suffer from "moderate and severe malnutrition" and 21 per cent of them are "severely underweight", according to UNICEF's report, "State of the World Children in 1998".

It also reveals that lack of food is not the main cause of malnutrition in Bangladesh. Lack of proper care of children and pregnant women is an important factor.

"Eighty million people including more than 20 million children lack adequate nutrition," said officer-in-charge of the UNICEF in Bangladesh Dr Aung Tun Thet at a press conference in the city yesterday.

He said that malnutrition was responsible for more than half of all child deaths.

Everyday, over 700 children die in Bangladesh, mostly due to malnutrition.

Dr Aung Tun Thet noted that Bangladesh would gain billions of dollars in increased productivity and revenue if adequate investment is made in nutrition and health programmes.

"This is a matter of much more than money alone — the progress of the nations needs to be judged by the well-being and nutrition of their peoples. Especially the protection afforded to the growing minds and bodies of their children," he said.

The press conference was also addressed by Gazi Shamsul Alam, Member of Planning Commission.

The UNICEF report this year focuses on nutrition which is a worldwide challenge and which has not been prioritised by different nations yet.

The report says that more than 70 per cent of the pregnant and breast-feeding women are also malnourished.

The State of the World Children report identified iron deficiency anaemia as the most prevalent nutritional problem in the world. Progress in reducing its prevalence and impact had been slower than expected, it added.

Recognising that malnutrition was hindering national development, Bangladesh has formulated a national nutrition policy and launched a nationwide nutrition intervention programme.

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, with the assistance of the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) has established nearly 1000 community nutrition centres covering 65,000 children and 16,000 pregnant or lactating women.

The report noted that Bangladesh had been one of those Vitamin A deficient countries which strongly administered high-dose Vitamin A capsules to children in 1996.

**TOMORROW**

Sandhani National Eye Donation Society (SNEDS) is a pioneer in Bangladesh in the field of posthumous eye donations. Since its inception in 1984 it has been able to obtain pledges from more than 25,000 people for posthumous eye donation. So far 980 corneas have been extracted of which 901 were successfully grafted. Read this week's Cover Story entitled "Gift Your Sight" (Sandhani Eye Donation Society).

**Inside Today**

**Article**

**Pakistan's Intra-government Power Struggle**

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**Supplements**

Today's issue of The Daily Star contains a 4-page supplement on Participatory Water Management in Bangladesh on Pages 13-16 and a 2-page supplement on National Day of Bhutan on Pages 18 & 19