



ILLUSTRATION: ANISUZAMAN SOHEL

# BANGLADESH TURNS **31** STATE OF SOCIETY & ECONOMY

The Daily Star

INDEPENDENCE DAY SPECIAL

DHAKA MONDAY MARCH 25, 2002

## EDITOR'S NOTE

**F**OR supplements on special occasions we try to focus on a theme. For our Independence Day supplement we have chosen the theme -- *State of Society and Economy* as Bangladesh turns 31. In the articles included in this special edition we have attempted to present a picture of the social realities in Bangladesh and the economic progress the country has made over the last three decades.

It is our view that given the enormous development challenges we face and the resource constraints we

constantly encounter, Bangladesh has not done too badly compared to the popular image it has had abroad. Our biggest and most laudable achievement has been in the area of agriculture, especially in food production. Today we are able to feed a population of 130 million whereas in the pre-independence days we were unable to take care of a population of 75 million.

It is our hope that by reading the articles contained in the supplement the readers will be able to make a realistic

assessment of where we have come and the priority areas we need to focus upon. We fear that as our political atmosphere gets heated up our economic agenda will be shoved further and further back posing a damage to whatever prospects of growth our peasants, workers and business leaders have been able to create. It is our firm belief that socio-economic issues must take precedence if we are to break the cycle of poverty that grips us today.

We hope that this humble effort will be of some help in taking the nation in the desired direction.