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## 18 prisoners snatched from court premises in Cox's Bazar

COX'S BAZAR, Apr 10: Armed assailants snatched 18 prisoners from the district court custody today, reports UNB.

Police said "seven to eight armed terrorists all on a sudden hurled several cocktails and fired gunshots and took away 18 prisoners from the *hajat* at 2:30 p.m." Four policemen were injured during the incident, police and witnesses said.

With the help of public three of the escapees were recaptured. Bullet-hit Habibur Abul Kalam, Habibur Janu Mia and constable Shahidur Rahman and injured SI Priyadarshi Barua were rushed to Sadar Hospital.

Deputy Commissioner Polin Bihari Dev and Police Super Lutfur Rahman said investigation started and "appropriate measures would be taken against those responsible."

The incident occurred when police were engaged in carrying 64 prisoners from the Sessions Judge's court to the court *hajat*, they said.

## GMG's aircraft breaks nose wheel while landing

By Special Correspondent  
GMG Airlines had to reschedule a number of its flights yesterday as one of its aircraft broke its nose wheel while landing at the Zia International Airport (ZIA) Sunday night.

The aircraft with 37 passengers was on a flight from Chittagong, sources said. The mishap occurred due to hard landing but all the passengers and the crew were safe, they said.

But GMG officials denied that any aircraft of the company broke its nose wheel. They said one of its two De Havilland turboprop aircraft has been grounded due to "technical problem."

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## Tk 15 lakh looted from Haji Selim's trading house

From Our Correspondent  
NARAYANGANJ, Apr 10: Robbers looted over Tk 15 lakh from a trading house at Munshikhola in Fatulla in the district today.

Police and witnesses said a gang of masked gunmen stormed Madina Trading Corporation at about 1 pm and snatched the money at gunpoint.

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## Our new numbers

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Country's first IT park likely by next month  
Japan extends debt relief to world's poorest nations

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April	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
11		6-19 pm
12	5-40 am	

## Prayer Timings

April 11	Azhan	Jamaat
Fajr	5:00	5:30
Zohr	12:45	1:30
Asr	4:45	5:00
Maghrib	6:25	6:28
Esha	8:00	8:30

Source: Islamic Foundation

# IJO's silent death

By Mustak Hossain

The International Jute Organisation (IJO) no longer exists.

The International Jute Council (IJC), policy making body of the IJO, has failed to adopt a 'successor instrument' to give a fresh lease of life to the Dhaka-based world body for promotion of jute and jute products.

The three-day meeting of the IJC that ended in Dhaka yesterday could not adopt the instrument in the face of opposition from all the 15 European Union members.

Earlier, an UNCTAD convened IJO conference in Geneva had adopted a resolution, which stopped short of referring to a 'Successor Agreement' but proposed a 'Successor Instrument' for continuation of the IJO.

As a follow up of the Geneva conference, the IJO met for

three-days in Dhaka from April 6 to 8. The meeting adopted the Successor Instrument.

The IJO agreement has not been extended and it has gone into liquidation due to lack of support from the EU members for a fresh lease of life, an official of IJO told The Daily Star following the IJC meeting.

The IJO was established under an agreement at the initiative of UNCTAD in 1984. The agreement, later extended till 1989, expires today.

The IJO has become the victim of internal conflict of the EU Commission. Some leading member states of the EU are in sharp disagreement with the Commission over policy matters and its jurisdiction of power, an IJC source said seeking anonymity.

The member states are un-

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## Bangabandhu Murder Case Judge embarrassed to hear death ref

By SC Correspondent

A senior judge of the High Court Division Bench which was hearing the death reference in Bangabandhu murder case yesterday felt embarrassed to hear the matter.

The death reference was referred to the Chief Justice who will send it to another HC Bench for disposal.

The Bench, on April 6, had fixed April 9 for order, and accordingly the death reference appeared in the cause list as No. 1 yesterday.

But when the Bench sat, the Bench Officer told lawyers of both the sides that the senior judge felt embarrassed to hear it.

However, the reasons for embarrassment could not be known.

Advocate Anisul Huq, specially appointed for the state, had first mentioned the reference before a Division Bench comprising Justice Kazi Ebadul Hoque and Justice Shikdar

Mokbul Hossain on January 16. But the Bench refused to hear it and asked the public prosecutor to mention it before a Death Reference Bench.

Anisul Huq then mentioned the case before the Death Reference Bench comprising Justice MM Ruhul Amin and Justice Md Abdul Matin in the first week of February. But this Bench also refused to hear it, saying that they were hearing death references serially.

On the same day at 2 pm, Attorney General Mahmudul Islam and specially appointed senior advocate Sirajul Hoque mentioned the case before the Division Bench comprising Justice Md Nurul Islam and Justice Md Mamotajuddin Ahmed. The Bench refused their prayer saying that, being a Motion Bench, it would not get time to hear the case even if it came in the list. The Bench asked the Attorney General to

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Staff of the Dhaka City Corporation that usually carries out drive to evict encroachers on parks and other public places occupy Tank Park (left) and Taltala Park at Gulshan-2.

## DCC employees occupy three public parks in Gulshan

By Staff Correspondent

Three public parks in Gulshan area of the city have been illegally occupied by a section of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) employees who have built shanty-like houses there.

Taltala Park near Gulshan-2 roundabout, Shooting Club Park at Gulshan-1 and part of Tank Park near Road-83 at Gulshan-1 have been occupied by class-IV employees of the DCC.

Drivers, gardeners and sweepers of the DCC have been occupying Taltala and Shooting Club parks for more than 10 years and are slowly expanding their occupation of Tank Park. Over the last one year, the number of illegal dwellings has risen to 15 from one, local people and guards of the park said.

Sources said that in all the cases, the employees have built structures for their

living as well as for renting out. DCC officials at zone level expressed concern over illegal occupation of the parks and said they could not do anything unless the authorities at the Nagar Bhaban take up the issue.

At Taltala Park, 35 DCC employees have built tin-shed houses. There are almost an equal number of tenants. The employees have also built and rented out some shops around the Park. Besides, a political party has opened its office and a peer (spiritual leader) has opened his chamber occupying part of the park.

An official at the Nagar Bhaban said the authorities are aware of the illegal occupation of 'several public parks' by DCC employees.

"The Mayor knows it but any move in this regard is yet to be taken," he said.

## Recovery of Shikdar's arms KMP doesn't want to 'disturb' them!

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Apr 10: Sincerity of some officials of Khulna Metropolitan Police in recovering Ershad Shikdar's illegal firearms is now being questioned by different quarters.

These senior officials now avoid the matter as the firearms are reportedly in possession of some persons whom police do not like to disturb for security and political reasons.

The illegal firearms are now possessed by some of Shikdar's beneficiaries in the ruling party who were named by his accomplices Nasir Khan and Jamal Faruk in their confessional statements to police earlier. But police are tight-lipped about the statements.

The KMP officials concerned had promptly acted on the confessions of Noor-e-Alam and detected the murders committed by Shikdar. But they are mysteriously showing no interest in

recovering the firearms, the sources said.

Senior KMP officials who worked tirelessly for detecting his murders, collecting *alamats* (evidences), building case dockets and equipping the judiciary with all necessary particulars for his trial are now taking no interest in recovery of the illegal firearms, they observed.

Confusion still remains about the exact number of firearms Shikdar had in his possession before his arrest on August 11 last year. A high official of KMP had said last year that there were sixty firearms in his possession. But police reportedly demanded 200 firearms from him as one of the preconditions for his surrender, the sources said.

Meanwhile, the demand for recovery of the firearms and disclosure of names of the persons possessing those now is growing day by day.

## Roundtable on strengthening of SAARC Civil society has a crucial role

By Special Correspondent

Non-governmental and civil initiatives are crucial if South Asian nations want to improve regional co-operation and make SAARC a formidable organisation, said speakers at a round-table discussion yesterday.

"If the civil society gives the desired thrust, it is possible to make SAARC work outside the governmental framework," Farooq Sobhan, a former envoy to India, China and Malaysia, told participants at "SAARC Process and Regional Co-operation in South Asia."

Organised by BISS, a defence-run think tank, the

round-table featured leading diplomats, academics and intellectuals, including retired Group Captain Dastagir, Dr. Masum, Dr. Zaidi Sattar, David Preston, high commissioner of Canada, Brigadier Shahidul Anam and Major General Jamil, director general of BISS.

Sobhan said the opportunity for co-operation within SAARC's framework is tremendous. However, people must abandon the path of pessimism for the path of opportunity and activity.

"It is not confrontation but co-operation that will save peo-

ple from the problems of poverty and economic hardship," said Sobhan, who also moderated the discussion.

Sobhan said it is ironic that one in every three people is illiterate, yet defence spending *per capita* is the highest in the region.

Sobhan also said the position of secretary general in SAARC should be strengthened. No other regional organisation has a secretary general with such a low status. The position should be on par with that of a minister so the secretary general can access important people in the region and

push SAARC's agenda with a strong hand, said Sobhan.

Despite its bilateral focus, Bill Clinton's recent visit to Bangladesh was a good example of the United States' growing interest in SAARC, said Sobhan.

He said media has a very important role to play in building regional co-operation.

Abul Ahsan, the first secretary general of SAARC, said a sense of despondency has prevailed, since the organisation has not achieved its goals.

SAARC must build on its momentum in order to make

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## Ctg court bldg may become archaeological site

From Staff Correspondent



The government decided recently to demolish the gorgeous Chittagong Court Building, which was built during British rule despite protests by locals people. They said the building should rather be preserved as an archaeological site—Star photo by A.K.M. Mohsin

CHITTAGONG, Apr 10: Public Works Department (PWD) may soon be asked to halt the process of dismantling the over 100 years old Chittagong Court Building, sources said.

Such a move is underway following demand of Parikpalita Chittagong Forum which formed a human chain on Chittagong Court Building premises on March 29, the sources added.

The forum demanded for conservation of the oldest court building located on the top of the scenic Parir Pahar as an archaeological site.

The Public Works Department initiated the process to dismantle the court building over a decade ago as the worn-out building became 'risky'. But the process for demolition was shelved for a long time, the sources said.

Meanwhile, a sub-judge and

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