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Supplements

Today's issue of The Daily Star contains an eight-page supplement on the Republic Day of India - on Pages 9 to 16 - and another one-page supplement on Australia Day on Page 3

NEWS BRIEFS

Habibur Rahman made CJ

Justice Muhammad Habibur Rahman of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court has been appointed Chief Justice of Bangladesh. The appointment will come into effect from February 1 this year, an official announcement said last night. President Abdur Rahman Biswas has given the appointment under Article 15 (1) of the Constitution. Justice Rahman will succeed Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed, reports UNB.

Khaleda greets Rao, Keating

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday felicitated Indian Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao on the occasion of the Republic Day of India. In another message Begum Zia also greeted her Australian counterpart Paul Keating on the occasion of the National Day of Commonwealth of Australia, reports BSS.

One stabbed to death in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, Jan 25: One Monaf Hossain, 18, succumbed to stab injuries at the Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) in the early hours of today. Police and hospital sources said Monaf Hossain was stabbed by some of his associates yesterday at his Segun Bagan colony residence. Police arrested three persons in this connection, reports BSS.

Trade fair till Jan 29

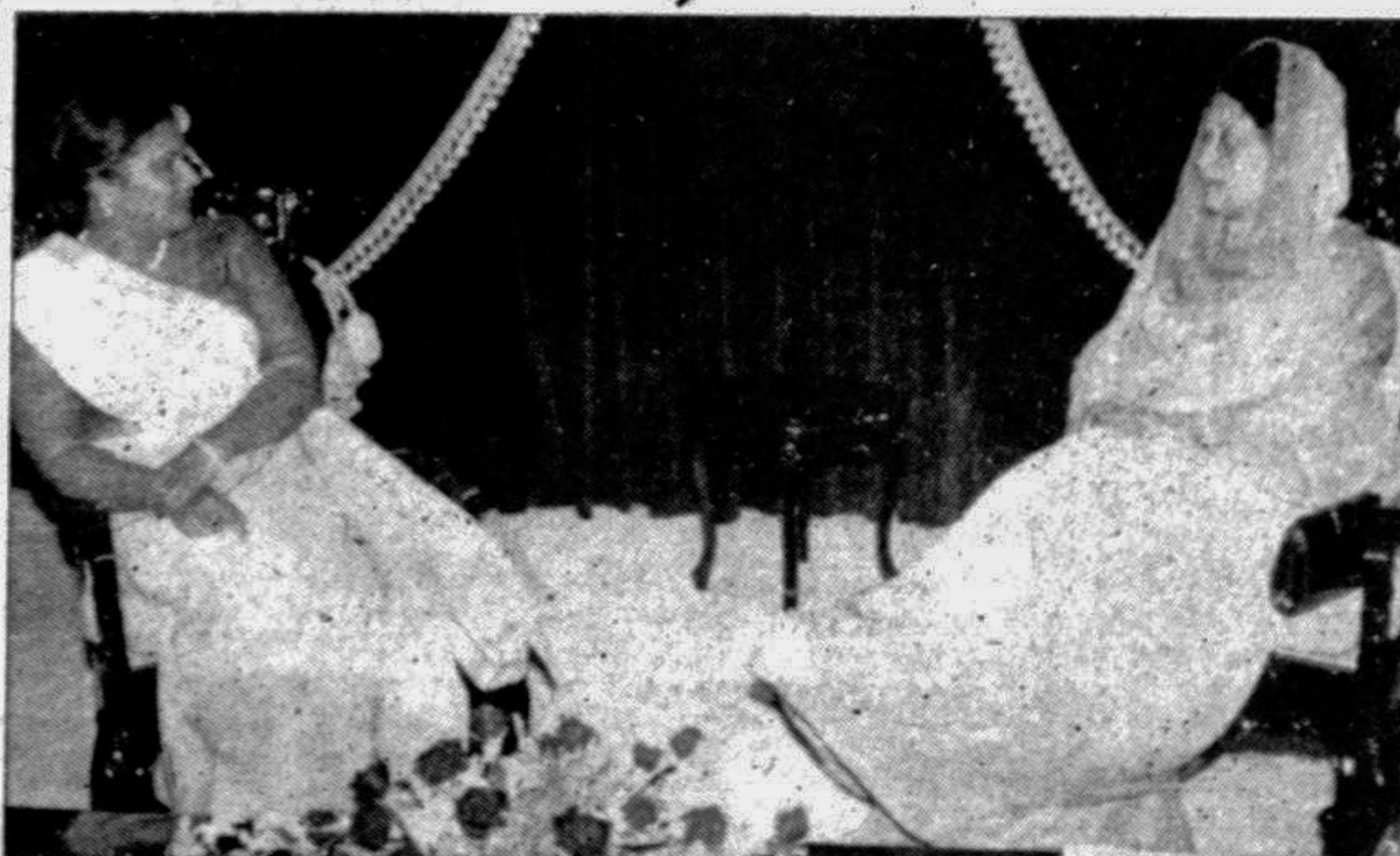
The tenure of the Dhaka International Trade Fair '95 has been extended up to January 29 in view of the great enthusiasm among the members of public, reports BSS.

Anti-terrorism rally

SAVAR, Jan 25: An anti-terrorism committee today held a rally at Savar bus stand demanding measures to curb terrorism in the area. Addressing the rally leaders of the committee alleged that a group of terrorists, led by Zayed Mostafa, were creating trouble in Savar thana demanding illegal tolls from the villagers and trying to capture their lands with fake deeds, reports UNB.

Khaleda, Chandrika hold 'cordial' talks

Dhaka, Colombo to expand trade, bilateral ties



Visiting SAARC Chairperson Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia (R) held talks with Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga yesterday at the Presidential Secretariat in Colombo. — AFP photo

'SAARC successes must be consolidated' 'SAARC members should redouble efforts'

COLOMBO, Jan 25: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, here today called for further strengthening amity and co-operation among the South Asian nations to achieve overall welfare of the people in the region, reports UNB.

"Peace, prosperity and development can only be ensured through mutual understanding and trust," the Prime Minister said at a banquet hosted in her honour by Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga.

Begum Zia, who is the current SAARC chairperson, said that Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman dreamt of a peaceful, stable and prosperous South Asia, and wanted to materialise his dream through the SAARC.

"Regional cooperation has assumed a great importance in

present-day world economy," she said.

On various regional economic blocs, working through mutual cooperation for their benefits, Begum Zia said that the SAARC was trying to establish relations with them.

The successes achieved so far by the regional forum must be consolidated, the SAARC chairperson said and called for preparing grounds for new initiatives before its next summit.

She sought advice of Sri Lanka to continue the activities of the seven-nation forum.

Referring to the Seventh SAARC Summit held in Dhaka, Begum Zia said it had taken vital decisions to alleviate poverty and expand trade in

COLOMBO, Jan 25: Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga has said, the SAARC member states should redouble their efforts to put into effect a phased programme of action, to make it an effective forum for the betterment of the people of this region, reports BSS.

Addressing the state banquet given by her to honour of Bangladesh Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at the Hilton Hotel here tonight she said that the well-being of the people of this region is a must as we move into the 21st century.

"I realise that this may take some time but after all Rome was not built in a day," said the Sri Lankan President.

Lauding the contribution of

the current SAARC Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia in promoting high ideals and aspirations to animate the seven-nation regional forum - SAARC - the Sri Lankan President said, "You have addressed the core issue of poverty alleviation and trade liberalisation with great vigour and dedication."

Extending a warm welcome to Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and the member of her entourage Chandrika said, relations between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka go back many centuries.

Besides the traditional political ties the peoples of the two countries share many other things in common.

The similarities in the day-

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Two-day international confce ends

Reforms must be sustained to attract investments

By Staff Correspondent

The two-day international investment conference concluded in the capital yesterday with a broad projection of the investment opportunities available in Bangladesh and a message to carry forward the ongoing economic reforms which have already produced good results.

"I am quite happy and satisfied at the outcome of the conference," said Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman at a press briefing on the outcome of the Bangladesh Investment Conference which began on Tuesday.

"The deliberations at the conference were of a high standard with the foreign delegates showing a keen depth of interest to review, assess and evaluate the investment opportunities in Bangladesh," he said.

Some 879 delegates, including 255 from 23 different countries, attended the conference, jointly organised by the Board of Investment (BOI) and Euromoney, a leading London-based financial journal.

It was sponsored by 20 local and foreign companies.

"The objective of the conference will be gradually realised in due course," said the finance minister while noting that the attendance of such a large number of foreign delegates in itself was a manifestation of the interest of the international investors."

Senior government policy-makers and leading private sector representatives of the country highlighted various aspects of the economic reform measures and the investment opportunities at the plenary sessions and workshops of the conference, the first such international meet to be held in Bangladesh.

The participants representing international companies, including UBS Securities (East Asia) Ltd, Smith New Court Far East Ltd, Global Emerging Markets, City Bank NA and Crosby Capital Markets (Asia) Ltd also made presentations on the Bangladesh economy and other related international financing issues.

Acknowledging the positive macro-economic fundamentals in the country, the foreign participants were upbeat about the country's potential to attract direct and indirect foreign investment, but pointed out that the ongoing reform measures must be continued to realise the potential.

Describing the conference as "extremely successful" at the concluding session, Richard Ensor, the managing director of Euromoney Publications, said: "My advice to the government is to move forward as fast as possible with the liberalisation programme, particularly privatisation and legal reform, to keep attracting foreign investment in a competitive environment."

Later, at the press briefing, the finance minister reassured the potential investors about the government's commitment to the reform programme to make the economy more outward oriented and investment friendly.

"Our commitment to reform

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Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman (2nd L) addressing a press conference at the conclusion of the two-day Euromoney Conference yesterday at the Sonargaon Hotel. BOI Executive Chairman Mokammel Haq (L), Special Envoy of the Prime Minister M Morshed Khan (2nd R) and Richard Ensor of Euromoney are also seen. — Star photo

Opposition calls 48-hr hartal from March 12

By Staff Correspondent

The mainstream opposition parties - the Awami League, the Jatiya Party and the Jamaat-e-Islami yesterday announced fresh agitation programme including a 48-hour hartal on March 12 and 13 throughout the country.

The three political parties announced their programmes at separate rallies in the city at the end of yesterday's dawn-to-dusk hartal to press the demands for dissolution of Parliament and general elections under a neutral caretaker government.

The Opposition will also stage demonstrations throughout the country on January 29 to protest police atrocities on opposition leaders and activists during Tuesday's hartal hours and on jute and textile mills workers during their 72-hour barricade programme.

During the month of February, the Opposition will continue mass contact programme and organise rallies and processions.

Awami League presidium

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Stray incidents mark day-long hartal

By Staff Correspondent

A dawn-to-dusk hartal across the country, called by the major opposition parties, passed off yesterday with stray incidents of bomb blasts, clashes and picketing disrupting normal life.

Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami called the hartal to press their demand for resignation of the government, dissolution of Parliament and early elections under a neutral caretaker government.

Hartal organisers said that their programme was observed in different areas of the country including Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Sylhet and Barisal.

Bus and train communications were disrupted during the hartal period as opposition activists put up barricades and detained trains and road transports at different places in the country.

About half a dozen domestic flights were delayed, according to Biman officials.

They said that a Dhaka-Calcutta flight was also de-

layed.

In the capital, normal life was affected during the shutdown which started from 6 am. Universities, schools and colleges, private offices, shops and marketplaces remained closed.

Except rickshaws, all sorts of vehicles remained off the streets of Dhaka since pickets demonstrated at different road intersections.

Banks and other financial institutions operated behind closed doors while attendance in government offices was poor.

During the shutdown, crude bombs exploded in different areas. Hartal supporters damaged many of the rickshaws that defied the hartal call.

Police arrested seven persons from Motijheel, Uttara and Sabdighat areas in connection with those.

Contingents of police were posted at important points in the city while para-military BDR patrolled the streets.

Awami League, Jubo Sang-

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Attack on motorcade Home Minister's statement in JS today

By Staff Correspondent

Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury will make a statement in the House today on the incident of bomb attack on the Prime Minister's motorcade Tuesday.

Drawing attention of the Deputy Speaker, Deputy Leader of the House Prof. Badruddoza Chowdhury said bombs were hurled on the

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Discussion on HC ruling on Speaker sought

By Staff Correspondent

Two treasury bench members yesterday submitted notices to Parliament saying that the recent ruling on the Speaker by the High Court has breached their privilege.

Ruling party MP Nurul Islam Monir and Abu Yusuf Mohammad Khalilur Rahman, in their separate notices, sought

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Test popularity in polls under interim govt, AL asks BNP

By Staff Correspondent

Awami League leaders yesterday said if the ruling BNP had respect for democracy, it should have gone for dissolution of Parliament after the mass resignation of Opposition MPs.

The AL leaders were addressing a rally at Bangabandhu Avenue in the city yesterday.

Presided over by city AL vice president Rezauddin Ahmed, the rally was addressed by, among others, party leaders Amir Hossain Amu, Mozaffar Hossain Paltu, Mantaz Hossain, Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin, Fazlur Rahman and Mozaffar Hossain Chowdhury Moysa.

Amir Hossain Amu said the

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'Good first step to boost investors' confidence'

By Anwarul Haq

The image of Bangladesh as a disaster-prone and aid-dependent country has been considerably erased with leading global and regional investors being exposed to first-hand information about the country's economic scenario.

Whatever be the immediate outcome of the just-concluded two-day Euromoney conference, the level of confidence has definitely improved, said leading foreign and local investors and diplomats while giving their instant reactions to The Daily Star yesterday.

Participants observed that the first line of action for generating investment has been completed. It now has to be supported by more follow-up actions like infrastructure building and creating an enabling atmosphere.

Cornelia Weirbach, Chief of the economic and commercial section of the US embassy said: "It was a very exciting conference. Everything was nicely presented. The foreign participants had a good idea of the

economic policies and prospects."

Mahbub Jamil, president of the Foreign Investors' Chamber of Commerce and Industry and MD of Singer Bangladesh, said: "I believe the participants used the opportunity for getting a firsthand assessment. This assessment, which is likely to be positive, will lead to investments. The conference has given tremendous exposure to Bangladesh, particularly to what it has done in the last three years."

Tim Glover of PBI Securities, based in the Netherlands, felt that Bangladesh still has some way to go before it can be seriously considered as a major market by foreign players.

"We look at Bangladesh in a different perspective having invested here. However we do feel that in the short term, it is not quite right to put more money into the share market due to liquidation problems, etc. But in the long term, we

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AL protests Morshed Khan's reported remark

By Staff Correspondent

The Awami League yesterday protested a reported remark by the Prime Minister's Special Envoy M Morshed Khan and said that party chief Sheikh Hasina was not invited to chair the closing session of the Bangladesh Investment Conference in the city.

A statement issued by Prof Abu Sayeed, information and research affairs secretary of the Awami League, said their

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High-level WB team due in March

A high-level World Bank mission will arrive here in March to resume lending to the country's power sector, reports UNB.

This was disclosed by the visiting World Bank Director of Asia Region-1, Paul Iserman, as he called on Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Dr Khondaker Mosharraf Hossain in the city yesterday.

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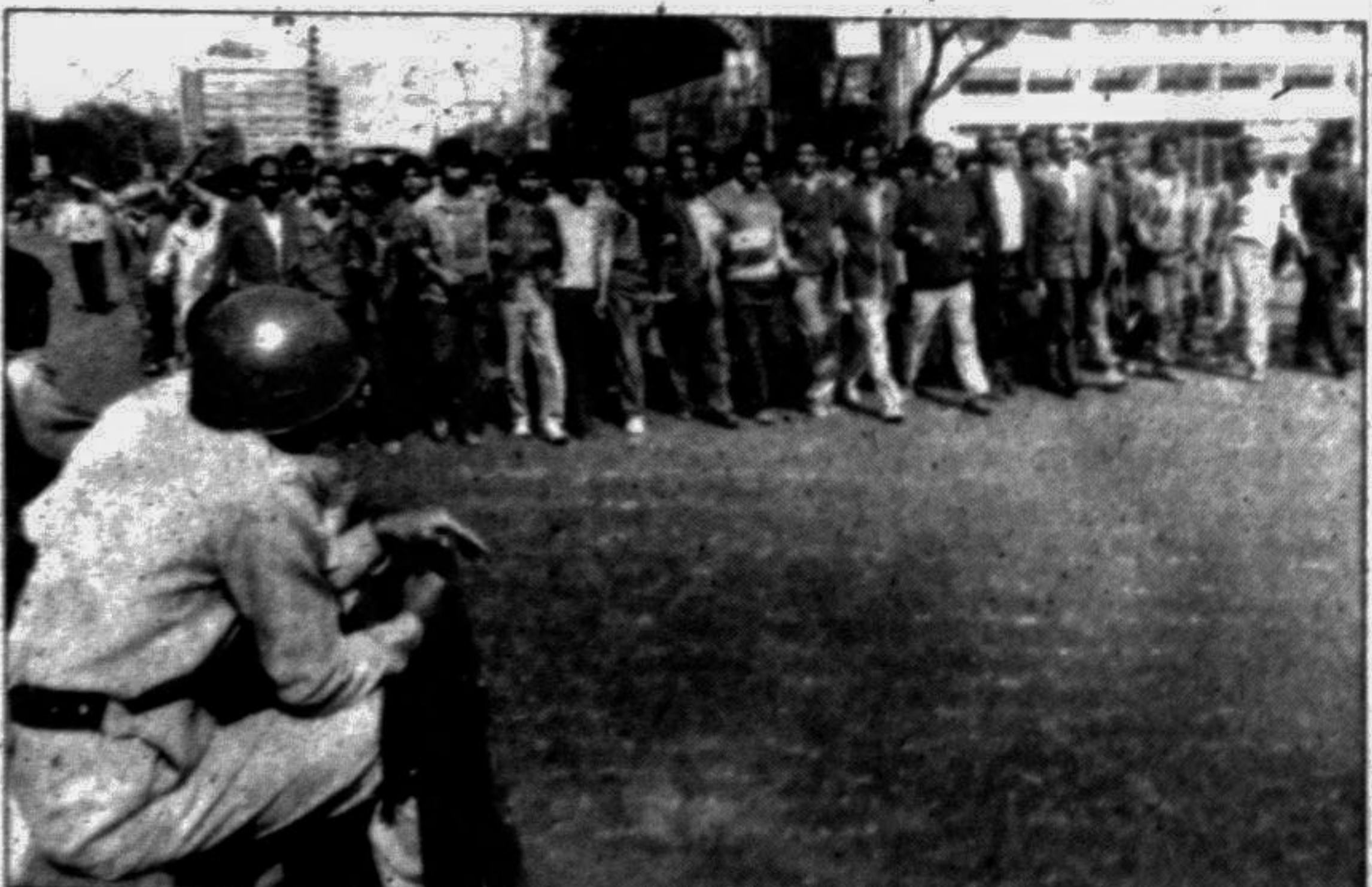
HC hearing on Opposition's appeal today

By Staff Correspondent

Applications filed by Opposition leaders for constituting a larger bench for hearing the writ petitions against the Speaker and three Opposition leaders regarding the en masse resignations of 147 MPs will come up for hearing today before a High Court division bench comprising Justice AM Mahmudur Rahman and Justice M Hamidul Haq.

Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina, Jatiya Party leader Moudud Ahmed, and Jamaat leader Matinur Rahman Nizami, all respondents named in the writ petition filed by one advocate Tawfik Hossain, have filed three applications before the bench praying for referring the writ to the Chief Justice to constitute a larger bench.

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An Awami League procession near the GPO during yesterday's day-long hartal. — Star photo