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# The Daily Star BUSINESS

DHAKA SUNDAY, MARCH 31, 1996



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CARS THAT MAKE SENSE

## Business briefs

**Lee seeks \$2 lakh in libel damages**  
SINGAPORE, Mar 30: Former Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew sought more than 300,000 Singapore dollars (214,285 US dollars) yesterday in libel damages from a US academic whose commentary in the International Herald Tribune (IHT) had already led to a 300,000-US-dollar payout. Lee 72, filed the personal suit against Christopher Lingle four months after three executives of the International Herald Tribune (IHT) agreed to pay him a total of 300,000 US dollars for publishing the contentious piece, reports AFP.

**Clinton signs stopgap funding bill**  
WASHINGTON, Mar 30: US President Bill Clinton signed a stopgap funding bill Friday only hours ahead of a deadline for another partial US government shutdown. The White House said Congress passed the temporary spending bill Friday the 12th in the current fiscal year that began October 1 as amid a continuing deadlock with lawmakers over a balanced budget plan. The bill authorises government funding to April 24 and replaces the current stopgap bill which was to run out at midnight (0500 GMT Saturday), reports AFP.

## Thailand, — 3rd largest investor in India

BANGKOK, Mar 30: Thailand emerged as the third largest investor in India in 1995, with investments worth 850 million US dollars, placing it behind only the United States and Israel, the local newspaper Bangkok Post reported today. Indian Ambassador to Thailand Ranjit Gupta was quoted by the newspaper as saying that interaction between India and Southeast Asia was limited until the break-up of the Soviet Union led to the collapse of India's traditional markets in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, reports Xinhua.

## Turkey halts beef imports from five European states

ISTANBUL, Turkey, Mar 30: Turkey announced Friday it had halted beef imports from five European countries, reports AP.  
The ban includes imports from Britain, Ireland, Portugal, France and Switzerland.  
The European Union already ordered Britain not to export its beef last week amid fears about new evidence possibly linking "mad cow" disease with a deadly human illness.  
The daily Cumhuriyet reported that Turkey imported 20 tons (22 short tons) of beef from Britain last year.

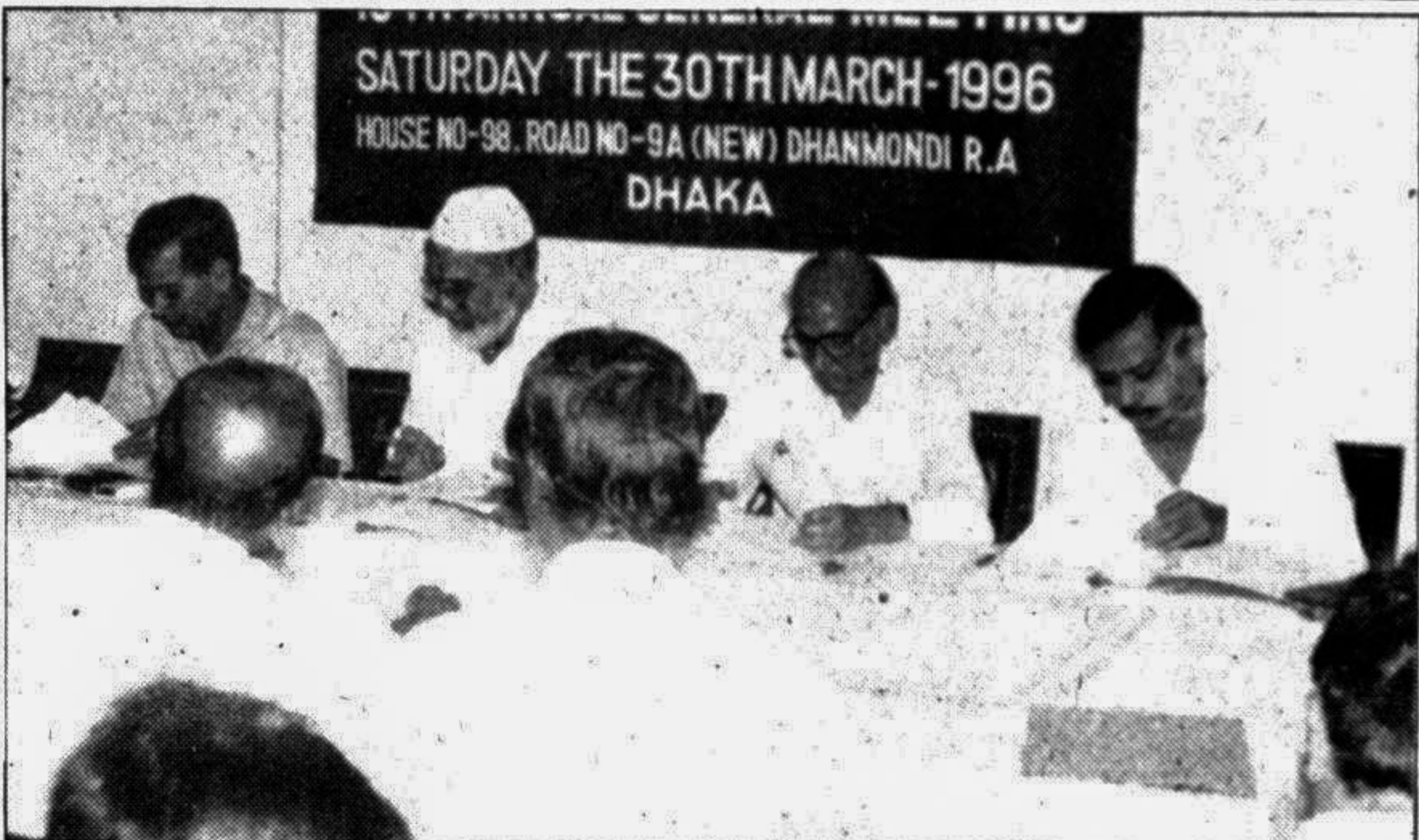
"We're here today because we are guilty by association," said Robert Watson of the Northern Ireland Meat Exporters Association, addressing the protest in the cavernous King's Hall in south Belfast.  
Veterinarians have detected 1,688 cases of the disease in Northern Ireland cattle, compared with an estimated 160,000 in Britain, since 1989.  
But the export ban imposed this week by the 15-nation European Union includes the British-ruled province, and Britain has refused to argue for an exemption because it would undermine its case for English and Scottish cattle.  
The threat to Northern Ireland's economy, which is disproportionately dependent on the beef trade, has united people normally divided by religious and political issues.  
US takes steps  
AP reports from Washington.

## EU may store 14 MT of British beef

BRUSSELS, Mar 30: European Union officials agreed yesterday to buy a tiny volume of British beef into EU stores despite the mad cow disease scare, in what appeared to be a symbolic gesture to Britain, reports Reuters.

## 'Ulster beef safe'

Another report from Belfast, Northern Ireland, says Rallying beneath banners of "Ulster Beef Is Safe!" 2,000 confused and angry cattle farmers on Friday demanded that Britain promote their beef as safe from "mad cow disease".



Muhammad Shams-ul Haque, Chairman and Managing Director of Jute Spinners Ltd, seen addressing the 16th Annual General Meeting of the company at its headquarters in the city yesterday. Muhammad Shams-ul Huda and Chowdhury Mahtabuddin, directors of the company, were also present. The company declared 10 per cent dividend at the meeting for the year ending June 30 '95.

## Tokyo to liquidate another bank

TOKYO, Mar 30: Japan's Ministry to Finance announced early Saturday a plan to liquidate Taiheyo Bank, a regional bank that holds 280 billion yen (2.61 billion dollars) in non-performing loans, reports AP.  
Tokyo-based Taiheyo is the latest casualty among Japanese financial institutions hit by the plunge in real estate prices in the early 1990s.  
Taiheyo's problems were widely known so its collapse is not likely to cause significant turmoil in the Japanese banking system.  
Taiheyo's depositors face no risk of losing their money, officials said.  
Last year, two major credit unions and Hyogo Bank, a regional bank, collapsed due to bad loans.  
Yoshimasa Nishimura, head of the Finance Ministry's banking bureau, said Taiheyo's operations — including its deposits and healthy loans — will be turned over to a new financial institution that will be set up later.

## \$200m WB loan to India

NEW DELHI, Mar 30: The World Bank yesterday announced a 200 million dollar loan aimed at upgrading India's poor infrastructure, cited by foreigners as a major deterrent to investment despite the sweeping market reforms of 1991, reports AFP.  
A World Bank statement faxed here Friday said the body would lend 200 million dollars with an Indian government guarantee to Infrastructure Leasing and Financial Services Ltd (IL and FS), a leading Indian financial firm.  
The bank will also extend of five-million-dollar credit line to the Indian government through its concessionary lending affiliate, the International Development Association, the statement said.  
"IL and FS is a 51 per cent privately-owned finance company with strong links to the public sector. It has broken new grounds in demonstrating the commercial viability of infrastructure projects in India," the World Bank's Joelle Chasard said.

## Emirates Skycargo wins first award in Asia Pacific

Emirates Skycargo has won its first award in the Asia-Pacific region, when readers of the regional trade publication, Car-gonevs Asia, voted the airline the Best Cargo Carrier to the Middle East, says a press release.  
The award is part of the annual Asian Freight Industry Awards organised by Car-gonevs Asia in recognition of outstanding performance in the cargo industry. Over 14,000 readers of Car-gonevs Asia were polled.  
Ong Kok Wah, Vice President of the Singapore National Shippers Association, presented the award to Emirates at a luncheon ceremony held on March 25 at the Hyatt Regency Singapore. Noryate binte Abdul Rahman, Emirates Cargo Manager Singapore, received the award on behalf of the airline. Gilbert Chia, Emirates' Station Manager, Singapore, was also present among the estimated 50 guests, all of whom were cargo industry professionals from across the world.

Ram Menon, Emirates Senior General Manager Cargo said: "Emirates is indeed very proud to have gained the recognition of our customers in the Asia-Pacific region who have voted us as the Best Cargo Carrier to the Middle East. We are very grateful for the support of the cargo industry, which has helped Emirates Skycargo achieve 17 per cent increase, year to date, in cargo revenues out of the Far East."  
Martin Savery, Publisher of Car-gonevs Asia, said: "Emirates has convincingly scored in all service categories to emerge a leading cargo carrier for reliability, efficiency and top quality service between Asia and the Middle East."  
"The region has certainly gained from Emirates connections into the Gulf and Middle East, with which trade links are expanding and demand for cargo space will continue to rise."

## G-7 ministers seek to protect workers

LILLE, France, Mar 30: Ministers of the leading seven industrialised countries are to consider what can be done to protect working people in the face of global free market forces when they meet in northern France Monday and Tuesday, reports AFP.  
The host government is hoping for progress towards acceptance of some minimum international standards to protect jobs and working conditions, in line with president Jacques Chirac's call for the European Union to establish a "social model."  
Chirac will be addressing the meeting of ministers of the Group of Seven (G7) countries (Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States) in Lille.

## Jakarta unlikely to import rice in '96-97 fiscal

JAKARTA, Mar 30: The Indonesian government is not expected to import rice in the next fiscal year beginning April 1996, a senior official has said, reports AFP.  
National Logistics Agency Chairman Beddu Amang said in Sgarang, Central Java, that "hopefully there will be no rice import contracts for the 1996-97 fiscal year," the Bhis Indonesia Daily quoted him saying.  
Amang said current rice stock "is at a safe level, adding that the March to May harvest should bring Indonesia's rice stock to four million tonnes."  
In January, Amang said here that rice imports for the first half of the 1995-96 fiscal year were worth 239.7 million dollars, the highest level in over a decade. Imports were needed because of bad weather and problems with fertilizer distribution.  
In December last year, Agriculture Minister Syarifudin Baharsyah estimated 1996 unhusked rice production would reach 50.4 million tonnes, a four per cent increase over 1995.  
Rice is the staple food of Indonesia's 195 million people.

## Wolfensohn complains of cynicism within bank

WASHINGTON, Mar 30: President James D Wolfensohn of the World Bank has complained of cynicism and distrust among its 6,500 staff, who lend about 20 billion dollars a year in the biggest international undertaking to cut poverty in poor countries, reports AP.  
He spoke on March 12 to about 300 senior managers at the bank's Washington headquarters. First disclosed by the London "Financial Times," the text was made available Friday by Wolfensohn's staff.  
A survey showed, he said that 40 per cent of the staff do not trust the management.  
"Since I came in here I have been astonished — astonished — at the individual performance, but the lack of interpersonal generosity," he said, "astonished about the lack of a team, a sense of team."  
Wolfensohn, 62, was a member of Australia's fencing team in the 1956 Olympics before coming to the United States, becoming an American and making a fortune as an investment banker. He took over the World Bank job last June.

"There is a need, somehow, to break through this glass wall, this unseen glass wall," he said, "to get enthusiasm, change and commitment."  
He wants more emphasis on the results of loans than on number of loans made.  
"I Singh, the bank's top economist on former communist-ruled areas, agreed with Wolfensohn."  
"What we really have right now is a culture of approval," he said, "a culture of fear, a culture of closeness, a culture where people don't talk to each other, where they don't express their opinions forthrightly."

## National

## Low voltage, heavy loadshedding Industries in N-dists incurring loss of Tk 50 lakh everyday

RAJSHAHI, Mar 30: Frequent loadshedding and low voltage of electricity have alarmingly started to affect production in the industries especially the small and cottage industries in 16 northern districts of the country.  
The industries are incurring taka more than half a crore a day solely due to electricity crisis, sources say.  
The sources said, at least 35 megawatt electricity is required to meet power demand of 24 hours in Rajshahi circle. But the actual supply has been decreased to only 12-13 megawatt a day during last one month. To overcome the crisis, electricity supply is interrupted every now and then, except in the three large industries, Rajshahi Jute Mills, Textile Mills and Sugar Mills, all small and middle sized and cottage industries which re-

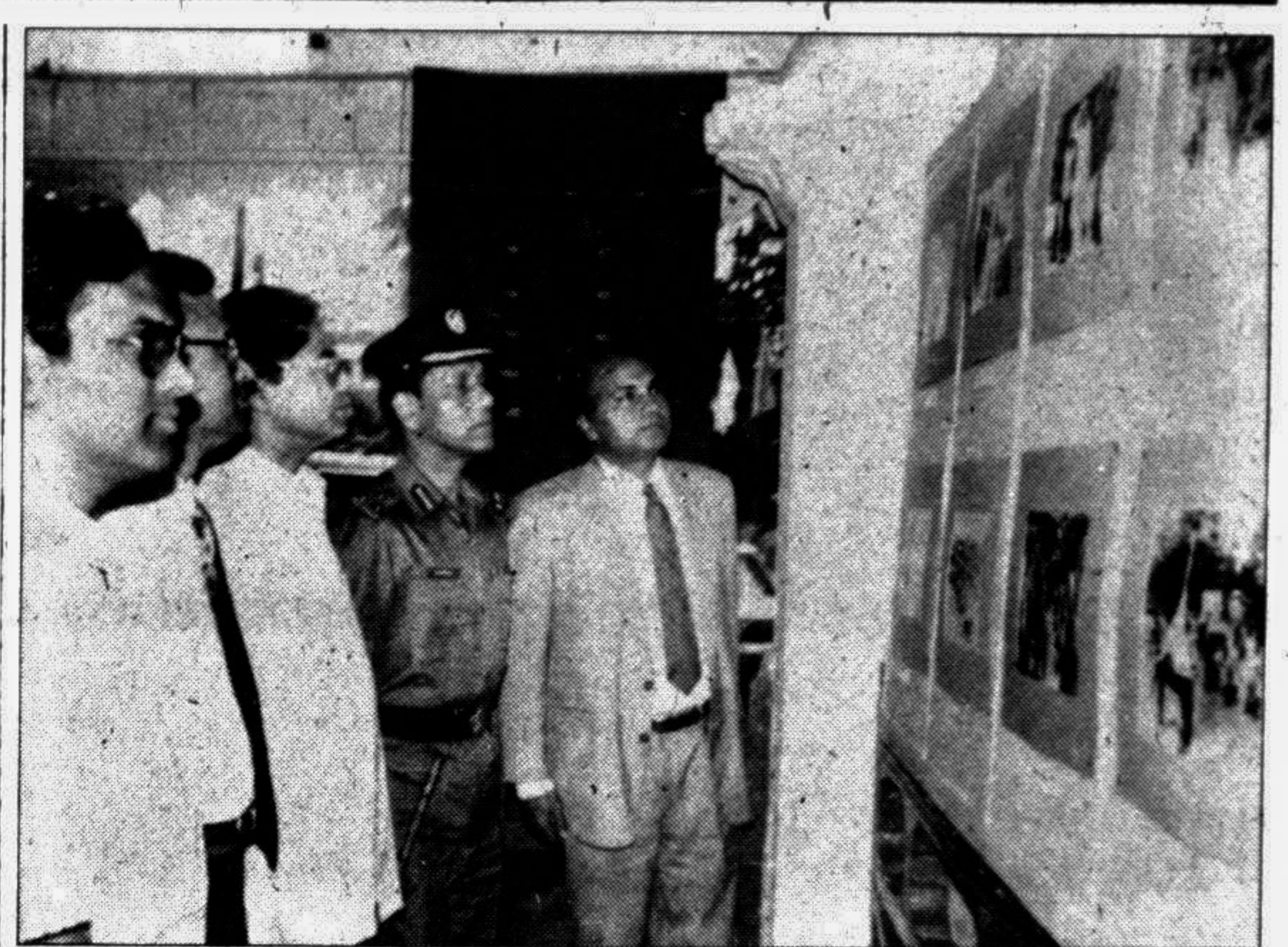
main closed five to seven times a day for an average period of 30 minutes each time.  
It may be mentioned here that 99 per cent of industries in the northern region use electricity and only one per cent consume gas and furnace oil as fuel.  
Mohammad Mustaq Hossain Lablu, Rajshahi unit President of National Association of Small and Cottage Industries, Bangladesh (NASIB) informed that the owners of small industries of Rajshahi had been suffering a loss of about Taka 5 lakh everyday for frequent loadshedding and low voltage of electricity supply. Situation are almost the same in other districts of Rajshahi Division, he said.  
A statistics of Rajshahi Chamber of Commerce and Industries shows that problem of loadshedding and low voltage

have been a regular feature every year, especially, between the period of February and June. According to the statistics, electricity supply to Rajshahi region remains closed for 165 days every year on average. This deficit of electricity causes incredible loss to the industry owners. As many as 160 small and middle sized factories have already been closed in Rajshahi region.  
Lablu, demanded regular and normal electricity supply to Rajshahi region and urged the concerned authority to establish a separate feeder line for ensuring regular and uninterrupted electricity supply to the small and cottage industries in BSCIC estate at Sapura in the city. He said that the facility of separate feeder line had already been introduced in many other districts of the country but the Power Devel-

opment Board authorities reportedly paid no attention to their repeated requests.  
An official of PDB, Rajshahi Circle, unwilling to be named, acknowledged the crisis of loadshedding and low voltage and said that the distribution of electricity was controlled by the central authorities. So they had no control but to shed loads to meet demands of all quarters by supplying smaller amount of electricity.  
About the separate feeder line for the BSCIC estate in Rajshahi, he said, that was also a matter of the higher authorities' decision. However, this could be managed as it would bring a lot of revenue income, he said.  
Problem of frequent loadshedding and low voltage are also creating hazards in the hospitals and clinics as well as sufferings for the city dwellers.

## Brighter side of non-cooperation programme

From Our Correspondent  
NATORE, Mar 30: Opposition political parties' non-cooperation programme has already done at least one good thing: Most of the smokers of the town say they have stopped their habit of smoking because of sudden price-hike of cigarettes and bidis.  
A good number of youngsters who were addicted to the cigarettes, which contain poisonous 'nicotine', have begun to realise that life was still precious and money was not to be wasted by extravagance.  
Talking to The Daily Star, Yakub Khan, a collage student of the town said, he used to have five or six cigarettes a day. With the price-rise of cigarettes, he was trying to give up his habit of smoking.  
Shahin, another collage student said, "It is clear to me that smoking is nothing but waste of money." But Shahin has started to take bidis instead of taking cigarette to save money.



SYLHET: Divisional Commissioner and DIG of Sylhet among the visitors seen at a photo exhibition at Osmani Museum arranged in observance of the Independence Day. — Star photo

## From greater Rajshahi region Mango production likely to fall by 20 pc due to "off year"

From M A Ali Himu (Back from C'Nawabganj)  
When contacted, Dr Md Abdul Jalil Bhuiyan, Senior Scientific Officer of Mango Research Centre told The Daily Star that most of the mango trees have the habit of alternate bearing. He pointed out that if a mango tree gives maximum fruits in one year, there may be much lesser quantity of fruits or not at all in the same tree in the following year. The year with less mango production is called 'off year' of mango, he added.  
Md Sharif Uddin, Assistant Information Officer of Agricultural Information Service, Rajshahi told this correspondent that as this region observed a bumper mango production last year, the production may fall during the current year. Sharif also informed that unfavourable weather may also add to the expected poor production.  
Scientists of Mango Research Centre at Chapainawabganj told this correspondent that mango growers of this re-

gion do not apply fertilizer in their orchards. As a result, lack of nutrient, bad soil and crop management, dearth of moisture in the soil help the attack of insects, pests or diseases, resulting in less production of mango.  
Dr Jalil Bhuiyan, a scientist informed that most of mango production are affected by insects and diseases. According to him, there are 41 types of pests affecting the delicious fruit. Among them, mango hopper (best known in Bengali as 'pata o fiter shoshak pokzi'), mango psyllids, weevils, bicha poka, and shoot weevils are mentionable. Among the diseases, anthracnose, powdery mildew, sooty mould and die-back are main.  
Mango growers of this region told this correspondent that unprecedented flood and heavy rainfall during last September and October, dense fog and cloudy weather in last January-February and rainfall during mid February have af-

fecting the flowering of mango trees.  
One Shahidul of Chapainawabganj sadar thana, an owner of a mango orchard told this correspondent that if storms do not affect the trees during coming March-April month, he can escape the apprehended loss this year. He added that storms affect the fruit adversely and the immature small fruits fall off the branches.  
Scientists of Mango Research Centre informed The Daily Star that mango three timber are being widely used as fuel in the brick fields affecting the mango cultivation badly in the region. They said, over two hundred varieties of mango are found around the region.  
The research centre, however, is trying to overcome the problem of 'alternate bearing' of the fruit as well as to develop the quality of mango.

## Return trip could not be confirmed Thousands of Biman passengers remain stranded in Sylhet Div

From Staff Correspondent  
SYLHET, Mar 30: Thousands of people from the Sylhet Division who live abroad and now in the country have been facing trouble for ensuring their return trip, due to the non-cooperation programme for weeks. Most of them are now stranded in the country.  
While talking to this correspondent, many of them said, they are worried enough as they will suffer badly because validity of visas would expire and scheduled date of flights of many are also being expired. Besides, other complexities regarding immigration would also arise in cases of many, they informed.  
The Biman flights from Sylhet are operating in full, said an official of Biman. But, booking confirmation and reconfirmation of return tickets in the local office of Biman remained almost closed since the non-cooperation programme began. But, a section of Biman officials and employees were doing the job asking extra money from the passen-

gers, it is alleged. Though the main gate of the Biman office here is seen under lock and key, some employees manage the works inside the office building at Zindabazar, it is alleged. However, the district Liaison Committee of three opposition parties exempted the Biman office from the non-cooperation programme for three hours from 2 pm to 5 pm every day.  
It may be stated here that many people from all the four districts of Sylhet Division had been in different countries like UK, USA, Middle East and other nations. A good number of these people visit the country during the period from November to April every year.  
Nuruddin Ahmed of village Mathura of Beanbazar thana live in the UK along with his family. Ahmed's family came in the country in last week of February for three weeks. I visited four days to the Biman office for reconfirmation of tickets, but failed to get my work done," he said, adding 1

should be reaching UK as soon as possible, otherwise, his business would incur a heavy loss. Nuruddin was talking to this correspondent on Saturday, March 23 in the premises of Biman office. Abdur Rahman of Jagannathpur thana of Sunamganj district informed that, he failed to contact anybody for reconfirmation of his return ticket to Saudi Arabia even after trying for two days. He was worried enough as the validity of his visa was about to expire.  
Same was the story of many others. A handful number of people, however, managed to get their job done through backdoor. Awlad Ali of Biswanath thana managed to get his ticket reconfirmed recently by paying Taka 1,300 A travel agent of Sylhet town on condition of anonymity informed that, he had to spend Taka 1,600 for reconfirming a ticket of one of his clients, though there is no fee needed for the purpose.  
However, an official of the

district office of Biman, denied such allegations, adding the office works have been hampered greatly due to the non-cooperation programme. But works of many returning passengers were done smoothly.  
Besides, the passengers had been suffering a lot in reaching the town and the airport from the remote villages in different thanas. However, a small number of microbuses babytaxis and tempos started plying in an around the Sylhet town hoisting red flags. These commercial vehicles were realising fares according to their will from the passengers especially from the Biman passengers.  
The passengers coming from abroad are also suffering extremely as their baggages and luggages are not reaching Sylhet on time. Since the non-cooperation began, no cargo van of Biman reached Sylhet from Zia International Airport. Huge goods had been stockpiled there, said a Biman official.