

Seat shortage

FROM PAGE 16 Dhaka College, proposed double shifts at big colleges so students could get themselves admitted into colleges of their choice.

According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Education Information & Statistics (BANBEIS), college-affiliated schools are increasing by ten percent annually while intermediate colleges by a paltry one percent.

But then, the number of GPA 5 scorers has shot up by 37.81 per cent and GPA 4 or above (but below GPA 5) achievers increased by 19.04 percent on last year. Besides, this year the pass percentage is 72.18, a 16 percent rise from last year.

The good news is ironically disheartening for high-achievers as the 130 college-affiliated schools, 20 intermediate colleges, 50 degree colleges with room for intermediate education and 40 Alia madrasas established in the last couple of years have failed to stand out, BANBEIS sources said.

Against the backdrop of some 7.2 lakh students having passed the SSC exams this year, "we have 4.5 lakh seats in general colleges, 70 thousand in Alia madrasas and 65 thousand in technical colleges.

We have only 638 college-affiliated schools, 1175 intermediate colleges, including 10 government ones, 1187 degree colleges with intermediate education and only 1039 Alia madrasas," BANBEIS Director Ahsan Abdullah told The Daily Star.

He said some of the students would never make it to college while many female students would have to stop their education after getting married.

"Many students with GPA 5 will have to enrol at colleges of their second choice. However, most of the colleges in rural areas will get sufficient students," the BANBEIS director added.

Among the capital's reputed colleges, Dhaka College can take in about 1,100 freshmen, Notre Dame College 2,139, Dhaka Commerce College 902, Vagrunnisa Noon School and College 990, Dhaka City College 1,083, Government Badrunessa College 819, Government Bangla College 972, Ideal College 1,050, BAF Shaheen College 606, Holy Cross College 488, Lalmaia Women's College 750, Rajuk Model College 444 and Residential Model College 300.

As they refused to sign rice supply accord

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

Sirajganj district controller of food cancelled 79 rice-mill licences as the mills did not sign an agreement with the government to supply rice to the authorities.

Furthermore, the authorities directed the power department to disconnect electricity supply connections to those mills within a week.

Sources said considering the situation, it is apprehended that the rice procurement target in the district may not be achieved this year.

According to them, the department recently started rice procurement drives with a target of 18,272 tonnes from nine upazilas of the district.

Earlier, the department directed 252 mills of the district to sign an agreement to supply rice to the government. At least 171 mills signed the agreement while the rest refused saying that it would not be profitable for them.

The district controller of food issued the punitive orders Tuesday without deciding on two mills that did not agree to sell rice to the government.

Sources said a total of 9,000 tonnes of rice was collected until yesterday. The procurement will continue till August 31.

The mills that lost their licences are, 12 in Sirajganj Sadar upazila, 15 in Kamarkhanda, five in Kazipur, one in Belkuchi, 14 in Ullapara, 18 in Raiganj, 10 in Tarash and four in Shahzadpur upazila.

A number of rice mill owners seeking anonymity told The Daily Star that the prices of rice and husked rice on the market are higher than the government fixed prices.

20 injured

FROM PAGE 1 avert any further incident.

Of the bullet injured, eight were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) while the others to different clinics and hospitals.

Those admitted to DMCH are Arif Hossain, 48, Alamgir Bepari, 35, Nur Banu, 35, Benu Begum, 35, Ali Hossain, 23, Mohammad Selim, 50, Aman Ullah, 35, and Fazar Ali Bepari.

Mohamad Akash, a mineral water vendor who was present during the incident, said, "A person along with a woman came to the spot by a microbus and barred the labourers from demolishing the wall and fired two blank shots."

He said as the labourers got dispersed and started running inside the market, the armed man fired targeting the crowd, injuring more than 20.

Injured Kabir Hossain, who is also a trader of the market, said, "Hearing gunshots, I came forward and saw a man firing indiscriminately."

Kabir and five employees of his shop were injured in the attack. He also showed the journalists the bullet marks on his cashbox and wall.

Some other traders claimed that more than 30 people, including traders, customers, pedestrians, market employees and labourers, were injured in the armed attack.

Talking to reporters, many traders of the market alleged that Mozammel made the gun attack in presence of Rab and police personnel.

Nazimuddin, caretaker of the filling station, said, "Two persons came to the filling station at around 7:00am to talk to me. In the meantime, some 30 to 40 others started demolishing the generator room and wall of the filling station."

"I informed one of the partners, Mozammel Hui, who, along with his wife Mili Chowdhury, came to the spot by a microbus within 20 minutes and fired blank shots," he said.

Mozammel told Rab-10 that he fired blank shots from his licensed gun as the labourers swooped on him.

Two separate cases were filed with Jatraban Police Station last night.

Local poll

FROM PAGE 16 Khagrachhari municipality mayor Joyal Abedin called on the government to hold election to fill district councils and regional councils after the scheduled local-body polls, noting that there have been no election to fill district councils in last 22 years due to the negligence of politicians.

It's about time chairmen and councillors were elected, he said.

Saying the hill district councils and the regional councils have become a den of looters, Khagrachhari Chamber of Commerce and Industry director Sudarshan Dutta said elections to these bodies would pull the plug on corruption in there.

He also called for commissioning the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Land Commission in order to resolve land disputes.

A host of local issues also popped up at the meeting, ranging from development projects to shortages of doctors to hiking of salaries for headmen.

Regional Council member Nurunnabi called for setting up of judge court and projects to improve communication in the district.

President of Bangladesh Tripura Kalyan Sangsad Manindra Kishore Tripura demanded that dismantled army camps be back in order to ensure security in the hill areas.

Brushing aside any doubts about the parliamentary elections, Commerce Adviser Hossain Zillur said the government would hold the polls as per the opinion of the people.

Saying elections influenced by black money and muscle power are incompatible with modern democracy, Communications Adviser Ghulam Quader noted that the government is holding dialogues with political parties and civil society in order to ensure a credible parliamentary election by December.

Law Adviser Anwar said judge court in the hill districts would be inaugurated soon. On the CHT Land Commission, he said it would be commissioned after poring over a few legal aspects.

700 Bangladeshis

FROM PAGE 1

"We drew the ire of the company officials after we filed a case against it. Since then all sorts of tactics are being applied to deny us our dues. We earnestly request the ministry to consider our case on humanitarian grounds," he said.

The workers said they were facing a serious food shortage and that some community members were providing them supplies out of kindness.

"We have been left in the lurch by the company and we do not intend to work for it anymore. All we are seeking now is payment of our salaries and tickets back home. The living conditions are horrible at the camp," said another worker, adding that some of the air-conditioning units have broken down for want of repairs and rooms are overcrowded. The drainage system is also in urgent need of repairs.

When contacted, an official at the Bangladesh Embassy said the embassy was leaving no stone unturned to put an early end to the plight of the workers.

Expatriates' Welfare Secretary Abdul Matin Chowdhury, however, said yesterday that he did not know of such an incident.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Embassy in Kuwait has taken some drastic measures to prevent exploitation of its workers by unscrupulous employers and create awareness among Bangladeshi workers in that country about the local laws.

It checks the antecedents of a company before giving the green signal for recruitment of Bangladeshi workers. Local companies with a history of violating the rights of workers are prevented from hiring Bangladeshi workers.

Non-payment, underpayment and abuses of Bangladeshi workers by employers in some of the labour receiving countries, including Malaysia, have become a regular phenomenon.

Cheated by agencies and employers, an estimated 2,000 workers have returned home from Malaysia in the last one year. Hundreds of workers were allegedly denied of jobs they had been promised there while many are provided salaries much less than pledged.

Around 130 workers unpaid for 16 months staged a demonstration near the Bangladesh consulate in Jeddah protesting against abuses by their employer, a consular official said.

The BNP secretary general and his counterpart in Jamaat-e-Islami Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojahid have repeatedly said the alliance would not stand in any election preceding the parliamentary polls.

Delwar has even said they would resist the polls. He also said those who would defy the alliance decisions would be declared stooges of the military-backed government.

Sources said division- and district-level leaders of BNP have communicated their recommendations to the high command.

They want the party to participate in the polls which they believe would give it an opportunity to reorganise itself.

Besides, they think the organisation would fall behind if it boycotts any election archival AL chooses to run for.

New animals

FROM PAGE 16

AKM Nazrul Islam, deputy curator of Dhaka Zoo. He said there was no giraffe in the zoo since 1998.

He said the animals will remain under the supervision of two experts for a couple of weeks. The experts came from South Africa.

A good number of people, including children, rushed to the zoo yesterday morning to see the new animals.

FROM PAGE 1 Manekshaw had been in hospital for several days battling lung disease.

He was the architect of India's greatest military victory against Pakistan in the 1971 war.

Manekshaw had developed broncho-pneumonia and associated complications and he slipped into coma four days ago. A specialist from the military hospital in Delhi was flown to assist doctors attending on him at the hospital in Wellington, a hill station, where Manekshaw had settled after retirement.

Manekshaw's two daughters--Maya and Sherry--were by his side when his end came. His wife Siloo died seven years ago.

Manekshaw, honoured with the Military Cross during the World War II, was the first Indian officer to command the Gorkhas after independence. For his close association with the Gorkha Rifles, he was called "Sam Bahadur".

Born in Amritsar on April 3, 1914, Manekshaw was commissioned in the army from the first course of Indian Military Academy in Dehra Dun in 1934. He became the army chief on June 7, 1969 and was the first officer to be decorated with the title of Field Marshal after the 1971 war with Pakistan. He was conferred the rank of Field Marshal, the highest military honour, on January 1, 1973.

Manekshaw was only the second Indian military officer to hold the rank of Field Marshal, the other being Gen KM Cariappa.

Handsome, witty and sporting his trademark handlebar moustache, Manekshaw had his way with people, including his seniors and even former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

The career of Field Marshal Sam Hormusji Framji Jamshedji Manekshaw spanned four decades and five wars, including the Second World War.

Becoming the army chief in 1969, the Indian forces under his command wrapped up a spectacular victorious campaign during the Indo-Pakistan War of 1971.

During World War II, Manekshaw saw action in the Burma campaign on Sittang river as a Captain with the 4/12 Frontier Force Regiment and has the rare distinction of being honoured for his bravery on the battlefield.

During World War II, he was leading a counter-offensive against the invading Japanese Army in Burma. As he charged forward with his men, a Japanese soldier suddenly emerged from the bushes and fired at him, wounding him seri-

ously in the stomach. Major General DT Cowan spotted Manekshaw holding on to life and was aware of his valour in face of stiff resistance from the Japanese. Fearing the worst, Major General Cowan quickly pinned his own Military Cross ribbon on to Manekshaw's uniform. "A dead person cannot be awarded a Military Cross".

Having recovered from those near-fatal wounds in Burma, Manekshaw went for a course at Staff College, Quetta and later also served there as an instructor before being sent to join 12 Frontier Force Rifles in Burma. He was once again involved in a fierce battle with the Japanese and was wounded for a second time.

Manekshaw showed acumen for planning and administration while handling the issues related to the partition in 1947 and later put to use his battle skills during the 1947-48 Jammu and Kashmir Operations.

Manekshaw's years of military experience were put to the test as thousands of refugees from the erstwhile East Pakistan crossed over to India due to the turbulent situation there. The situation got worse, and soon erupted into a full-scale war in December 1971.

Oil prices

FROM PAGE 16 hurting stock markets, which in turn triggered a further rally in commodities as investors seek better returns," Sudden analyst Michael Davies said in London.

Prices "continued to be buoyed by the dollar, as the greenback continues its free fall decent this week," he added.

Opec's president on Thursday predicted that oil prices could reach 170 dollars this year owing to a weak dollar and geopolitical unrest.

Crude futures crossed 140 dollars for the first time on Thursday following the price forecast made by Opec's chief, Algerian Energy Minister Chakib Khelil, in an interview with television news channel France 24.

After achieving new peaks on Friday, New York's main oil futures contract, light sweet crude for August, was trading at 141.40 dollars, up 1.76 dollars from Thursday's close.

Brent North Sea crude for August delivery stood at 141.06 dollars a barrel, a rise of 1.23 dollars.

ROAD MISHAP IN CHT Hasan Ariff hurt but to join CA's confce in Ctg

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Law Adviser Hasan Ariff, his APS, driver and gunman were hurt in a road accident while returning to Chittagong after a dialogue at Khagrachhari yesterday.

The adviser sustained minor injuries to his head and is now in good health. He will join today's regional conference in the port city. Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed is expected to attend the conference.

According to sources, the law adviser met with the accident when the driver of his vehicle lost control over the steering and fell into a roadside field at Manikchhari under Khagrachhari district at around 4:00pm.

The police escorting the adviser immediately rescued him and took to the local health complex.

Commerce Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman who had left for Chittagong a bit earlier went back to Manikchhari and brought his colleague to the port city by an ambulance.

Hasan Ariff was taken to Cardiac Clinic at around 6:30 pm and got his primary check-up done by cardiologist Dr Mohsin Zillur Karim.

Quoting the cardiologist, Hossain Zillur said the law adviser is quite well and will attend the regional conference on schedule.

Hasan Ariff said the vehicle carrying him slipped off the road as it was drizzling at that time.

"I got a bit hurt as the vehicle fell into a roadside field. There is nothing to worry about," the adviser assured the pressmen while coming out of Cardiac Clinic on his way to Chittagong Circuit House at 7:30pm.

Meanwhile, the law adviser's gunman Abdul Malek, driver Md Ibrahim and APS Hamidur Rahman were admitted to the casualty department of Chittagong Medical College Hospital.

BSF kills one in Satkhira

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) yesterday gunned down a Bangladeshi cattle trader near Keragachhi border at Kalara upazila in Satkhira.

The dead was identified as Mithu, 28, son of Abdur Razzak of Gobindakali village.

Sources said BSF members of Tarai camp fired four shots on a group of cattle traders while they were returning to Bangladesh from India with cattle at about 4:30am.

Mithu was killed on the spot. BSF members took away the body.

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) authorities sent a letter to the BSF protesting the killing and asked them to return the body.

AL to join poll

FROM PAGE 1 caretaker government, sources said.

Zillur said it is sad that the government has yet to lift the state of emergency despite their repeated demands. He called on the caretaker administration to revoke the emergency rule completely so that people could practise their right to vote properly.

AL will raise these issues at formal talks with the government on July 3. At yesterday's meeting, the presidium members have been asked to strike a hard bargain at the dialogue with the government.

Sources said the decision in favour of the polls has come on getting a green signal from the party chief who is now abroad for treatment.

The working committee tasked AL acting general secretary Syed Ashraf Islam with contacting the government and requesting to shift either the closing date for submitting nominations from July 3 to July 5 or the dialogue date from July 3 to July 1 so that the party could discuss their stance elaborately with the government.

Referring to the condition of Hasina's ears, Zillur said it would not have deteriorated to the extent it did had the government released her earlier.

He also demanded her unconditional and permanent release.

Zillur criticised the government for not releasing Mohammad Nasim yet. He asked for immediate arrangements for the ailing AL leader to be sent abroad for treatment.

North Korea

FROM PAGE 16 weapons development since the reactor became operational in 1986.

Last year, the North switched off the reactor at Yongbyon, some 60 miles north of the capital of Pyongyang, and it has already begun disabling the facility under the watch of US experts so that it cannot easily be restarted.

The destruction of the cooling tower, which carries off waste heat to the atmosphere, is another step forward but not the most technically significant, because it is a simple piece of equipment that would be easy to rebuild.

Still, the demolition offers the most photogenic moment yet in the disarmament negotiations that have dragged on for more than five years and suffered repeated deadlocks and delays. Those attending the event include the top US State Department expert on the Korean, Sung Kim, along with broadcasters from the United States, China, Japan, Russia and South Korea.

Pakistan calls for results in peace talks with India

AFP, AP, New Delhi

Pakistan's foreign minister said yesterday his country and arch-rival India needed "to seize the opportunity and start getting concrete results from their slow-moving peace process."

The appeal from Shah Mehmood Qureshi for progress on a string of thorny issues came as the two nuclear-armed rivals announced dates for a new round of formal peace talks to kick-start four years of flagging dialogue.

"We must seize this opportunity, we have the right environment," Qureshi said.

"Governments have to show political will and they have to give leadership" to resolve differences, he said, adding that political parties in both countries were supportive of the peace process.

The foreign ministers of India and Pakistan held talks yesterday on the ongoing peace process between the nuclear-armed South Asian rivals, including their dispute over the divided Himalayan region of Kashmir.

The meeting was the second between Indian Foreign Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee and his Pakistani counterpart, Shah Mehmood Qureshi, since

a civilian government took power in Pakistan and comes ahead of a new round of peace talks scheduled to begin in July.

Qureshi said Friday's talks would focus on deepening the peace process, differences over Kashmir, and bilateral trade.

The ongoing peace process is central to peace, security and prosperity in our region," he said in a statement after arriving in the Indian capital.

Expectations of progress on Kashmir have been dampened by the sidelining of Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf, who was instrumental in pushing for a solution to the dispute over the region, which both countries claim.

The next talks have been scheduled for July 21 and diplomats from the two sides will try to address the impasse over the divided Himalayan region of Kashmir, Indian Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee told reporters.

While both Mukherjee and Qureshi, who arrived in India earlier Friday for a three-day visit, did say there had been some progress in the previous meeting, the Pakistani foreign minister said he had urged his Indian host "to give serious thought to outstanding issues that need serious consideration."

Obama, Hillary

FROM PAGE 16

top surrogate on the campaign trail and at the Democratic Party convention later this summer. Some of her supporters want Clinton's name to be placed in nomination for a roll call vote at the Denver convention, an effort she hasn't formally discouraged.

Thursday, at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, the New York senator urged about 200 of her top donors and fundraisers many of whom have been openly critical of Obama's campaign and its perceived slights against Clinton during the primaries to get behind her erstwhile rival and help him. Obama announced last week he would forgo public financing in the general election, guaranteeing he would need considerable fundraising help in the months to come.

Obama assured the group he would help Hillary Clinton retire her debt an announcement that drew a standing ovation in the room, according to participants. He also wrote a personal check of \$4,600 toward that goal \$2,300 each for himself and his wife, Michelle, the maximum allowed under federal law.

"I'm going to need Hillary by my side campaigning during his election, and I'm going to need all of you," Obama said.

He also expressed concern about the sometimes sexist treatment of Hillary Clinton during the primary campaign and said Michelle was on the receiving end of such treatment now.

Three top Clinton aides attor-

Nasim

FROM PAGE 16 and a half. The test report was yet to be released.

Nasim, also a former home minister, has complained of constant headache, and told doctors that he is partially blind in his left eye.

The eye problem is temporary and part of the after-effects of stroke, Deputy Inspector General (Prisons) Major Shamsul Haider told The Daily Star last night, quoting an ophthalmologist.

Earlier in the day, he visited Nasim in the hospital.

Meanwhile, the government is still weighing what would be the legal implications if it decides to release Nasim and Khaleda Zia's younger son Arafat Rahman Koko for treatment abroad.

Officials at the home ministry yesterday said the government is taking time since the issue of Nasim's release is somewhat complicated because of his previous conviction.

They said a handout would be published as soon as the matter is settled.

Of the two, Nasim has been sentenced to 13 years in prison in a graft case and facing trial on other charges of corruption.

Queried, the DIG prisons yesterday said, "We are waiting for instructions from the government."

Families of Nasim and Koko want the matter to be considered on humanitarian grounds and settled soon.

Sources in the BNP said Koko, now undergoing treatment at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, might be released on parole within the next few days.

Nasim's younger brother Rezaul Karim said the family hopes the government would act promptly on their application seeking arrangements for overseas treatment.

neys Cheryl Mills and Robert Barnett, and longtime confidante Minyon Moore have been negotiating the details of her future involvement. They've made the case to the Obama campaign that Clinton can spend more time campaigning for him this summer if she isn't working to pay off her debts.

Obama finance chairwoman Penny Pritzker sent an e-mail to the campaign's finance committee Wednesday making a direct pitch.

"Barack has asked each of us to collect five or six checks to help Senator Clinton repay the people who provided goods and services to her campaign," Pritzker wrote. "He made this request in the spirit of party unity. Senator Clinton has promised to do everything she can to help us beat John McCain."

350 children

FROM PAGE 16 was no child in 13 jails in the month of May this year.

On June 2 this year, following an application from Advocate Fahima Nasrin, a human rights activist, an HC bench of Justice Md Iman Ali and Justice Md Emdadul Haque directed the authorities concerned to release on bail Zahidul Hasan Roney, detained in Kushtia jail, who had been 16 at the time of his sentencing and was still in jail till last night.

Fahima Nasrin told The Daily Star that there are a number of precedents of the authorities either flouting HC directives or dillydallying in complying with those regarding release of detained children.

As an example she cited the case of 14-year-old Zafar who had been detained in Cox's Bazar Jail, the HC in September 2007 granted him bail but the jail authorities released him three months later in December.

The Sessions Judge's Court in Kushtia sentenced Roney to 10 years imprisonment in a murder case on August 14, 2006, directing the authorities concerned to keep him in the juvenile development centre in Jessore till he reaches 18. On May 8 this year he became 18 and was sent to Kushtia Jail to serve his time.

The authorities of the juvenile development centre recently made a recommendation to the social welfare ministry that Roney should be freed, as he developed a good character during his stay in the centre.

But the ministry ignored the recommendation, prompting Advocate Fahima to file the petition with the HC.

ASP accused

FROM PAGE 16 customs and other officials body-searched him and found the phone set in his pocket.

Sarakop filed a general diary with the Airport Police Station.

Talking to The Daily Star, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Nur Mohammad termed it embarrassing.

Khondoker Rafiqul Islam, deputy commissioner (DC) of Uttara Zone of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP), said the incident is sensitive since the complainant is a foreign national and the accused a senior police official.