

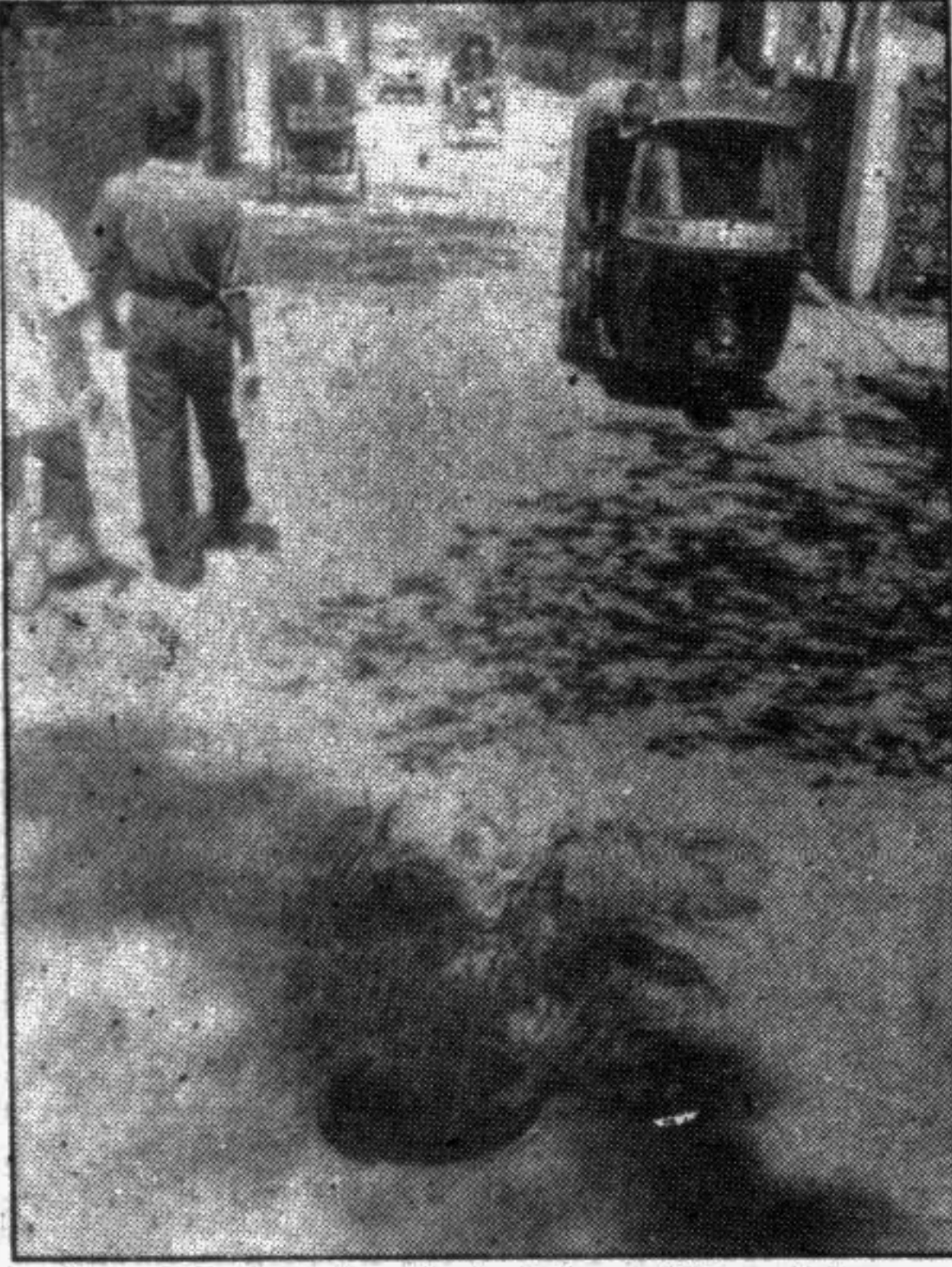
Dhaka Day by Day

More than Holes

by Neil Ray

Manhole is a queer word. It corresponds in terms of sound to molehill or more precisely molehole. Sure enough, a burrow is where a rat or a mole retreats after its nightly adventure. Manhole was never meant to be a retreating place for the national biped animal. Yet funnily, the word gives a meaning closer to that purpose than the one assigned to it to convey the entrance to a sewer. But no wonder, the endless rows of manholes dotting the different city streets and alleys most of the time keep yawning as if to gulp the people along with their vehicles.

Manholes have developed a character like any living being. The frequent changes in their appearance ably compete with human habit of changing their attire. The iron lid imprinted on which is the DCC mark, has a penchant for disappearing every now and then. During their absence a green twig with branches inserted in the open mouth fulfils its fondness for adorning itself in a crown. Sometimes some leaves will do and at other times a bamboo pole or stump will announce with a rude reminder of the absence of the manhole's face cover.



Crowning beauty of manhole. — Star photo

Some of the roads and lanes are famous for manholes. One such road is the Central Road and a typical lane is the one that intersects Indra Road to the west of Tejgaon College at one end at the other end the Green Road by the Green Super Market. This serpentine lane with endless turns and twists might be credited to have the maximum number of manholes in a given distance. Every ten feet a manhole shows up crowding the whole lane and giving the impression of a manhole's colony. The Central Road is not lagging far behind. But here the speciality is the road's pouting mouth. In the rainy season in particular the gurgling mouths go on the spree of splashing rain water mixed with muck.

Why do the manhole covers disappear unannounced and so frequently? Known-

geable sources inform that the iron covers are specially favourite with the drug addicts. The connection between drug taking and the disappearance of manholes looks somewhat remote. But given the desperation of the addicts, the connection is not difficult to establish. Short of money, the victims of drug find it convenient to lift the manhole covers for sale. Of course, a clandestine business network is at work. What happens is that the lifted covers ultimately find their way to the Dhaka City Corporation office. Most of the time therefore the lids only change hands — indeed several of them — in the process.

So the authority felt tempted to deal with the problem in a way that might stop the road pilferage. It came up with the novel idea of slab like concrete covers. In several roads the iron covers have been replaced by concrete ones. Such covers are no more a favourite with the thieves. But the problem with them is that whenever they are built, they protrude like hillocks — not just molehills — in the middle of the road. Most vehicles would, of necessity, try to avoid them. For the rickshaws in particular it is almost like crossing the Alps or the Himalayas. When the rickshaws suddenly try to skirt around such unexpected road obstacles, chances are that the speedier vehicles would hit them from behind.

On the other hand, where the contractors have thought it propitious to make the slabs less thick or just compromised with the construction materials, they just give in under the pressure of heavy vehicles. The manholes once again open up with their wide mouths in disrepair. Again they become the trap for man and the vehicles. The problem looks almost insoluble. Not least for the authority's own reluctance to deal with the criminal gangs and also the contact persons responsible for returning the manhole covers to where they originally came from.



Indian Finance Minister Dr Manmohan Singh (2nd from left) speaking at a meeting with the members of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) at a local hotel in the city yesterday. FBCCI president Mahbubur Rahman and Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman are on his left while Minister for Industries A M Zahiruddin Khan is seen on his right. (Story on page 1) — Star photo

Qatar assures support in development efforts

Emir of Qatar Sheikh Khalifa Bin Hamad Al-Thani has lauded Bangladesh's recent economic reforms and assured his country's total support in its development efforts, according to a message received here yesterday, reports UNB.

The commendation came when Bangladesh's new ambassador to Qatar Dr Iftekhar A Chowdhury presented his credentials to the Emir at his palace in Doha on Monday. The Emir appreciated the contribution of Bangladeshi community in the economy of Qatar.

The Ambassador said Bangladesh was ready to re-

ceive investment from Qatar and other friendly countries. In this regard, the Emir of Qatar reciprocated to the sentiment of Bangladesh.

Chowdhury conveyed the greetings of the President and Prime Minister of Bangladesh to the Emir. He also thanked the Emir for his remarks about Bangladesh's economic development and appreciated his leadership in Qatar's development.

The Emir urged the Ambassador to convey his greetings to the President and Prime Minister of Bangladesh.

Foreign Minister of Qatar Sheikh Hamad Bin Jasim Bin Jabor Al-Thani was present.

Manmohan calls on Mostafiz

Indian Finance Minister Dr Manmohan Singh called on Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman at his office yesterday, reports UNB.

Mostafizur said friendship between the two countries, based on close neighbouring relations, natural trust and meaningful economic cooperation, will lead to the mutual benefit of the people.

Weather

Moderate rain likely

Moderately heavy falls are likely at places over the regions of Chittagong, Noakhali, Barisal, Patuakhali and Khulna during the next 24 hours till 6 pm Wednesday, reports UNB.

Met office says temporary light to moderate rain or thundershower is likely at many places over Chittagong, Barisal and Khulna divisions, at a few places over Dhaka division and at one or two places over Rajshahi division.

Day temperature may fall by 1-2 degree Celsius during the period across the country.

Country's highest temperature 35.0 degree Celsius was recorded at Sylhet and the lowest 24.2 degrees at Kutubdia yesterday.

The sun sets today (Wednesday) at 6:49 pm and rises tomorrow (Thursday) at 5:20 am.

The maximum and minimum temperature and humidity of some major cities/towns recorded yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	9 am	6 pm
Dhaka	33.0	27.4	75	67
Chittagong	33.0	26.2	68	78
Rajshahi	32.0	26.2	86	75
Khulna	31.8	27.2	84	76

S M Ali's books to be published July 17

By Staff Correspondent

The University Press Limited (UPL) is expected to release on July 17 a book written by late S M Ali, country's leading journalist.

The book is entitled: Rainbow Over Padma. It is a political novel set against the grim economic and political situation in Bangladesh.

The book makes a case for the kind of development that can save a country like Bangladesh where development touches the lives of teeming millions in the country.

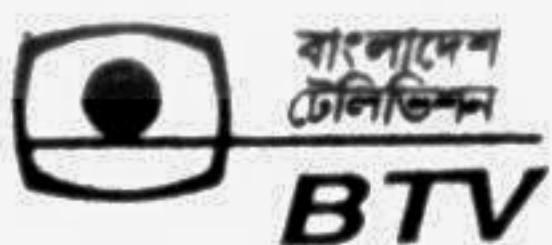
S M Ali died in October, 1993, and could barely finish the final draft of the book which he was hoping to publish in Bangladesh.

The UPL is also re-issuing his earlier book entitled: After the Dark Night — Problems of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The book is about post liberation Bangladesh when the country faced the challenges of re-construction and national unity.

In the book, based on S M Ali's personal research and extensive tour of Bangladesh, the author has attempted to examine the issues in Bangladesh rather than focus on personalities.

The book is also expected to be released on July 17.



Wednesday

- 4:30 Opening announcement
- 4:45 Al-Quran Programme summary
- 5:10 Sports programme
- 5:10 News in Bangla
- 5:25 Population programme: Agami
- 6:00 Musical programme: Unmesh
- 6:55 Open University
- 7:25 Tagore song
- 8:00 News in Bangla
- 8:40 Saragbad Parikrama
- 9:05 Film show: Equalizer
- 10:00 News in English
- 10:30 Magazine programme: Kathamala
- 11:30 Khabar/The News
- 2:00 Live telecast of World Cup semifinals

Physiotherapy degree course reopens

Every specialised institution should provide highest quality of specialised services and train up specialists. Health and Family Welfare Minister Chowdhury Kamal ibne Yusuf said here yesterday, reports UNB.

He was speaking as chief guest at the inaugural ceremony of the 'Re-opening of the physiotherapy degree course', introduced by the Rehabilitation Institute and Hospital for Disabled (RIHD).

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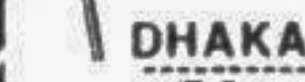
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Pakistan keen to expand trade with Bangladesh

The visiting adviser to the Prime Minister of Pakistan for Finance and Economic Affairs, V A Jafarey, called on Commerce Minister M. Shamsul Islam at the latter's secretariat office here yesterday, reports BSS.

Welcoming Jafarey, Commerce Minister said the existing good relations be-

tween the two friendly countries would help our government and our people to work closely to realise common objectives both in bilateral and multilateral arena.

Termining the present economic situation of Bangladesh satisfactory, the adviser said the government of Pakistan was keenly interested to ex-

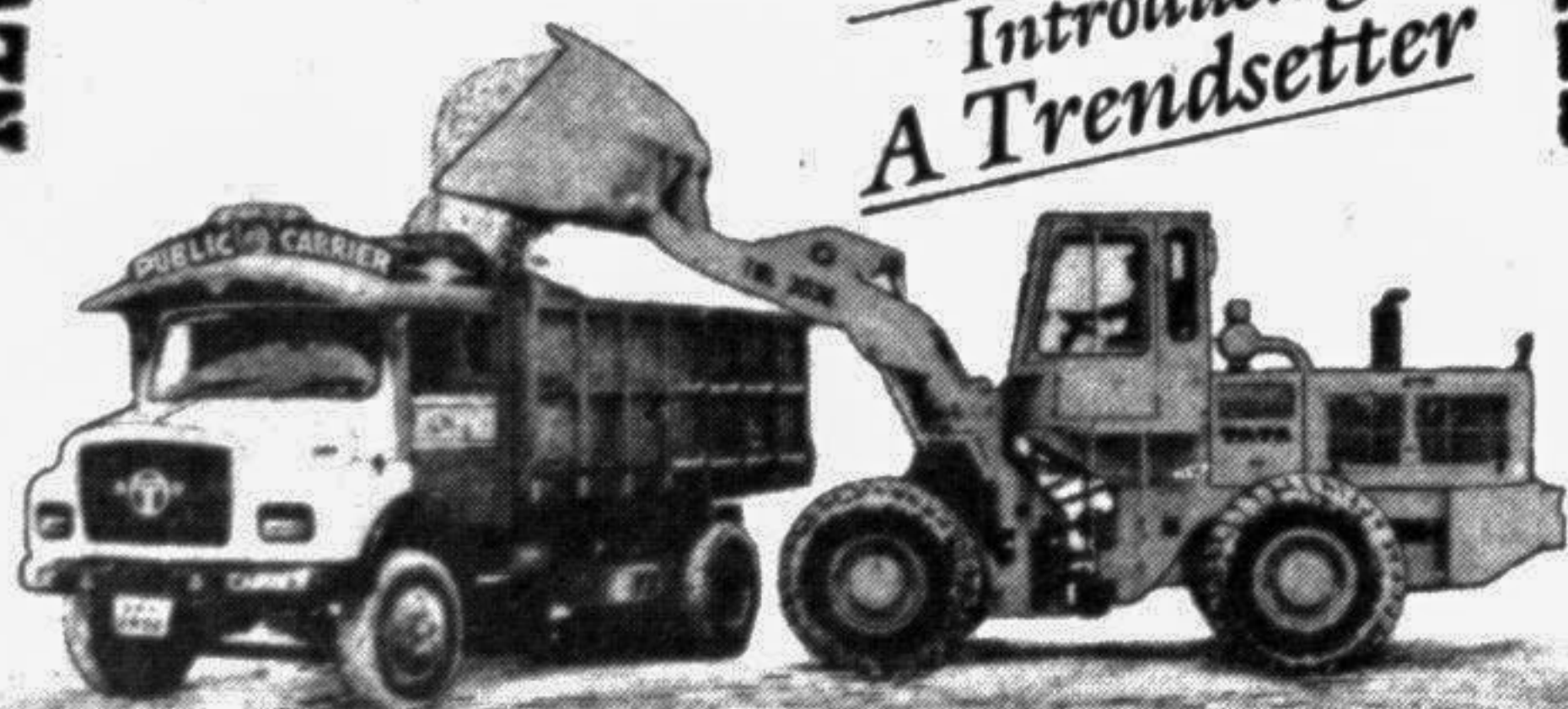
pand the volume of trade with Bangladesh.

Islam said the bilateral co-operation between the two countries would strengthen as the countries were pursuing liberal policies in different sectors. The 5th JEC meeting would help us to find out the possible area of cooperation, the minister hoped.

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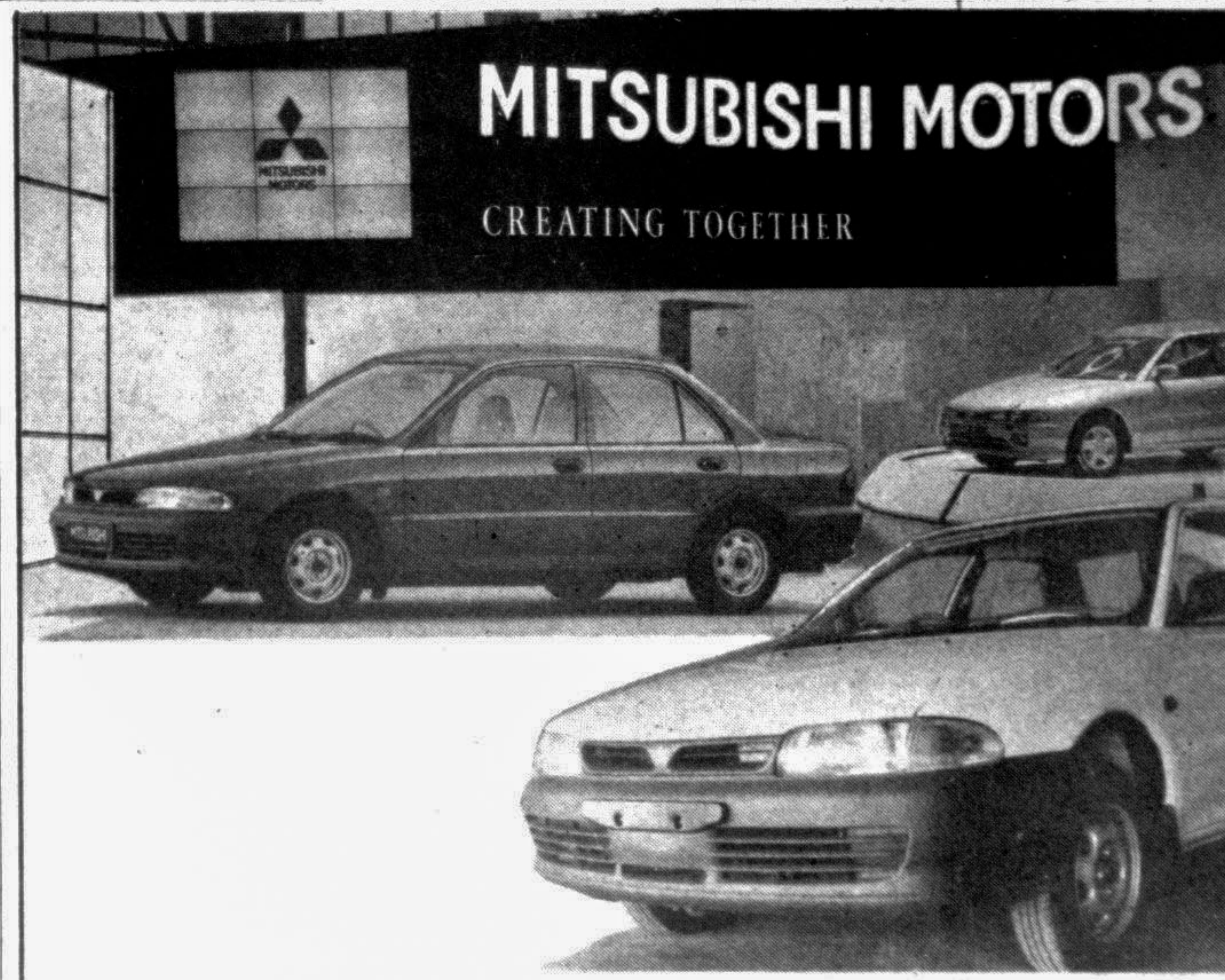


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