

What's on today.....

Discussion: United States Information Services (USIS) will present a discussion session on 'Higher Education in the United States'. Venue: North South University campus, 12, Kemal Ataturk Avenue, Banani. Time: 10 am.

Publication ceremony: Writers' Foundation Bangladesh, an organisation for the history of the spirit of War of Liberation will hold a publication ceremony of a book titled 'Muktijuddhe Ami' (I am in the War of Liberation) written by Shamsuzzoha Chowdhury. It will also hold a second rally of freedom fighter writers. Venue: Poet Sufia Kamal Auditorium at the National Museum, Shahbagh. Time: 4 pm. Chief guest: Speaker of Parliament Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury. Special guest: Minister of State for Planning Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir. Vice Chancellor of Jahangirnagar University Prof M A Baves will preside.

Prokichi meet: The central executive committee meeting of the Prokichi BSC Central Coordination Council will be held. Venue: Meeting room of Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) head office. Time: 7:30 pm.

Training programme: The inaugural ceremony of the training programme for baby-taxi (autorickshaw) mechanics to reduce air pollution will be held. Organisers: Uttara Motors Ltd & Society for Urban Environmental Protection (SUEP). Sponsor: World Bank. Venue: Uttara Motors Workshop, 124, Tejgaon Industrial Area, North Bagbari. Time: 9 am.

..... and tomorrow

Seminar: A seminar of 'Role of an Actuary', organised by Bangladesh Insurance Academy, will be held. Keynote speaker: David J Richardson, Actuary and Consultant of Asian Development Bank (ADB). Venue: Academy Bhaban, 53, Mohakhali C/A. Time: 4 pm.

Meeting: A joint meeting of the Executive Committee and Advisory Committee of Bangladesh Environmental Journalists Association (BEJA) will be held. Venue: Jatiya Press Club. Time: 11 am.

Weather

Cloudy sky likely

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely over the regions of Rangpur, Sylhet and Mymensingh in the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB. Weather may remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country during the period, the met office said.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 39.2 degree Celsius was recorded at Jessore and the lowest 20.5 degree Celsius at Sylhet. The sun sets in the capital today at 6:19 pm and rises tomorrow at 5:40 am.

Maximum and minimum temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in Percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	34.7	25.8	72	62
Chittagong	33.2	24.3	72	80
Rajshahi	38.4	27.0	69	30
Khulna	36.0	25.8	78	56
Barisal	34.5	26.0	81	77
Sylhet	32.1	20.5	66	71
Cox's Bazar	33.8	26.0	77	--

HERE and THERE

GC0

By DU Correspondent
Ganotantik Chhatra Oikya (GC0), a conglomerate of some left leaning student organisations, yesterday expressed solidarity with fast unto death programme. The programme has been taken up by 'Increased Admission Fee and Charge Resistance Movement' of Rajshahi University. The GC0 also demanded immediate reduction of increased admission fee and other charges of Rajshahi University. Meanwhile, Samajtantrik Chhatra Front (SCF) also expressed solidarity with the programme. In a separate statement yesterday, Nurul Islam and Saifur Rahman Tapon, president and general secretary respectively of the SCF, also demanded immediate reopening of the Chittagong University.

Lions club of Dhaka Central East

State Minister for Textile AKM Jahangir Hossain called upon the well-to-do section of society to extend their allout support to mitigate the sufferings of the distressed, reports BSS.

It is a moral and social responsibility of the fortunate to help the poor to live in society with minimum honour and dignity" he said while speaking at a gathering of the members of the Lions Club of Dhaka Central East at a city hotel on Sunday.

It was presided over by regional chairman of the club MA Hai. Sagupta Yasmin MP, Lion Districts Governor Feruzur Rahman, Advocate Salahuddin Abdullah, Shaiful Anam spoke on the occasion.

"The activities of any social organisation should not be concentrated in traditional courses" the state minister said and urged his audience to make special efforts against exploitation, corruption and social inequality, now plaguing the social life.



GrameenPhone executives are cutting cakes to mark the opening of 100th GP outlet.

Double murder HC commutes maid's death sentence

The High Court yesterday commuted the death sentence of Romana Begum alias Noshi yesterday to life imprisonment for double murder in Lalmitia in 1996, reports UNB.

Young maid Romana was sentenced to death by a lower court for the sensational murder of Begum Anwarul Molla Chowdhury, professor of Home Economics College and her daughter Soma, a student of Mymensingh Medical College.

There was no premeditation for the killing. It was the culmination of hot altercation, observed the court while commuting the death sentence.

Romana confessed her guilt to the trial court that sentenced her to death.

The criminal division bench of the High Court comprising Justice M M Rubul Amin and Justice Abdul Matin delivered the judgement after hearing the death reference and appeal of Romana Begum.

Advocate Nizamul Haque Nasim appeared on behalf of Romana Begum while additional attorney general Abdur Rouf stood for confirmation of the death sentence.

Motijheel Model School Guardians observe hunger strike today

Guardians of 132 HSC examinees of Motijheel Model High School & College will observe a day-long hunger strike today at the National Press Club as their demand of allowing their children to appear in the ensuing examination was not met.

"As nobody is paying heed to our demand, we will go for day-long hunger strike from 10 am today," Jafar Ahmed Bhuiyan, one of the guardians told UNB yesterday evening.

He said it is a matter of hope that some human rights organisations and agencies have come up with their helping hands and they would fight for us.

Earlier, they submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister and Education Minister on Sunday demanding that their children be allowed to appear in the ensuing examination.

Round table

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the organisation an effective tool for the advancement of regional co-operation.

Prof. Rehman Sobhan, chairman of Centre for Policy Dialogue, said the recent cricket match in Dhaka proved people believed in regional co-operation.

If players from different South Asian countries can work together, they can also work together for their mutual progress and development, he said.

Rehman said it was unfortunate countries are consumed by fears of being dwarfed by India. Intelligent policy planners would try and take advantage of this geographical proximity.

Q.A.M.R. Rahim, a former envoy of Bangladesh, said SAARC did not build on external relations. He said he felt this was a glaring weakness.

Former finance minister A.M. Muhith said SAARC's members should focus on building multilateral relations instead of bilateral co-operation.

However, Atiqur Rahman, an NGO leader and academic, differed with Rahim. He said it wouldn't be possible to build multilateral relations without first establishing bilateral relations.

Speakers said decision making and leadership should be taken away from the bureaucrats and placed in the hands of politicians. The SAARC secretariat in Kathmandu should also be strengthened, they said.

GrameenPhone opens 100th outlet

GrameenPhone Limited, the largest mobile telephone operator in the country, recently opened its 100th dealer and agent outlets around the country, says a press release.

GP Managing Director Trond Moe, Finance Director N K A Mobin and Technical Division Director Thor Rundhaug jointly cut a cake to mark the occasion last week at the cafeteria in the company's head office at Gulshan. GP Sales and Marketing Director Mehboob Chowdhury, Customer Relations Division Director Naila Chowdhury and other members of the GrameenPhone family were also present on the occasion.

There are seven Dealers and 29 Outlet Agents of GrameenPhone. Among the Dealers, Butterfly Marketing Limited has 42 outlets, Flora Limited has nine, Grameen Telecom and Brothers Limited have five outlets each, Star Tel has four, Maxis has three and GSM Shoppe has two outlets.

GrameenPhone's outlet agents are: AIMS, Rahman Telecom, M K Trade International, Alpha Telecom, Shonali Aash, City Heart Mobile Center, Gulf Electronic, EEL Tel, Tele Shop, Parbatel Network, Mobile Care, Cell Telecom, Panasonic Electronic, Future Tech International, Tele World, Citylink, Green Tel, Bulbul Electronics, Sayed Electronics, Bapli Electronics, Excel Technologies Limited, Tele Media, Tele Sens, Mobile Emporium, Hussain Telecom, M A Chowdhury Limited, Mollika Telecom, Sadi Enterprise and North Eastern Telecom.



'We want rehabilitation.' The inmates of Paribag box culvert slum staging a protest yesterday, demanding resettlement before their shanties are demolished. Dhaka City Corporation with the help of police carried out a partial drive on Sunday to clear the slum to make room for an alternative road from Sonargaon link road to New Elephant road. — Star photo

Bangla-Nepal transport accord soon: Tamrakar

KATHMANDU, Apr 10: Bangladesh and Nepal will sign a transport agreement shortly to facilitate the movement of Nepalese trucks to Mongla Port along the Kakarvita-Bangla-Banah route, reports BSS.

The agreement will be signed between the two countries during a visit by Bangladesh Commerce Minister Abdul Jalil to Nepal, said Minister for Industry and Commerce of Nepal Ram Krishna Tamrakar Saturday.

Tamrakar said the transport agreement would reduce drastically the time it takes to reach Mongla from Nepal. Nepalese trucks have to wait several days now to complete formalities, including visas and duties, at the Bangladesh border.

Tamrakar said proper use of Kakarvita-Bangla-Banah route

would help Nepal ship its goods to global markets.

However, here is a lot of infrastructure that must be built including a direct road link from Nepal to Mongla, he added.

The Kakarvita-Bangla-Banah route was formally opened on September 1, 1997. The transit agreement between Dhaka and Kathmandu was signed in 1976. The agreement was ineffective for 21 years, since India did not give its permission to use the 61-kilometre corridor between Bangladesh and Nepal.

Nepalese businessmen ship about a million tonnes through Mongla annually.

Tamrakar said his country can export hydro-electric power to Bangladesh to meet its power shortage.

US team

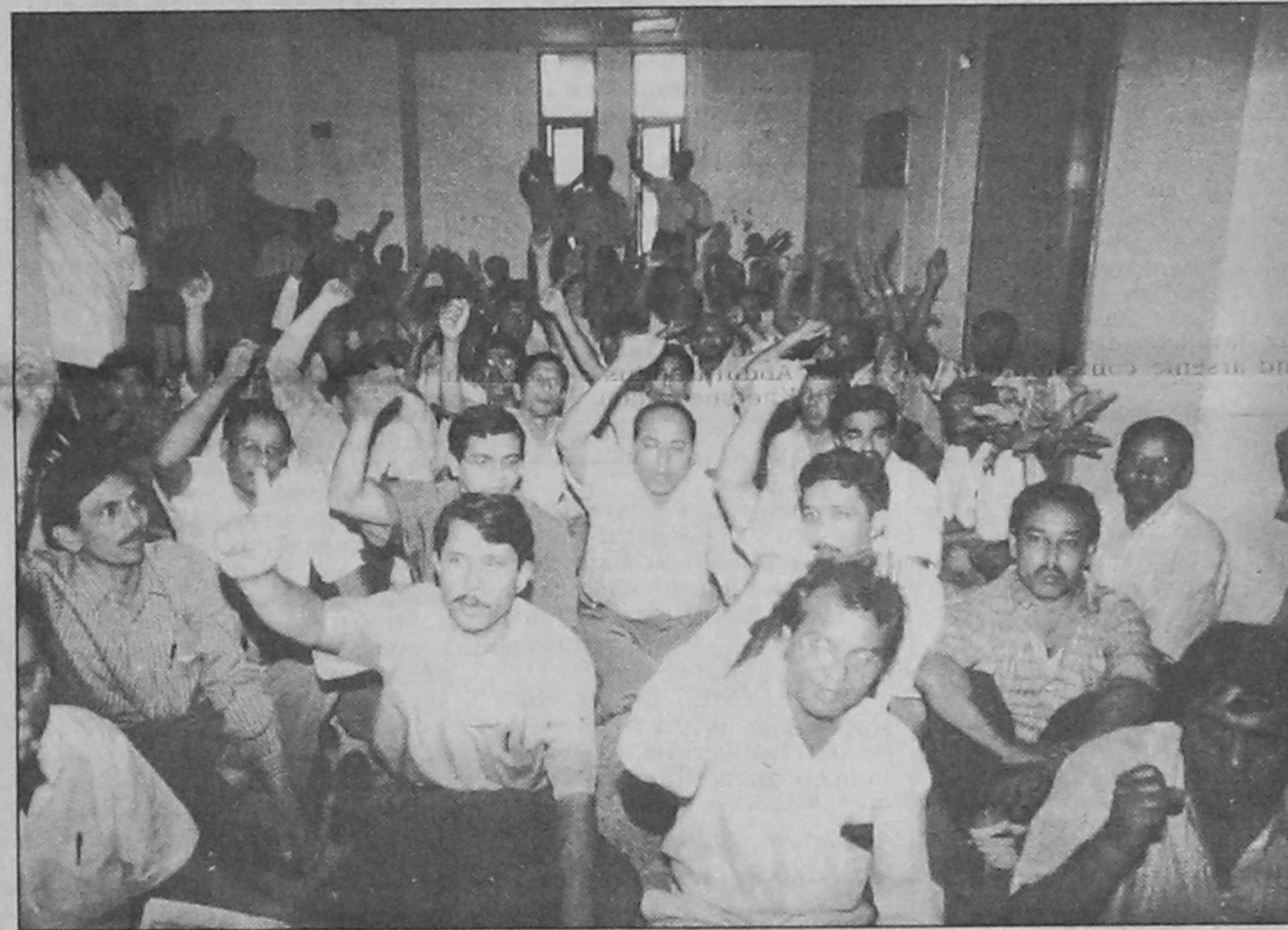
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permission from the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Commerce through the US embassy here, they said.

When contacted, a high official of EPB said that it was a routine check of some garments factories by a US Customs team.

Their main job is to check whether the factories have the capability to produce and export garments to the US market, the official said. Such teams also visited Indonesia, Thailand, Hong Kong and South Korea earlier, he added.

The team would visit a number of garments factories in Dhaka and Chittagong and leave on April 20.

Earlier, the Commercial Councillor of Bangladesh Embassy in Washington informed the EPB that the US government warned buyers of punitive actions if they buy goods from Bangladeshi exporters involved in visa forgery.



Diploma engineers of the Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (DESA) staged a sit-in in front of the office chamber of the chairman in support of their various demands yesterday. — Star photo

Death anniversary

The first death anniversary of Hiran Gomes, a retired Government official who also worked for some time at the now defunct Morning News, will be observed today at his village home at Padrisivpur village of Bakerganj P S of Barisal district, says a press release.

The programme includes a prayer at the local Catholic Church.

Hiran Gomes started his career in Calcutta in 1943 as Stenographer to the Superintendent of Police. After retiring from government service in 1971, he worked in the Editorial department of the Morning News, during 1972-73.

Late Gomes, who died at the age of 80, left behind his wife, five sons and two daughters.

Heroin recovered, 2 held in N'ganj

NARAYANGANJ, Apr 10: Narayanganj district Detective Branch (DB) of police recovered 750 grams of heroin last night from a house at Lashkardi under Arahazar police station, reports BSS.

Two persons, including the owner of the house, were arrested in this connection, police said.

Acting on a tip-off, a contingent of DB plainclothes police led by SI Shah Alam raided the house of Abdul Mannan and found the heroin in a polythene bag. The police arrested one Kamrul Ahsan Sodu, alleged to be a heroin smuggler, from the house.

A case has been registered with Arahazar police station.

Forced marriage: 3 youths held from AL leader's house

SHERPUR, Apr 10: Police arrested three youths, including a Jute League leader, from the house of an Awami League leader on charges of forced marriage of a girl on Monday, reports UNB.

The arrested youths are: Rashed, Mamoon and Jute League publicity secretary Montaz.

Police said Rashed along with his friends Montaz and Shabbul picked up Mamun from another area in the town at 3:45 pm and exert pressure on Mamun to marry his sister Halima.

On information police rushed to the spot and caught the three from the house.



Workers and employees of T&T brought out a procession demanding regularisation of their colleagues yesterday. — Star photo

Young man

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Locals said they heard several shots at about 12:45 a.m. yesterday. Police said they suspected Hasan was killed at that time.

Police said their investigation has revealed Hasan was an accomplice of Munna and Imon, a professional killer, and that he was at the scene when Sujon was murdered.

According to family sources, Hasan returned to Dhaka about two months ago after living in London for about two years.

No arrests have been made in connection with the murder. The body was sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital's morgue for an autopsy.

Munira Begum, Hasan's mother, filed a murder case with police yesterday accusing Munna and Imon.

Haji Salim

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Ruling Awami League MP from Old Dhaka, Haji Selim owns the corporation. The robbers blasted several bombs to scare off people in the area to make a safe way out, a witness said.

The employees and supporters of Haji Selim blocked the Dhaka-Narayanganj road after the incident. The blockade was continuing till filling of the report at 7:30 pm.

Meanwhile, Haji Selim told UNB that several Ansar personnel who were guarding a land near his shop said that happen, "but they didn't try to resist them."

He also alleged that a local chairman led the gang in the robbery. He, Selim said, reportedly has link with two officers-in-charge of police.

Haji Selim also alleged that a series of robberies were committed in the area in last one week but police could not arrest anyone.

Later, shopkeepers of Munsikhola area close their shops, brought out a procession chanting slogans against "police failure."

Ctg court

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some other people were reportedly injured last year after parts of the roof of the dilapidated court building that also houses the office of divisional commissioner, deputy commissioner and district judge collapsed, sources said.

Some court rooms were closed fearing accidents. The works ministry asked the PWD to construct a new building after demolishing the old court building, PWD sources said.

Accordingly, a project with an estimated cost of Tk 36 crore was submitted and auction was called for dismantling the court building immediately. On PWD sources said the auction bid was yet sent to works ministry for approval.

"We are now moving very slowly as an anti-demolition sentiment has been created in Chittagong," a PWD source said.

"But the building may not be conserved for a long time as it may collapse any time, the source added.

IJO's death

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happy at the reported commitment of EU Commissioner Paul Nelson in Dhaka recently for a new lease of life for IJO without consulting them.

Three EU member states - United Kingdom, Finland and the Netherlands - believe that the IJO has totally failed to promote trade on jute and jute products.

Sources concerned pointed out that the dispute erupted as the Commission has the right to take decisions only on issues relating to trade and not development matters. On the other hand, member states have the right regarding development matters and IJO is concerned with that.

The four jute exporting members of the IJO - Bangladesh, India, China and Nepal - had earlier requested the EU Commission not to opt for continuation of the organisation.

"It is tragic and unfortunate that the EU members who benefited most from the IJO realised after long 16 years that the organisation was unnecessary" an IJO source said.

When contacted, Bangladesh's Jute Secretary Mahuluz Islam, who is Chairman of the IJC, said, "The EU Commission's move was unexpected. They could have remained silent at the IJC meeting, instead of voting against the Successor Instrument, which forced IJO into liquidation."

The Jute Secretary said the government would now go for diplomatic efforts to persuade the EU that the new organisation, which is likely to be floated after a meeting of the IJO members in Dhaka on June 27-28, should get funds from the UN's Common Fund for Commodities (CFC) to continue various projects taken up by the IJO.

The EU Commission in a statement after the IJC meeting said, "EU favours continuation of International Cooperation in the jute sector. Consequently, the European Community and its member states were not in favour of another extension of the expiring International Agreement on Jute and Jute Products of 1989. Instead, they proposed the establishment of a working group among the members of the IJO and other interested parties to discuss substantially new approaches to international cooperation in the jute sector."

LGED chief

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any rivalry with Zillur Rahman.

"He is a very senior leader and minister. I have the best respect for him. He also supports me fully," Chowdhury said about his relations with the Local Government Minister.

About the inquiry, he said it's an evaluation process which always is carried out to monitor who are getting the wheat, or whether it is being used in proper ways.

The current process began 10 to 12 days ago. The LGED Chief Engineer will submit a report on the matters," he said.

The LGED chief engineer, M Monowar Hossain Chowdhury, who is being blamed by the newspapers, is now visiting Sylhet. Additional chief engineer M Ataulah Bhuiyan was busy holding a meeting with foreigners.

Officials at the LGRD ministry declined to comment on the reported rivalry of the senior and junior ministers, but said Zillur Rahman asked them to take an early decision to begin the investigation process.

"Since morning, he had continued talks with senior officials over the wheat scandal and later asked them to get together. The decision of inquiry came from him and it was adopted in the meeting," said one of the officials.

GMG aircraft

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They said the aircraft will be operational in two to three days with spares to be brought from abroad. They refused to give details.

Meanwhile, the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh formed a three-member committee to investigate the incident, it was learnt last night.

One of the Romanian pilots of the aircraft has been suspended, the sources said.

Judge

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come next week. Next week, the case was mentioned again but the Bench observed that they would not be able to hear the reference due to motion cases.

On March 30 after Eid-ul-Azha vacation, the Chief Justice constituted two benches for disposal of death references and the reference in Bangabandhu murder case was put specially in the cause list of the Division Bench comprising Justice Amrul Kabir Chowdhury and Justice Md Abul Aziz.

The court, on March 30, directed the solicitor to appoint lawyers for the absconding condemned prisoners and fixed May 2 for hearing of the death reference.

Advocate Mahbubur Rahman, counsel for one of the condemned prisoners Major (Rtd) Bazul Huda, filed an application on April 2 for reconstruction of the Paper Books, saying that some important documents including the service records of Huda were not included in the Paper Books.

The court on April 2 fixed April 6 for hearing Huda's application.

On April 6, the government filed an affidavit-in-opposition to Huda's application. On the same day, another application was filed on behalf of Huda for permitting his lawyer to inspect the original file of the case to determine which papers were not included in the Paper Books.

On the same day, the court asked Advocate Mahbubur Rahman to introduce hearing of his application, but he prayed for time to file a reply to the affidavit-in-opposition filed by the government.

Then DAG M Faruq submitted before the court that the defence side was trying to delay the matter.

Senior Advocate Sirajul Hoque with Advocate Anisul Hoque were present in the court on behalf of the state yesterday. Advocate Mahbubur Rahman was present on behalf of Major (Rtd) Bazul Huda.

PM tells

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country and we seek cooperation from all.

"Today, the image of Bangladesh is redeemed from a disappointing image of drought, cyclone and flood... Our main mission is now to gain economic freedom," said Hasina.

"We have a vision. We want to dream and a developed nation by 2020, before our 50th anniversary of independence."

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury, US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia Karl F. Inderfurth, Deputy Secretary of the Energy Department Calvin Humphrey and Bangladesh Ambassador in Washington K M Shehabuddin also spoke at the function.

Inderfurth said Clinton's visit projected Bangladesh to the world as a nation of progress, economic development and democracy.

Clinton's visit convinced US investors to invest in Bangladesh, he said. "We will be with you, said Inderfurth.

Inderfurth said Bangladesh and the United States are committed to peace and democracy. He congratulated Hasina for receiving the Pearl S. Buck Award for her "courage, vision and achievements" in politics, economics and humanitarian affairs.

Humphrey said love, support and friendship between the two countries would increase due to Clinton's first visit to Dhaka.