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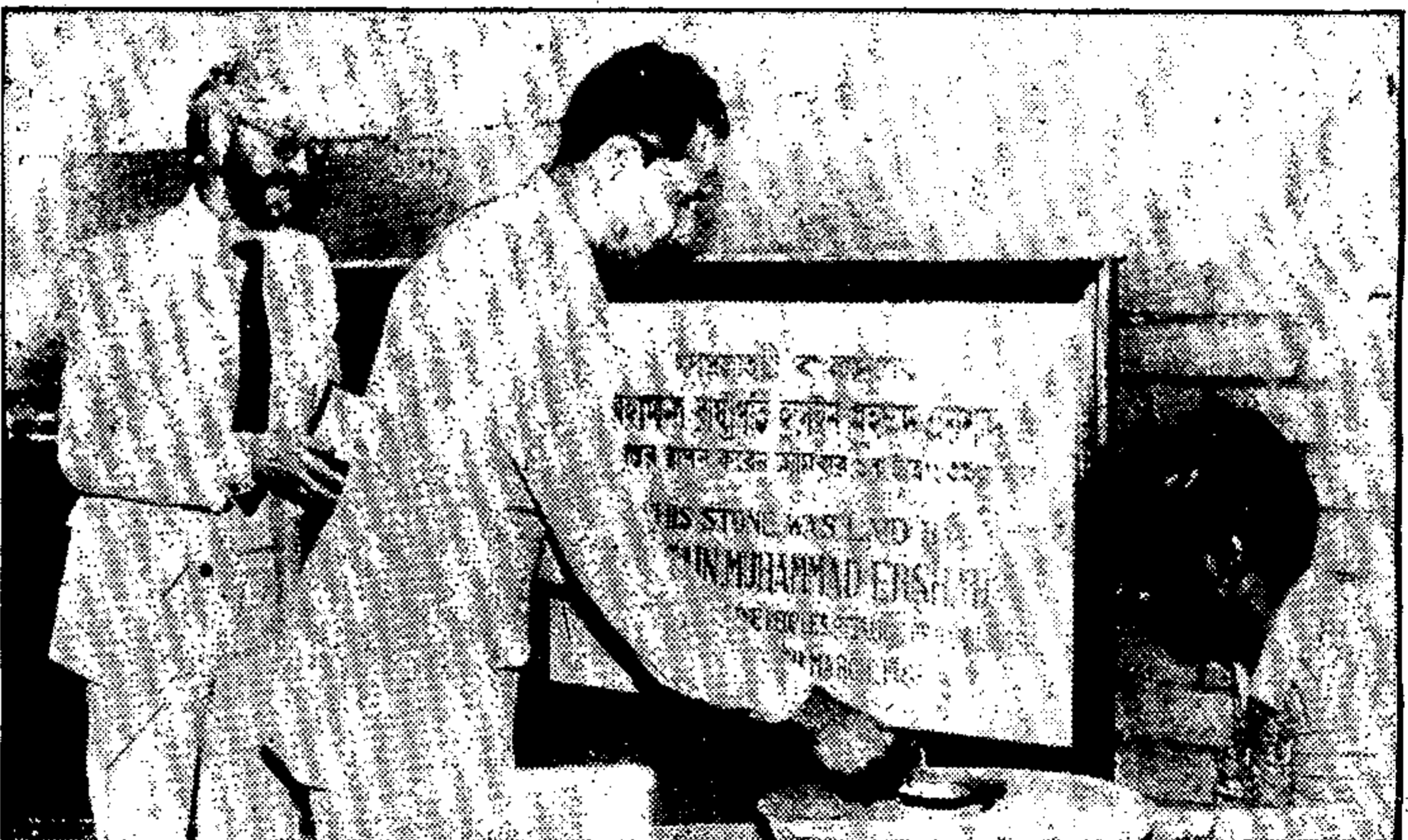
# Child care given top priority: Ershad

President H.M. Ershad on Monday said we may wait for some time for our requirements to be fulfilled but children cannot, "We cannot tell a child to wait for tomorrow." His name is 'today', he said, reports BSS.

The President was addressing the foundation stone laying function of Children's Nutrition Unit of Save the Children Fund (UK) at Maghbazar in Dhaka.

The construction, furnishing and running of the new nutrition complex are being funded by the Townswomen's Guilds of UK which raised pound sterling 7.5 lakh for the purpose. The European Economic Community has also made a substantial contribution in the form of grant towards the capital cost of the complex, and Bangladesh Government has provided the land at a token price.

The function was also addressed by Director of Save the children Fund in Dhaka, Mr Alex Gray and the visiting Chairman of National Union of Townswomen's Guilds, Mrs Jean Ellerton. British High Commissioner in Dhaka T.G. Streeton read out a message of



President H.M. Ershad laying the foundation stone of the new Children's Nutrition Unit of Save the Children's Fund (UK) at Maghbazar on Monday. —Times

## Top priority

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Princess Anne sent on the occasion. Princess Anne is the President of Save the Children Fund. The function was attended, among others, by Health Minister Salauddin Kader Chowdhury, Health Secretary Manzurul Karim and diplomats.

President Ershad said we have to ensure healthy living of children if we want to get a healthy nation. With that end in view, he said, his Government has laid utmost importance on the welfare of children and their medicare, he said.

President Ershad referred to Government's announced policy of ensuring education and medicare for all by 2000 AD and said steps and being taken to make primary education universal and compulsory. Side by side work on setting up health centre in each of the unions of the country by next three years is progressing fast, he said.

Expressing the hope that education and medicare can be ensured for all children in near future, he said primary immunisation programme for children under two years against fatal diseases has been progressing satisfactorily. He said as per the commitment of the Government, 85 per cent children could be brought under the coverage of primary immunisation by 1990.

The President mentioned

measures to reduce child mortality and health care of mothers and children and said as positive outcome of the programme, the child mortality rate has been brought down to 112 per thousand.

Welcoming the initiative of Save the Children Fund for new Children's Nutrition Unit, President Ershad said in a developing country it is not possible for the government alone to solve piled up problems overnight. He hoped that non-governmental organisations, both national and international, engaged in welfare-oriented activities would expand their activities to rural areas so that more people can get benefits out of their programme.

The President referred to the First and Second World Wars and said the whole world is now fearful as the ominous sign of a Third World War is looming large.

President Ershad said the cost involved in constructing a nuclear powered submarine, capable of carrying Trident missiles, can provide educational expense of one crore sixty lakh children in the developing countries. So, he said, we are faced with the question whether we will continue to proceed towards self-destruction or will ensure a peaceful, happy and prosperous future for the posterity.

He concluded his speech with a self-composed poem, dedicated to children. Later, the President formally laid the foundation stone of the new Children's Nutrition Unit of Save the Children's Fund.