



স্বাস্থ্যের জন্য

# The Daily Star

VOL. VIII NO. 171 REGD. NO. DA 781 INTERNET: <http://www.dailystarnews.com>

SRAVAN 1, 1405 BS DHAKA THURSDAY JULY 16, 1998 RABIUL AWAL 21, 1419 HIJRI

16 PAGES PLUS RISING STARS: PRICE TAKA 9.00

MARBLE MARBLE MARBLE

WE HAVE HUGE READY STOCK OF  
ITALIAN CARRARA, PERLATO SICILIA,  
BOTTICINO, INDIAN KESSWARI GREEN,  
MALAYSIAN AND PAKISTANI MARBLE  
OF DIFFERENT TYPES.

NIRMAN INTERNATIONAL LTD.  
199, TEJGAON I/A, DHAKA.  
TEL : 605957, 607363 SHOW ROOM : 861985

## Half-day hartal only in Dhaka city today

BNP and its allies have withdrawn today's half-day hartal across the country in view of the flood situation, reports UNB.

The hartal will now be observed in Dhaka city only from 6 am to noon.

This was decided at a meeting of the 7-party alliance yesterday evening.

Sources closed to the meeting said the alliance leaders agreed to withdraw the country-wide hartal except in Dhaka city considering sufferings of the people in the flood affected areas.

BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia has asked her party leaders and workers to move to the affected areas and provide all possible help to the flood-hit people.

## Barisal-5 by-polls Hasnat, Suranjit asked to explain purpose of visit to constituency

By Nurul Kabir

The Election Commission yesterday instructed the district officials of Barisal not to be present in any function attended by any member of the council of ministers before the ensuing by-election in a parliamentary seat of the district.

The by-election in Barisal-5 constituency of the Jatiya Sangsad is scheduled to be held on July 20. But allegations are there that the ministers and persons enjoying their rank and status are violating the election code of conduct.

The Jatiya Sangsad seat fell vacant following the death of an Opposition lawmaker in the second week of March.

According to sources in the Chief Election Commissioner's office, the EC issued identical directives to the Deputy Commissioner and Superintendent of Police of Barisal not to be present in any function being attended by any minister, state minister, deputy minister or See Page 12 Col 1

## By-polls: Holiday in Barisal-5 July 20

The government has declared July 20 as general holiday for Barisal-5 constituency on the occasion of by-election to the vacant Jatiya Sangsad seat, reports UNB.

An official handout said in Dhaka yesterday that the day had been declared a holiday to facilitate officers and employees of the government, semi-government, autonomous and private offices of the constituency to exercise their right to vote.

## Star MAG TOMORROW

They are everywhere—in the soil, water, air, food, our body. Microbes are tiny microscopic organisms that are essential in all nature's activities. Only less than five per cent are harmful, the remaining ninety five percent, being beneficial. Don't miss this Friday's cover story, entitled *Microbiology in Bangladesh: Offering Exciting Possibilities*, in which some of the experts in the field reveal the hidden potential of microbes in the industrial growth of the nation.

## Inside Today Article

**Hartal Politics:**  
Unwanted  
Thanks  
Thickening,  
Wanted Services  
Thinning

by A R Shamsul Islam  
Page 4

## Focus

**Harvesting rainwater  
in Bangladesh; and  
How much our water  
filters are safe?**  
Page 5

## Business

**Mark charged with  
non-payment of Tk  
37.5cr in VAT**  
**EPZ exports rise by  
37pc**  
**DSE index decreases**  
Pages 6, 7, 8

## Several lakh marooned in 15 districts: 11 killed

By Staff Correspondent

The flood situation took a serious turn yesterday killing at least 11 people and leaving several lakh marooned in 15 districts.

Our correspondents reported that two persons died in Rangamati, two in Cox's Bazar and one each in Pabna and Mymensingh district. UNB reported two deaths each in Bogra and Sirajganj and one in Mymensingh.

Two persons died in Jamalpur on Tuesday.

The affected districts are Chittagong, Cox's Bazar, Bandarban, Khagrachhari, Feni, Pabna, Sirajganj, Mymensingh, Sherpur, Jamalpur, Bogra, Khulna, Rajshahi, Gaibandha and Kushtia.

The flood situation deteriorated as heavy rains continued for the last two days and on-

rush of waters from across the border further swelled most of the major rivers in the Brahmaputra, Meghna and Ganga basins and those in Feni and greater Chittagong district. The Flood Forecasting and the Warning Centre yesterday said the Ganges-Padma, Brahmaputra, Khowai, Someswari, Gumti, Muhuri, Halda, Sangu and Matamuhuri rivers continued to flow above their danger levels yesterday and may rise further. The Dharla recorded slight fall but Teesta swelled along with Karoti, Punarbhaba, Mohananda and Gorai.

Our staff Correspondent from Chittagong reported that four persons including two women were killed in Rangamati and Chakaria in Cox's Bazar district yesterday.

Administration sources confirmed the deaths of Saleh Ahmed (60) and Nurjahan Begum (35) in Borobola village in Chakaria under Cox's Bazar when their mud house collapsed due to flood water.

In Rangamati hill district, two persons died in landslide. Selina Akhtar (25) died at Baghaichhari and Abul Kalam (35) died at Chandragao, administration sources said.

A boy, Nurul Islam (11) died from snake biting at flood affected Tarakandia village under Mirsharhat thana, in Chittagong, police sources said.

The flood situation in Chittagong and Cox's Bazar districts deteriorated with increase of water in all the low-lying areas as rainfall continued.

About four lakhs people See Page 12 Col 4

## 2 get life-term for rape in Chittagong

CHITTAGONG, July 15: A court here today sentenced two people to life-term imprisonment for raping a woman about two years ago, reports UNB.

The Judge of the Chittagong Special Court on Prevention of Women and Child Repression, M Moinul Islam Chowdhury, gave the verdict against Abul Kalam, son of Mohammad Ziaul Haq, and Abdul Kalam, son of Sukkur Ali.

According to the prosecution case, Abul Kalam of Hatia in Noakhali, and Abdul Kalam of Katiadi in Kishoreganj raped Ratna Begum while he was returning home after watching a movie at a cinema hall at Halishahar on October 18, 1996.

A case was filed with Paharali thana in this connection and police submitted charge-sheet after investigation.

After hearing the witnesses, the court gave the judgement against the two accused.

## 30 BNP MPs deposit resignation letters with party chief

By Staff Correspondent

Some 30 lawmakers of BNP have deposited letters of resignation from the Jatiya Sangsad with party chief and Leader of the Opposition Begum Khaleda Zia over the last couple of days, sources in the party said.

The move, reportedly initiated by Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury, triggered an unpleasant debate among the rank and file of the main opposition party.

The process began on Monday and continued till yesterday evening. Former state minister for planning Dr Moin Khan distributed printed resignation forms among the party MPs present at the Minto Road office of Begum Zia yesterday evening.

Some of the MPs, including Maj (retd) Akhtaruzzaman, however, refused to sign the resignation letters, arguing that they were not ready to respond to the arbitrary move.

Talking to The Daily Star, Akhtaruzzaman said: "I am ready to submit my resignation any time, if asked by Begum Zia. Why should I do it at the dictate of those having no authority to ask for it?"

Meanwhile, senior BNP leaders like Prof A Q M Badrud-dozza Chowdhury, Saifur Rahman, Khondaker Delwar Hossain and K M Obidur Rahman met the party chief at her Minto Road office to discuss the issue.

According to party sources, they questioned the process of collecting the resignation letters by people like Salahuddin Maj (retd) Akhtaruzzaman, See Page 12 Col 6

## CHT Affairs Ministry formed

The government has set up a new ministry named as Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs in fulfillment of the commitment made in the December 2 CHT peace accord, reports UNB.

This was announced in a gazette notification issued yesterday.

The ministry will deal with the following matters relating to the CHT:

Administrative issues of the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Counseling the local government bodies on selective issues.

Coordinating among the related ministries and divisions on concerned issues.

Providing secretarial assistance to all the council committees, special committees and working committees formed for the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Advising the government and the committees, monitoring and implementing related decisions.

Preparing development ac-

See Page 12 Col 7

## CAB survey

9.4 pc increase  
in prices of  
essentials  
during '97-98

By Staff Correspondent

Prices of essentials during last financial year (1997-98) have gone up by 9.41 per cent, indicating a high rate of inflation in the economy, according to a market survey by the Consumers' Association of Bangladesh (CAB).

In a statement yesterday, CAB said that the prices of rice increased by 15.13 per cent last fiscal while it had declined by 9.93 per cent in the previous fiscal (1996-97).

The increase in fuel and spice prices was the steepest. Fuel prices rose by 24.67 per cent while prices of spices were up by 23.44 per cent.

Besides, according to the CAB survey, prices of egg increased by 14.65 per cent, vegetables by 13.46 per cent and See Page 2



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina speaking at a mass reception accorded to her by the National Committee for Peace and Friendship at Paltan Maidan in the city yesterday.

—Star photo

## PM at mass reception Cooperation of all needed for development of CHT

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was accorded a mass reception at a grand rally in the capital yesterday for her success in restoring peace in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT).

The grand rally was organised by the National Committee for Peace and Friendship.

Reciprocating the warm felicitation, the Premier told the huge gathering of rain-soaked people at the Paltan Maidan. "It's not me who deserves this salutation but those who sacrificed for people's causes."

She also acknowledged the 'cooperation of all sections of people' in reaching the agreement with the tribal leaders in CHT.

Conveying her gratitude to those who braved rains to complement her, an emotion-charged Sheikh Hasina recalled, "Today's rain reminds

me of May 17, 1981, when I returned home (after several years) amid heavy downpour." She said, "Overwhelmed by people's love and affection for me that day, I pledged to dedicate myself to bringing about economic emancipation of the people by establishing their right to vote and food. After restoring their voting right, we're now striving to ensure their right to food."

By signing the peace accord, the PM told the rally, her government met a constitutional obligation of guaranteeing equal rights to all citizens. Besides, she added, peace in the one-tenth area of the country (CHT) was imperative for a balanced development in the country.

Referring to her government's steps for development of the See Page 12 Col 7

## \$235m IDA credit to promote pvt sector role in gas, power, telecom

A US dollar 235 million IDA credit to promote greater private sector participation in power, gas, water supply, telecommunications and transportation in Bangladesh has been approved by the World Bank, according to a World Bank press release, reports BSS.

Announcing the World Bank fiscal year 1998 lending results to South Asian region, the press release said that another 250 million US dollar IDA credit for a health and population programme project in the country will support health-care reform, help expand access to essential services for the poor, reduce the number of infant, childhood, and pregnancy-related illness and deaths, alleviate the infectious disease burden, and improve family planning services.

## 22 hurt as some compartments of 2 trains derail

LALMONIRHAT, July 15: At least 22 people were injured when some compartments of two trains derailed at Mahimaganj and Pirgachha this afternoon, reports UNB.

Railway sources said the first accident occurred at 4-15 pm when some compartments of Dhaka-bound mail train from Santahar derailed near Mahimaganj.

A rescue train rushed from Bonarpur to salvage derailed compartments. Details of the incident were not immediately available.

In the second accident, four compartments of the Dinajpur-bound North Bengal Mail from Dhaka derailed at about 5-25 pm near Pirgachha railway station.

Passengers of the train said they panicked when the train jolted severely under the impact of derailment. Fear-stricken passengers were seen jumping through the windows.

The injured were treated in local clinics. The railway authorities, however, denied any passenger received severe injury.

A rescue train from Lalmonirhat started clearing the line in the evening.

Train communications in the region were disrupted due to the accidents.

## Faruk murder: Case shifted to Dhanmondi thana

By Court Correspondent

Dhanmondi police will soon take up the case filed with Keraniganj thana in connection with the killing of former Jatiya Party MP Lutfor Rahman alias Kala Faruk on July 6.

Nasrin Akhter Flora, the only arrested accused in the murder case, was sent to Dhaka Central Jail yesterday after a four-day police remand.

Keraniganj police produced Flora, said to be a girl friend of Kala Faruk, before the District Magistrate's Court, Dhaka, praying for a seven-day remand.

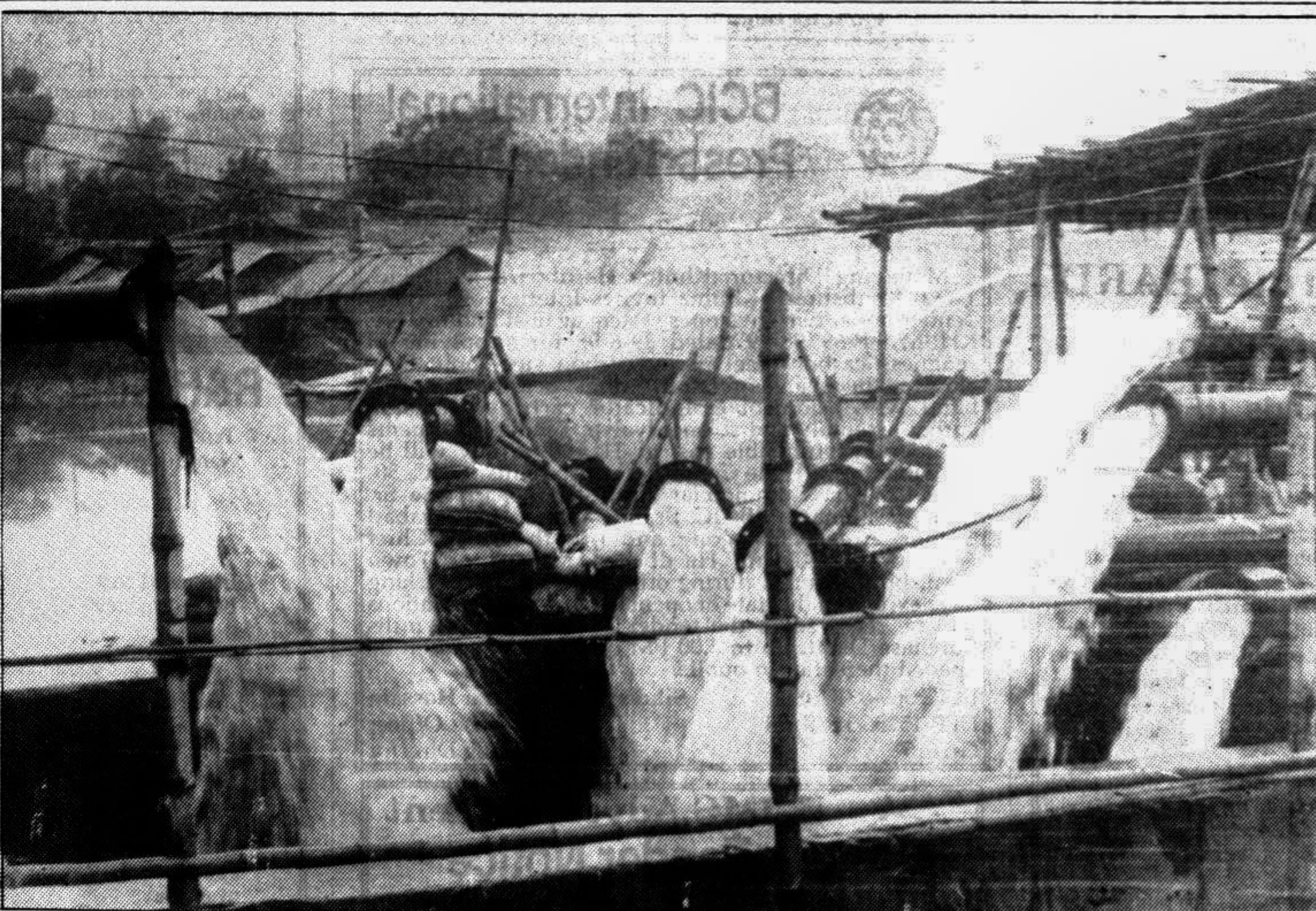
A bail prayer was also moved on behalf of Flora.

The court rejected both the prayers and sent the case to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court for transferring it to Dhanmondi thana.

Police investigation so far revealed that Flora and six others strangled the former MP Dhanmondi. The killers dumped the body in the luggage compartment of a car which was found abandoned on Dhaka-Mawa highway at Bhawar Bhatti in Keraniganj.

A police official at Kerani-

See Page 12 Col 5



Water being pumped out as some city areas went under water following incessant rains. The picture was taken from Mugdapara yesterday.

## Environment minister tells The Daily Star Tk 338cr plan to turn 20pc of land area green by 2015

By Shehab Ahmed

The government has taken up a Tk 338 crore plan to turn at least 20 per cent of the country's land area green by the year 2015, to help maintain ecological balance, said Forest and Environment Minister Begum Sajeda Chowdhury.

"The forestry sector project is the first step in the forestry master plan, aimed at development of forests with direct participation of the people," the minister told The Daily Star in an interview.

Referring to the disappearing woodlands, she said the plan aims at preservation of the existing forests and maintaining bio-diversity, raising forests on the vacant forest lands, unclassified forests and

along the roads, embankments and railway tracks and other fringe forests.

The government headed by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is determined to make the tree plantation drive a social movement. We are trying to involve of people and NGOs.

She said the main objective of the programme is to evolve a benefit-sharing mechanism for the people, improve the environment and bio-diversity and regenerate the disappearing forests by distributing 5.38 crore saplings.

Under the plan, 20,786 hectare of woodlot forests would be developed, while agricultural forests would be created on See Page 2



Sajeda Chowdhury

## Rural people to get health & FP services at same centre

By Naimul Haq

The government has approved a proposal for unification of health and family planning centres at thana and union levels to provide better services to people at a single centre.

The centres will be under the supervision of a thana level 'chief or manager', official sources said yesterday. The proposal was made by a High Level Committee on Organisation and Management (HLCOM), formed earlier to identify problems in health and family planning services at grass-roots level and recommend measures. The Cabinet approved the HLCOM proposal on June 28.

The unification process will start in a month. The programme follows successful implementation of a pilot project in five districts, sources in the health directorate said.

A World Bank study earlier said that lack of cooperation

between the health centres and the family planning centres at thana and union levels seriously hampered delivery of service.

The study showed that between 1992 and 1997, average monthly performance declined to 3,500 from 20,000 in sterilisation and to 15,000 from 30,000 in Inter-Uterine Devices (IUD) insertions.

"The opportunity to communicate family planning messages to millions of health clients is lost as health department does not provide family planning information and services from its facilities," the WB study added.

Asked about the advantage of the unification, Health Minister Salahuddin Yusuf told this correspondent yesterday, "The idea of combining two wings of the ministry at union and thana levels is to offer efficient

client services at a single centre instead of clients having to visit two different centres for complaints."

The unification will be made under the Health and Population Sector Programme (HSPS). A client now has to go to family planning centres for reproductive health care and to another centre for curative and preventive services.

"This will be a major part of the planned reform in the health sector," a WB official told The Daily Star.

He said, "The changes will substantially contribute to efficient management of health services and yield more output in the sector. It aims at modernisation of health care service delivery system."

The HLCOM recommended institutional reforms to achieve cost-effective and See Page 12 Col 8