



Winners of the national cultural competition of Bangabandhu Shishu Kishore Mela pose for photograph with President Zillur Rahman and other guests at Bangabhaban in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 3)

UNIVERSITY ADMISSION

Existing method to be followed

Says education minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid yesterday said the existing method would be followed in the admission to the country's public and private universities for higher education.

He assured that everybody would get the chance to pursue their higher education and there would be no seat crisis in the higher education institutions.

The minister said this after a meeting with vice chancellors (VCs) of different public universities at Secretariat office in the city.

Every year, the students and their guardians pass an anxious period after the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examinations as they need to go through a stiff competition to gain their admissions into the desired institutions.

Against this backdrop, the education ministry held the meeting with the VCs, University Grants Commission chairman and others concerned to find out a way.

After the meeting, Nahid said, "A total of 4,42,389 students passed the HSC and equivalent exams under 10 boards this year and we have a total of 4,37,171 seats in all public and private education institutions which means a shortage of 5,258 seats."

Since many universities are autonomous, it would not be proper to impose any decision on them, the minister mentioned.

"There would be no seat crisis if all the universities increase 10 seats," he said, adding that some 5,000 seats would be increased, if necessary.

Nahid said the existing admission process in different higher education institutions

would be followed this year and if the institutions want to develop or ease the process, they can sit together to find out a way.

Students lose a huge time after passing their HSC exams, he said, urging the universities to discuss the matter mutually to bring forward the dates for the admission tests and decrease the fees.

The minister also called on the universities to fix their admission dates closer and make the process easier so that the students do not face any harassment.

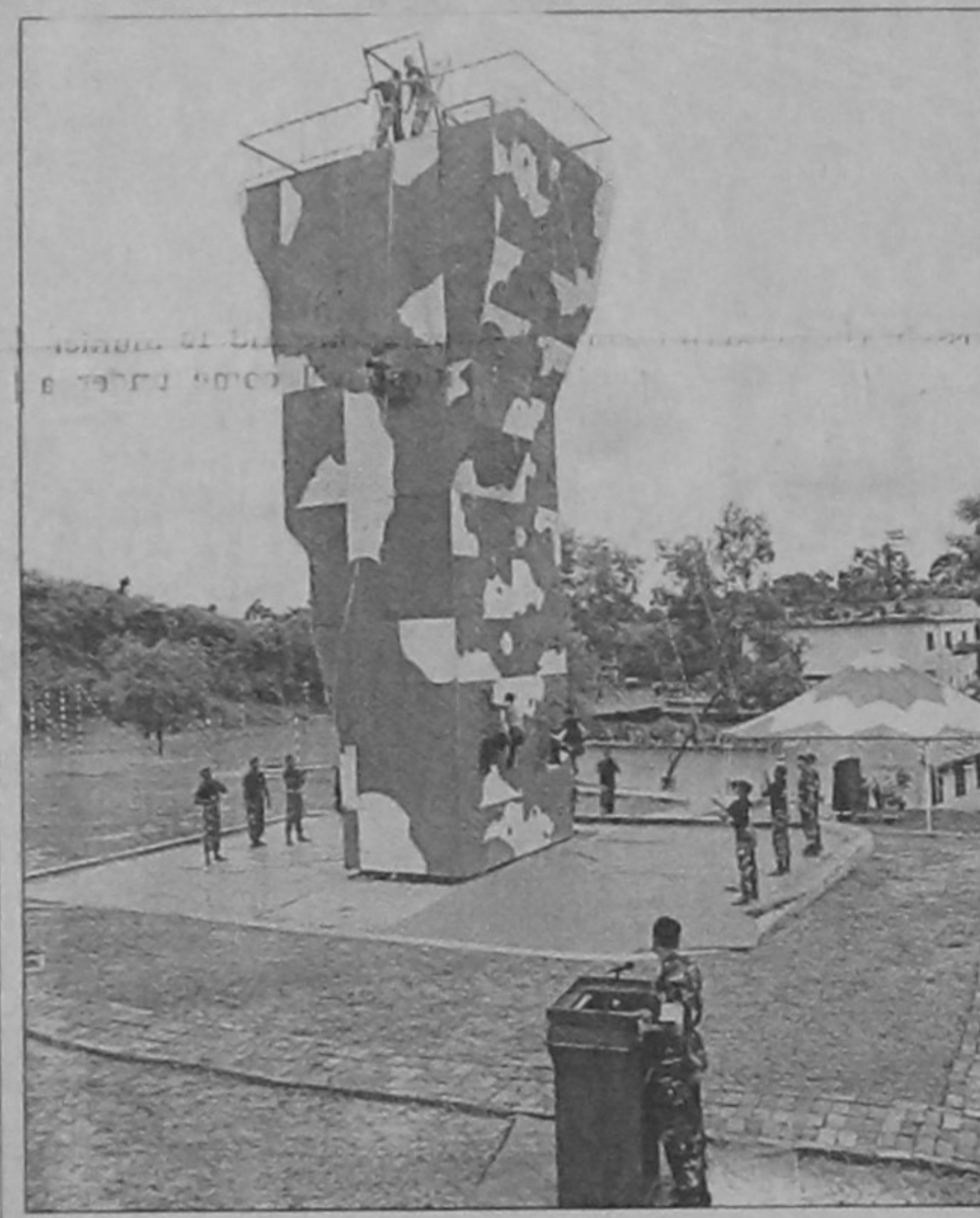
It was told in the meeting that there are 35,886 seats in 29 public universities while

the number of seats in 51 approved private universities is 64,063.

There are 2,394 seats in 18 public medical colleges, 3,055 in private medical colleges and 910 seats in public and private dental colleges, while there are 1,76,005 seats in 199 honours colleges under National University (NU) and 1,53,338 seats (pass course) in 1,474 colleges under NU.

The number of seats in colleges of leather technology and college of textile technology is 455.

As many as 20,136 students under the 10 education boards secured GPA (grade point average) 5 this year.



Members of the armed forces climb an artificial rock wall during the handover ceremony of the wall at Jalalabad Cantonment in Sylhet yesterday.

Indian envoy hands over rock climbing wall to army

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Indian High Commissioner Pinak Ranjan Chakravarty yesterday said India has no military ambitions beyond its borders.

"Rather, as the world's largest democracy, we want to continue the good neighbourly and friendly relations to all concerned," he said at a ceremony at the Commando Training Centre, School of Infantry & Tactics (SI & T), at Jalalabad Cantonment in Sylhet.

At the ceremony, the Indian high commissioner handed over an artificial rock climbing wall, presented by the Indian Army, to the Bangladesh Army.

Chief of General Staff Maj Gen Abdul Hafiz received the rock wall.

The Indian envoy said the long-standing friendship between Bangladesh and India is deeply rooted in strong foundation. "We are also partners in the rapidly changing world by now."

He also stressed the need to further strengthen the bilateral relations through frequent interactions between the professionals and institutions of both the countries.

According to a press release of the Indian High Commission, Indian Army Chief Gen Deepak Kapoor, during a visit to Bangladesh in July 2008, announced the gift of the rock climbing wall to the Bangladesh Army.

The construction of the rock wall was completed within 120 days at Jalalabad Cantonment by a private firm deputed by the Indian Army.

With a vertical height of 12 metres, the rock climbing wall is a training aid for troops to carry out rock climbing, slithering and other aspects of commando and mountain training.

A demonstration of speed climbing on the rock wall was also held at the ceremony.

Commandant of School of Infantry & Tactics Brig Gen Abdul Hakim Aziz and Military Attache at the Indian High Commission Brig RN Nayyar were present.

CTG ARMS HAUL Three police officials interrogated

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The investigators interrogated the then deputy commissioner (DC) and assistant commissioner (AC) of Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) port zone and the first investigation officer of the sensational Chittagong arms haul case here yesterday.

The police officials denied allegation of providing abetment to those involved in the smuggling of the deadly consignment.

They however gave details on the seizure of 10 truckloads of firearms and ammunition at Chittagong Urea Fertiliser Limited (CUFL) jetty in the early hours of April 02, 2004.

The three police officials are former DC (port) Abdullah Baki, now OSD as SSP of Special Branch in Dhaka, former AC (port) Mahmudur Rahman, now OSD as DC at Sylhet range, and the first IO and the then officer-in-charge of Karnaphuli Police Station Ahadur Rahman, now the OC of Sathkira Police Station. They appeared for interrogation here at 11:00am.

A team of investigators led by IO Muniruzzaman Chowdhury, a senior ASP of CID Chittagong zone, interrogated them at Dampara Police Line till 7:30pm.

The investigators also inquired into the allegation of helping five unidentified people to flee the scene.

They were suspected to be members of United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA).

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Guests at a condolence meeting at Shilpakala Academy in the city yesterday observe one minute's silence in memory of Hena Das.

'Decision to withdraw troops from CHT a positive move'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A number of organisations yesterday hailed the government for its decision to withdraw a brigade of troops from Chittagong Hill Tract (CHT), terming it a positive move to implement the CHT peace accord.

International CHT Commission lauded the decision about the pullout from the CHT areas by September which, it said, would be the biggest army withdrawal from the area after the areas since the peace accord was signed in 1997.

The commission referred to the ruling party's election manifesto which stated, "The 1997 Chittagong Hill Tract Peace Accord will be fully implemented. More efforts will be directed toward the development of underdeveloped tribal areas, and special

programmes on priority basis will be taken to secure their rights and to preserve their language, literature, culture, and unique lifestyles."

"The commission supports efforts on the part of the government to bring about cessation of hostilities in the region of the CHT through the holding of dialogues, negotiations and the signing of the CHT accord," said a statement of the commission.

Amsterdam-based Organising Committee CHT Campaign (OCCHTC) and Copenhagen-based International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) jointly formed the commission in 1990. The CHT Commission is co-chaired by Lord Eric Avebury, Advocate Sultana Kamal and Dr Ida Nicolaisen.

Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK),

a human rights organisation, also lauded the decision to pull out troops from CHT and termed it a positive move, but it underlined the importance of full implementation of the peace deal.

ASK said, "The peace treaty should not be implemented only by pulling out army. The government should also pay attention to the other clauses of the agreement."

Bangladesh Adivasi Odhikar Andolon welcomed the decision to withdraw troops from the Chittagong Hill tracks as part of implementing the peace accord, says a press release.

"The government has decided to withdraw a brigade, including three infantry battalion and 35 camps, by September which will play a milestone role in implementing the peace treaty," said Prof Mesbah Kamal, general secretary of the organisation.

Meanwhile, the leaders of Fight for Equal Rights in CHTs called on the government to reconsider the decision of withdrawing army from the CHT areas for the sake of the country's sovereignty, says a press release.

They said the government should not withdraw the army just now for safeguarding the country's independence and sovereignty and keeping law and order situation of the hilly areas.

"It will harm the independence as well as sovereignty of the country, if the government withdraws army under the pressure of tribal leaders," they said.

The leaders will form a human chain and hold a rally on August 3 at Muktangan in the city in this regard.

'Include biography of Hena Das in textbooks'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a condolence meeting yesterday urged the government to include the biography of Hena Das in textbooks, as she worked for establishing the women's rights.

They said Hena Das also played a significant role in the historic nankar movement, anti-British movement and the liberation war.

"The government should include the biography of leading women's rights leaders in the academic curriculum to encourage the young generation," said Ayesha Khanam, president of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad (BMP).

The meeting was organised by BMP at the auditorium of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy in the city.

BMP Vice President Dr Fawzia Muslem said Hena Das was a leader who always stood for deprived people.

Hayat Mahmud, a researcher and educationist, said the country now needs a leader like Hena Das who worked for underprivileged section of people.

BMP General Secretary Maleka Banu, President of Bangladesh Mahila Samity Selina Khaleq and daughter of Hena Das Champa Zaman also spoke at the condolence meeting.

BMP Vice President Khaleda Mahub read out the condolence message while Editor of Ganamadhya Kazi Sofia Akhter presented the biography of Hena Das at the meeting.

Earlier, a one-minute silence was observed to pay homage to the memory of Hena Das.

Obituary

METRO DESK

Faizul Huda Khan (Firoz), a retired officer of American government emigration department, passed away after a prolonged illness at a hospital in America on July 29 at the age of 72, says a press release.

Firoz, who hailed from Balia village in Manikganj, left behind his mother, wife, two daughters and a host of relatives and friends to mourn his death.

He was laid to rest in America.

Nirmol Nag

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Nirmol Nag, personal assistant of lawmaker Syed Mohsin Ali of Moulvibazar-3 constituency, passed away due to a cardiac arrest at a clinic in Moulvibazar on Wednesday at the age of 42.

Chief Whip of the parliament Vice Principal Abdus Shahid and Syed Mohsin Ali rushed to the clinic after hearing the news of his death.

His cremation was held at his village home at Alinagar of Kamalganj upazila yesterday.

Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 17th death anniversary of comrade Ratan Sen, says a press release.

Elaborate programmes have been taken to mark his death anniversary both in the city and in Khulna, where some miscreants killed him.

On the occasion, CPB President Manjurul Ahsan Khan and General Secretary Mujahidul Islam Selim paid tribute to the memory of Ratan Sen. They also demanded arrest and trial of the killers immediately.

India won't divert water

FROM PAGE 1

This is a significant development against the backdrop of worries in Bangladesh that the possible effects of the Tipaimukh project would have on flow of water in the Barak and consequently the Surma and the Kushiara and the Sylhet region.

The Bangladeshi MPs raised a number of queries regarding the project and articulated their concerns over certain areas, to which the Indian power minister and officials responded.

Emerging from the meeting, delegation and senior Awami League leader Abdur Razzak told reporters that, "India has once again assured us that no irrigation project would be constructed upstream or downstream of the Tipaimukh project."

Referring to his meetings with Indian External Affairs Minister SM Krishna Wednesday evening and Shinde yesterday morning, Razzak said both the leaders have assured that India would not do anything which would harm the interests of Bangladesh.

"Whatever they [India] do, they will do through discussions with Bangladesh," he said, adding, "All issues can be resolved through talks."

The delegation's yesterday's meeting with the Indian power minister was also attended by officials of India's National Hydro Power Corporation, which will execute the Tipaimukh project, and external affairs ministry.

Indian officials said the Bangladeshi parliamentarians yesterday, "appeared satisfied by our replies."

They said New Delhi has been very transparent by inviting the parliamentary team from Bangladesh and sharing with it the data on the Tipaimukh project and allowing it to visit the project site.

This was done as a "gesture of goodwill" towards the new government in Bangladesh, they said.

India is ready to share more

information on specific aspects of the project if Bangladesh wishes, said the officials.

The meeting with the Indian power minister was the high-point of the second day of the five-day visit of the delegation which later left for Guwahati in Assam where they will have a night's halt before flying to Tipaimukh project this morning.



Rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely to occur at most places over all the six divisions with moderately heavy to heavy falls at places over the country in next 12 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Day temperature may rise slightly over the country, Met Office said.

The sun sets in the capital at 7:42pm today and rises at 6:28am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 34.5 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sathkira and lowest 24.0 degrees Celsius at Sandwip and Rangpur.

Highest and lowest 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	30.3	24.8	89	93
Chittagong	27.4	24.4	97	98
Rajshahi	31.3	25.2	97	91
Khulna	33.5	25.4	94	89
Barisal	32.0	24.8	87	96
Sylhet	30.9	24.6	88	93
Cox's Bazar	28.4	25.0	96	94

A seminar titled 'Suicide, never the last answer of life question' will be held at TSC of Dhaka University tomorrow.

DU Vice Chancellor Prof Dr AAMS Arefin Siddique will attend as the chief guest at the seminar to be organised by Dhaka University.

Eminent psychologists are expected to address the occasion, says a release

BNP may fail to hold council

FROM PAGE 16

The party will have to form convening committees for three ward units under each union parishad and there are about 5,000 union parishads in the country. Besides, there are about 329 municipalities and each of them has minimum nine wards. Committees will also have to be formed for the wards under all city corporations.

Party leaders said they have to form 15,000 ward committees under union parishad and about 3,000 ward committees under municipalities by September 30 through council under the supervision of district convening committees.

But the party has yet to complete the formation of district convening committees, which were due to be completed by June 30.

The party standing committee on June 9 announced the names of conveners and joint conveners for its 71 district committees and asked these units to submit a 51-member committee by June 25 but most of the committees failed to comply with the orders.

According to the party plan, ward committees should be formed by September 30, union committees by October 15, upazila level committees by October 30 and district and city committees by November 15.

Let alone starting work for forming committees under their units, the district convening committees could not even submit its full committees to

the central committee for approval due to huge internal conflicts.

After getting approval, the district convening committees will form convening committees after dissolving all upazila level bodies, which would be responsible for forming committees at union level.

While talking to The Daily Star, a district convener said most of the conveners are now facing difficulties in forming full convening committees for submission to the central body for approval due to internal conflicts.

"It would be easier to form committees for upazila, union and ward units once the formation of district committee is completed," he said.