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## Launch crash programmes to increase power generation; PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked for launching crash programmes for increasing power generation to meet the growing demand, reports UNB.

"Economic progress cannot be ensured without increased power supply," she said while presiding over a high-level meeting of energy and power ministry at her office.

After the upazila election, massive economic activities will be started at upazila levels, she said and asked the officials to set up area-based small power plants.

The prime minister suggested that small power units like 10 to 20 megawatt plants be

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## Dhaka condemns Serbian 'reign of terror'

Bangladesh yesterday strongly condemned the Serbian leadership for unleashing a 'reign of terror' on the unarmed ethnic Albanian civilians in Kosovo, reports BSS.

Referring to the crisis in Kosovo, Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad told BSS that "Bangladesh earnestly hoped that the negotiations would provide a basis for a peaceful solution to the crisis in Kosovo."

The foreign minister said it is regrettable that the diplomatic efforts were not allowed to succeed due to the intransigent attitude adopted by the Serbian leaders.

He noted that the Serb authorities opted for "systematic brutal repression on the Ethnic Albanian population of Kosovo by Serbian paramilitary and police forces."

Narrating Bangladesh's efforts for "concerted international endeavours" to resolve the crisis in Kosovo, the foreign minister said "Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has announced a token donation of US dollars 50,000 to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for its programmes in Kosovo."

He said Bangladesh had already urged immediate and concerted international actions for ensuring protection, shelter, food and medical assistance for the refugees of that area.

## Jubo League leader shot dead in Khulna

From Staff Correspondent  
KHULNA, Apr 7: A local Jubo League leader was shot dead by three unidentified assailants near a tea stall at Daulatpur thana here at 4:15 pm today.

Bikash Barhoi, a Daulatpur thana Jubo League leader, was rushed to the KMCH with bullet wounds where doctors declared him dead.

The assailants shot Bikash from a point-blank range, witnesses said.

The killing was a sequel to intra-party rivalry, police said. He was an accused in two murder cases, one at Daulatpur thana and another at Kaleshpur, police added.

## Nor'wester kills 6 in Dinajpur, Lalmonirhat

DINAJPUR, Apr 7: At least six people were killed and over 100 injured as nor'wester accompanied by hailstorm swept northern districts of Dinajpur and Lalmonirhat last night, reports UNB.

Officials said five people died in house collapse and lightning in Parbatipur thana as hailstorm pounded the area. It followed a welcome shower after a long dry spell.

The dead were identified as Solaiman, 55, of Jahanabad, Samad, 50, of Chandoa, Rahim 42, of Baniapara, Kasimuddin 48, of Pikepara and Jalal, 30, of Madhyapara.

Parbatipur power station was affected seriously and electric wires snapped in the one-and-a-half-hour storm that started lashing at about 10 pm.

Tins and roofs of over 1,000 thatched houses, educational institutions and mosques were blown off, crops of a vast tract of land damaged and huge number of trees grounded during the nature's fury.

Thana Nirbahi Officer visited different places of the nor'wester-hit Parbatipur today and assured the victims of emergency relief.

In Lalmonirhat, thunderbolt struck a man to death as the tropical storm lashed the district, wrecking nearly 500 thatched houses.

Identity of the victim, hailed from Kulaghat union, was not known immediately.

## Plea to transfer 3 share scam cases rejected

Star Report  
A Metropolitan Sessions Court yesterday rejected the transfer application by three companies accused in the 1996 share market scam.

The three companies — Beximco Pharmaceuticals, Shinepukur Holdings and Doha Securities — filed applications on March 11 for transfer of the cases from the Court of Third Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge to the court of Mia Mohammad Sharif, the Second Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge, who had earlier

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## Opposition walks out as SSF man enters main JS chamber

By Staff Correspondent  
In an unusual incident yesterday, a member of the Special Security Force (SSF) allegedly entered into the main chamber of the Jatiya Sangsad when the session was going on, triggering angry protests from the opposition benches.

Opposition members burst into anger and then staged a noisy walkout protesting "illegal intrusion of an armed outsider" in the House.

The incident later sparked off a stormy debate in the House with the Opposition bench demanding punishment to the trespasser and the Treasury bench denying the occurrence.

Deputy Speaker Abdul Hamid, who was chairing the session at that time, said he did not see any outsider in the House. Speaker Humayun

Rashid Chowdhury, who replaced Hamid later, assured the Opposition that he would investigate into the matter and take appropriate steps.

The SSF member walked up to the chair of the House Chief Whip Abdul Hasnat Abdullah and whispered something to him while the House was having discussions on a bill on the Islamic University at 6:13pm.

It was BNP MP Major (retd) Hafizuddin Ahmed who first reacted to the presence of the man. "How can an armed outsider get into the House?" he asked Deputy Speaker Abdul Hamid.

Fellow party MPs promptly joined him and started shouting, forcing the SSF official to leave the House in the quickest

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## Bus service No consensus on fare

From Shehab Ahmed  
CALCUTTA, Apr 7: Officials of Bangladesh and India held more than six hours of talks today to negotiate the fare of passenger bus service between Dhaka and Calcutta, which they are hoping to run from next week to coincide with the Rabindra-Nazrul Jayanti.

Meeting sources said they failed to arrive at a consensus on the fare. Bangladesh proposed it should be between 20-22 US dollars both way as against the Indian proposal for 40 dollars.

Their proposed fare is too high," a Bangladeshi official said after the meeting which was also joined by representatives of Bangladeshi bus and truck owners association.

But the private sector is yet to gain a toe hold on the lucrative sector. At least 2500 passengers every month use Emperor Sher Shah's grand trunk road, which stretched from Dhaka to Peshawar, to visit the two cities.

The travellers these days are mainly students, patients, businessmen and tourists.

The private sector would be able to run its services after the state-owned bus companies of Bangladesh and West Bengal complete the first phase of the service on a trial basis for some time while officials in Dhaka and Delhi finally prepare necessary documents for ratification by the respective governments, sources said.

Nur Mohammad Akhonda, a Bangladeshi official told newsmen at Calcutta Press Club

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Witnesses said the severe storm with gusty wind, which lasted about half an hour, caused disruption of road communication.

The meeting will resume this morning at the same venue, 29 Minto Road.

Sources close to the meeting said the leaders debated the prospect of anti-government agitation, including *gherao* and hartal.

Anyhow a programme may be finalised in today's meeting for simultaneous announcement in separate rallies by the allies, sources added.

BNP will hold the rally at Paltan Maidan, Jatiya Party in front of its central office at Kalabagan and Jamaat-e-Islami at Muktangan in the afternoon.

The 120-minute meeting, presided over by Shamsul Islam of BNP, was attended, among others, by Kazi Zafar Ahmed of Jatiya Party, Mohammad Quamaruzzaman of Jamaat-e-Islami and ARM Abdul Matin.

## Liaison body may finalise programme today

The liaison committee of the opposition alliance discussed the next course of action but could not finalise the programme, reports UNB.

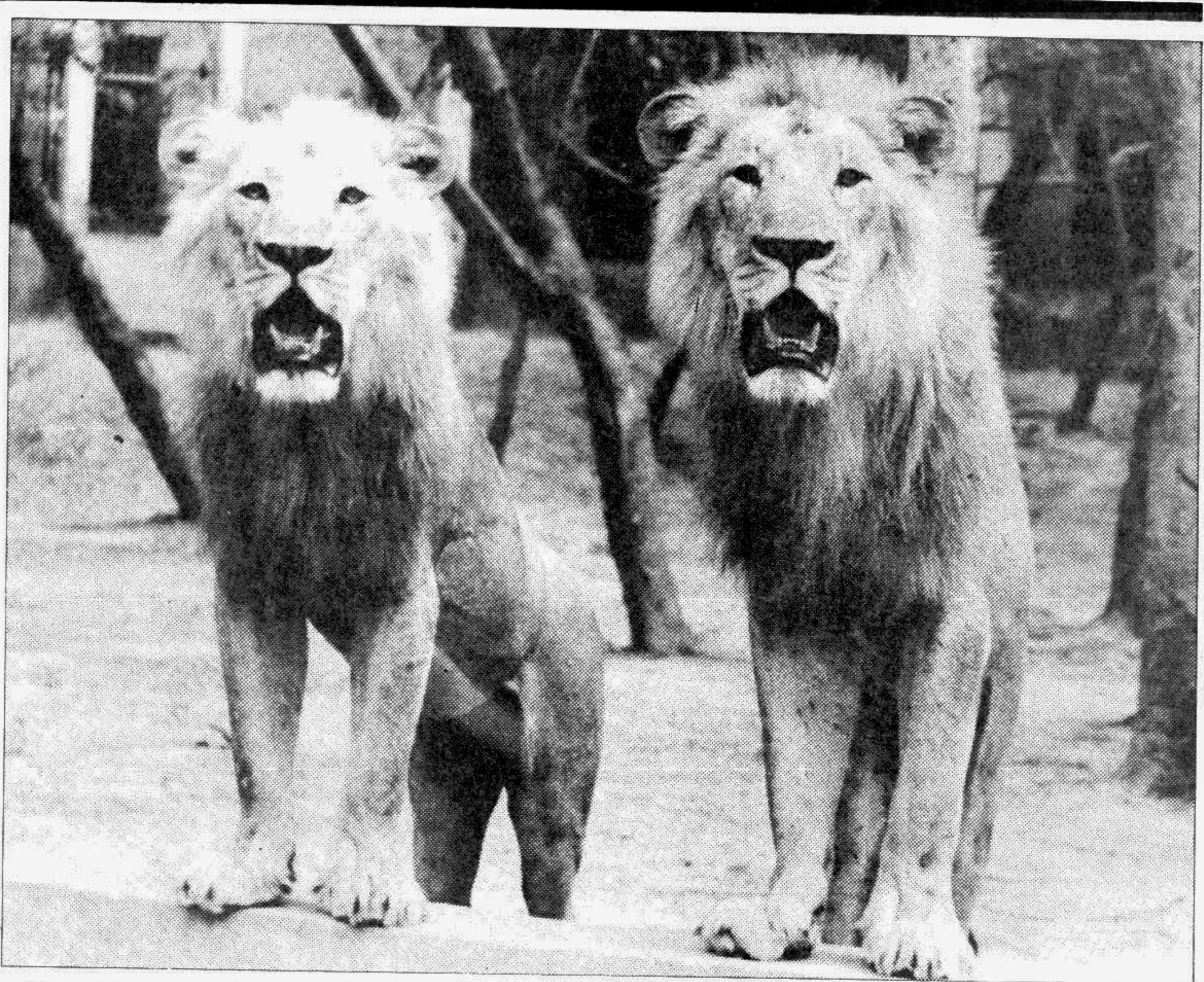
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The bite of the prevailing drought and heat force two lions at the Dhaka Zoo stand on their hind legs and gasp for water. Of Indian origin, both lions stood on the safety wall of their enclosure and looked on at the few visitors. The picture was taken yesterday at around noon.

## JS tidbits

By Nazmul Ashraf  
BNP lawmaker Shahidul Islam yesterday brought in the House a packet containing some specimen of soil from his constituency — Maheshpur in Jhenaidah district.

He showed Deputy Speaker Abdul Hamid the small packet and said that nowadays the soil from his area was being smuggled to India.

"A truckload of soil sells at Tk one lakh. Why is the soil so costly? I am sure, something expensive is made of this soil," he said and offered the Chair his packet of soil to have a test.

"You can send it to me provided it is not a bomb," the Deputy Speaker joked.

Speaker Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury yesterday announced that he would be generous to the opposition lawmakers. Chowdhury was in the chair for the first time since he

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## JS session prorogued PM sees no logic behind walkout

By Staff Correspondent  
The 12th session of the Seventh Jatiya Sangsad ended last night endorsing a thanks-giving resolution on the Presidential address but it saw walkout twice by opposition BNP lawmakers during the day's sitting.

Before the Chair read out the prorogation order from the president at 10:55 last night, Prime Minister and Leader of the House Sheikh Hasina castigated the BNP for "staging walkout every now and then". She spoke for an hour as the last person to discuss President Shahabuddin Ahmed's address in the parliament.

Earlier, BNP legislators, led by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, staged a walkout for the second time

during the day's sitting, protesting what they said curtailment of their scope to speak on the Presidential address.

The JS Business Advisory Committee (BAC) had earlier decided for a detailed discussion on the Presidential address. But at its meeting last night, it decided for prorogation.

Though a previous BAC meeting had allocated 20 hours for the lawmakers to discuss the Presidential address, there were nine hours' discussion till April 6.

As the Speaker turned down a plea from Badruddoza Chowdhury, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, to continue the session for two more days to

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## Opposition's 'Demonstration Day' today

By Staff Correspondent  
The BNP-led opposition alliance will observe "Demonstration Day" today protesting various issues including deterioration of law and order and price hike of essentials.

BNP, Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami and Islamic Oikyo Jote (IOJ) will hold rallies and bring out processions in all city, district and thana headquarters.

They will protest scarcity of water and electricity, government's "failures and incompetence" in running the country, attack and repression on opposition MPs, leaders and activists, arrest and filing of false cases and killing of opposition men.

As part of its programmes, the BNP will also hold a public meeting at Paltan Maidan at 4 pm and bring out procession in the city.

BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia will address a public meeting at Nabinagar High School playground under Brahma Baria district.

Jamaat will hold a rally at city's Muktangan and bring out procession. JP, IOJ, Jagpa, Democratic League, PNP and other opposition parties will also observe the day.

## Hartal observed till 3 pm in Rajshahi

From Our Correspondent  
RAJSHAHI, Apr 7: The BNP-called hartal was observed 'amid confusions' here till 3 pm today.

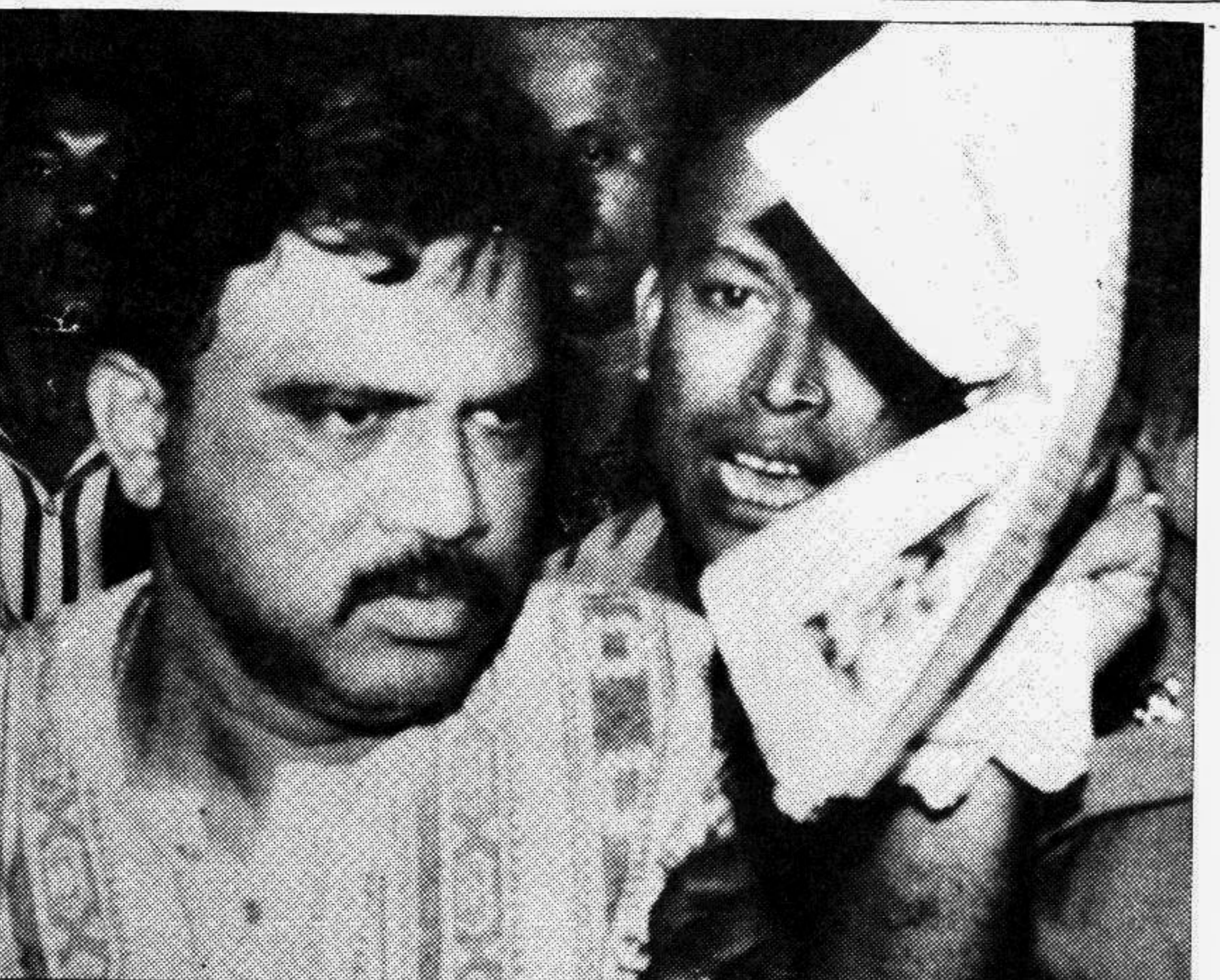
Earlier, one faction of the party called a half-day hartal and the other faction called for a dawn-to-dusk hartal. The hartal, however, passed off peacefully.

BNP had called the hartal to press home its seven-point demands.

The demands include immediate arrest of the culprits who attacked March 27 public meeting of BNP at Durgapur, improvement of law and order in the district and repair of Rajshahi Town Protection Embankment.

All kinds of vehicles were off the roads and shops, business establishments and markets remained closed. No class was

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DB inspector Ziaul Ahsan after arrest Tuesday in connection with Shafi murder. — Star photo

## Three more DB men arrested

Star Report  
CID yesterday arrested three more Detective Branch (DB) men in connection of the killing of Jalal Ahmed Shafi.

With the three — SI Shajahan Hossain, Habilder Belal and constable Rauf — four DB men were arrested in the last two days.

According to CID sources, more DB men will be arrested soon. Besides, ADC of DB Nuruzzaman is likely to be interrogated in a couple of days.

Meanwhile, Humayun Kabir, who was summoned to the CID office from Chittagong, were being interrogated yesterday.

DB Inspector Ziaul Ahsan, who was arrested at the CID office Tuesday night, was placed on a five-day CID remand yesterday while canteen contactor Anwar was placed on a fresh remand for two days.

Three of the arrested four were members of a DB team under AC Humayun Kabir that had recovered heroin worth about Tk 2.5 crore from the city's Demra area on the basis of a tip

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## Attachment of Orion's property ordered

By M Shamsur Rahman  
A court has ordered attachment of property of Orion Infusion Ltd to realise Tk 19.2 lakh in penalty imposed by the regulators.

This is for the first time in Bangladesh that a publicly traded company is facing such a court order.

The Court of General Certificate Office passed the order last month under the Public Demand Recovery Act (PDR) after the company had failed to respond to notices.

"Since the company did not pay Tk 19.20,000, you are therefore directed to attach movable properties of the certificate company until you are given further order from the court," the court said directing the officer-in-charge (OC) of Tejgaon police station.

"If no warrant is issued, then you are directed to inform the court in writing by April 18, 1999 why it was not issued and return this order," the court said.

Asked, the Tejgaon OC declined to speak over telephone.

"There are thousands of warrants pending and I don't know which one you are talking about," the OC said.

The court order came after the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) sued Orion Infusion Ltd to recover an accrued penalty of Tk 19.2 lakh for the company's failure to disburse dividends to its shareholders.

The respondents in the case were Orion Infusion Chairman Major General Abdul Mannan Siddiqui (retd), Managing Director Obaidul Karim, Director Arjuda Karim, Minufar Nasreen, Shafiqur Rahman, Ebadul Karim, and Golam Mohiuddin.

The company declared a cash 32 per cent dividend and a right share against every two holdings for Tk 100.00 each.

The dividends — 15 per cent for 1995 and 17 per cent for 1996 — were declared on February 3, 1997.

The regulators had also asked the company to come up with its compliance report as it

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## JRC meet begins tomorrow Delhi's help in forecasting flood may be sought

By M Anwarul Haq  
The next ministerial level meeting of Bangladesh-India Joint Rivers Commission (JRC) begins in Delhi tomorrow.

The two-day meeting is being seen as crucial in dealing with a number of water-related issues including the Ganges water accord, permanent sharing of the Teesta waters and improving the Flood Forecasting Measures.

Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzak will visit Delhi at the head of an eight-member delegation to hold talks with India's State minister in charge of Agriculture and Water Resources Som Pal.

Talking to The Daily Star, Water Resources Secretary Dr Shamsul Huda said, "The forthcoming JRC meeting would be a warming up exercise. The most important aspect is that the ball would be set rolling again."

A significant aspect of the meeting, an official said, would be to seek cooperation from Delhi in enhancing Bangladesh's flood forecasting ability. Dhaka would ask for immediate handover of data collected from water measuring devices located in the upper catchment

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## Ctg chamber polls postponed again

From Staff Correspondent  
CHITTAGONG, Apr 7: The election of directors of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI & I), earlier scheduled for tomorrow has been postponed again.

The election has been postponed following a Supreme Court injunction, sought by a CCCI member, Morshed Murad Ibrahim, Managing Director of Ibrahim Cotton Mills Ltd, chamber sources added.

The election was first scheduled to be held on December 20 last year but was postponed following a court injunction after some members and directors filed cases.

CCI members and directors are now sharply divided over some issues related to giving new membership and renewal of some old ones and the two factions are engaged in a legal battle.

## Alarming rise in infection by STDs 11.5pc men, 5.4pc women carry syphilis in city slums

By Gobinda Bar and Ripon Baig  
A Bangladesh Genitourinary Foundation (BGF) report, compiled from 25 different surveys and researches conducted by various government and non-government organisations, projects an alarming picture of prevalence of STDs in the country. It also gives a comprehensive picture of sexual behaviours and practices and genitourinary complications among men and women.

It said professional blood donors in the country pose a serious threat to recipients as at least 19.4 per cent of the donors suffer from syphilis. More alarmingly, most of them regularly sell blood despite knowing that they are infected with syphilis and often Hepatitis B.

Commercial sex workers (CSWs) in the city are also largely infected with various STDs. At least 28 to 67.5 per cent of the sex workers carry Syphilis, 14.3 to 27 per cent Gonorrhoea and 18 per cent Hepatitis B, the report said.

STDs are alarming among the floating CSWs in the city. More than 56 per cent of them carry syphilis while the percentage is around 39 among the institutionalised CSWs.

The report said around 67 per cent of the CSWs are aware of syphilis and 88 per cent of them know about gonorrhoea. Around 36.5 per cent of the CSWs know that HIV and AIDS are transmitted through sexual routes. About 36 per cent women in general know that condom can prevent STDs but, they said, its use is very low.

In the city slums, around 11.5 per cent men and 5.4 per cent women are infected with syphilis. Studies in the city slums also showed that gonorrhoea and chlamydia were less

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**Prayer Timings**

April 8

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-30	5-35
Zohr	12-45	1-20
Asr	4-30	4-35
Maghrib	6-20	6-23
Esha	7-30	7-35

Source: Islamic Foundation