

### Manikganj dist BNP convening body formed

By Staff Correspondent  
The BNP has dissolved the Manikganj district unit executive committee following the expiry of its tenure. A 71-member convening committee has been formed with Harunur Rashid Khan Monno MP as convener. Advocate Abdul Matin Biswas, Jamlur Rashid Khan and Abdul Matin Chowdhury have been made joint convenors. BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan has given approval to the new committee. Presidents and general secretaries of all thana committees will be ex-officio members of the committee. The committee has been asked to form a full-fledged committee as per the constitution of the party within 90 days.

### One killed in road accident

One person was killed in a road mishap in the city's Kuril Bishwa Road area during the opposition-sponsored dawn-to-dusk hartal yesterday morning, reports APB. Police and hospital sources said the unidentified man, aged about 35, was knocked down by a speeding microbus at Kuril on the Bishwa Road while he was crossing the road at about 9:30 am. Local people took him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

### Reception given to A K Khondaker

PABNA, Dec 13: A K Khondaker, newly elected Awami League MP from the Pabna-2 constituency, was accorded a reception here today, reports APB. A number of rallies were organised on the occasion at Kakiang, Manikhat, Bonkola, Nazirganj, Hatkhola, Masumdia and Badherhat in Sujana-gar thana. Addressing the rallies, A K Khondaker said that he would work for the development of the area. He also thanked the people for electing him as their representative in the Parliament.

### Giasuddin's death anniversary today

The 27th death anniversary of Shaheed Prof Giasuddin Ahmed will be observed today, says a press release. A professor of the History Department of Dhaka University, Giasuddin was picked up by the Bangladesh local collaborators of the Pakistani occupation forces, and was brutally killed along with other intellectuals. A *milad mahfil* will be held today after Asr prayers at the residence of Sajeda Banu, youngest sister of late Giasuddin.

### Death anniversary of Dr Mofiz today

Today is the 27th death anniversary of Shaheed Dr Mofizuddin Khan, says a press release. Dr Khan was killed along with his son and brother-in-law in an air attack by the Pakistani army on his residence at 106 New Elephant Road. A renowned physician of Gafargaon thana under Mymensingh district, Dr Khan had remarkable contributions to medical science. In observance of his death anniversary, a *milad mahfil* will be held at his residence after Asr prayers today. Relatives and admirers have been requested to attend the *milad*.

### Death Anniversary

By Staff Correspondent  
The 27th death anniversary of martyred intellectual Dr Serajul Haq Khan will be observed today. Prof Khan was abducted by a group of collaborators from Dhaka University residential area on the eve of the country's independence and killed at Mirpur Badshahpur. A *milad mahfil* will be held today at the deceased's family residence at 934/C, Khilgaon, Taitola.

### Obituary

Mustafizur Rahman Gama, 60, a former deputy director of Bangladesh Betar, Chittagong Transmission Centre, died on Saturday at Bangalore in India, reports BSS. He had been suffering from kidney ailments, an official handout said last night. He was a veteran freedom fighter and played an active role in 'Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra' during the Liberation War in 1971.

### Errata

In our story on computer show, published Sunday on the Bangladesh Page, the price of a colour monitor wrongly quoted as Tk 9,000-10,000. It should be Tk 6,000-6,500.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina walks down the Dhaleswari-2 Bridge yesterday after officially inaugurating the bridge. The 383-metre-long bridge on the Dhaka-Mawa-Khulna highway was built at a cost of Tk 33.16 crore. — PID photo

## Computerised Wagon Control System to be fully operational by March

Communications Minister Anwar Hossain Manju has emphasised on making the Bangladesh Railway (BR) an efficient and modern transport system to integrate it with the regional and international traffic network, reports UNB. "Nowadays, transport infrastructure of a country is not built or developed for national consideration alone," he said, inaugurating a regional seminar on "Railway Wagon Information and Control System" (RAILWICS) in the city yesterday. The three-day seminar has been organised jointly by UNB, ESCAP, UNCTAD and Siemens of Germany at Hotel Sheraton. Under the German-funded Tk 5.24 crore RAILWICS Project, Bangladesh Railway has recently implemented a Computerised Wagon Control System (CWCS) which will be fully operational by March next year. The Communications Minister sought financial and technical support from development partners and international agencies for modernisation and expansion of the country's railway system keeping the regional and global context in view. He said integration with regional and international transport network is vital for

transport planning as "globalisation of trade is leading to globalisation of transport system as well." The government has already decided to allow certain railway routes for international use, he said, adding that the decision in this respect has already been communicated to ESCAP, the regional UN agency for coordinating the Trans-Asian Railway corridors. Manju said: "Because of resource constraint, government could not provide investment support needed for rationalisation, modernisation and expansion of the railway system." It is also becoming increasingly difficult for the government to provide operational subsidy, he added. The Communications Minister, however, commended the Bangladesh Railway's success in balancing its budget through reorganisation and reforms and by rationalising the manpower. He hoped that the newly-introduced computerised system for wagon and cargo tracking would improve the Railway's management efficiency and customer services. Terming Railway as an energy efficient and environment friendly mode of transport, he said railways all over the world are getting due priority in

transport infrastructure development. Railway officials from nine countries — Iran, China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Nepal and Bangladesh are attending the seminar. The objective of the seminar is to share with other regional railways the Bangladesh experience of partial implementation of the RAILWICS Project, a computerised system of tracking and monitoring the movement of wagons, containers and cargo. ESCAP Director Dr Rahmatullah said the RAILWICS Project will benefit Bangladesh Railways in carrying "not only its national traffic, but also in carrying the potential sub-regional and regional traffic when the Trans-Asian Railway, of which Bangladesh is a part, becomes fully operational." He said the project can be expanded to track movement of containers between Bangladesh and its immediate neighbours. Chaired by Roads and Railway Division Secretary Syed Rezaul Hayat, the inaugural session was also addressed by Railway director general Atikul Husain Khan, UNCTAD representative Olaf Poelder of Siemens, UIC director Sharma, and consular head at German Embassy Krususppe.



With Victory Day just around the corner, a vendor selling flags makes the most of the empty roads during the hartal hours yesterday. — Star photo

## Hartal hurts computer show organisers

Computer and information technology personnel were highly shocked as the ongoing international computer show was not exempted from the BNP-sponsored hartal protesting the alleged rigging in Pabna-2 by-election yesterday, reports UNB. "We tried our best to keep the country's biggest computer fair exempted from the hartal. We are shocked that it didn't finally happen," said Aftabul Islam, president of Bangladesh Computer Society (BCS), the organiser of the show. Talking to UNB, he said they had tried to reach leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia and BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan to make the request for exemption from hartal for the fair of the prospective computer sector. "Some leaders of the BNP listened to us, assured that they would carry the message to party chairperson, and said they would communicate to us their response about our request," the BCS president said. "Unfortunately, none contacted us and finally we were forced to keep the show closed on Sunday."

urged all political parties to be careful so that politics doesn't affect the country's economy, specially when the nation has a bright prospect in the computer sector. "A strong will from all the political parties is a must for development of the country," he said. "I think none would impose strike on the fair had he or she witnessed the enthusiasm of the new generation who could be a good human resource for computer." In this regard, Aftabul Islam mentioned that Bangladeshi young computer professionals, mainly from the BUET, topped the first nine position in an international computer competition held from USA through Internet. There were participants from 34 countries. The convener of the show, Afamed Hasan Jewel, told UNB that several hundred people

thronged the show on Sunday although it was closed due to hartal. "People are coming (to the fair) not only from the capital, but also from far-flung districts like Patuakhali, Dinajpur and Sylhet." He said Bangladesh has a bright prospect in software development and information technology sectors. "None should act in a way that would hamper the prospects," Jewel said, adding everyone should be more calculative before announcing any political programme. A total of 131 participants are taking part in the greatest computer show with 151 stalls in five categories: Hardware, software, Internet, printing and training Seminars and discussions are also being held where young people acquire computer knowledge from resource persons.

## 'People reject BNP's hartal'

KISHOREGANJ, Dec 13: LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Zillur Rahman today said the democracy-loving people of Bangladesh have unitedly rejected the pre-planned hartal called by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), reports BSS. The BNP has called hartal after their failure to rig in Pabna-2 by-election at the direction of Begum Khaleda Zia, he said while inaugurating a gas transmission and distribution programme as the chief guest at Kalipur field here. He said the victory of the Awami League candidate in the Pabna by-polls has reflected the increasing popularity of the present democratic government. "The result of the polls has showed that the voters have accepted the pro-people politics of the Awami League and rejected the anti-people and destructive

politics of the Opposition BNP and its allies," he said. Zillur, also the general secretary of Awami League, said the BNP has to apologise to the people for its destructive politics and disrupting the government's post-flood rehabilitation programmes. Referring to the Pabna by-election, he said the BNP and its allies, despite a congenial atmosphere, wanted to create an issue against the government by unleashing terrorism. "But the people of Pabna have foiled the evil design of the BNP by helping the authorities to hold the election in a free and fair manner," he said. "It has once again been proved that free and fair election is possible under the Awami League administration," he said adding the Awami League has established the voting rights of the people in the country.

## Commemorative stamps on martyred intellectuals

Bangladesh Postal Department will issue 16 commemorative stamps of Tk 2 denomination each on 16 martyred intellectuals today marking the Shaheed Intellectuals Day, an official handout said last night, reports BSS. A first day cover of Tk 5 denomination will be issued and a special canceller will also be used in this connection. A souvenir with the life-sketches of 16 martyred intellectuals will also be published to mark the occasion. The first day cover and the souvenir will be sold from four GPOs and all general post offices of the country from today. Subsequently, the stamps will be sold from all post offices of the country.

## Mohila Awami League leaders call on Hasina

The Prime Minister called upon the members of Mohila Awami League to inspire the women especially those who are living in rural areas to avail the facilities extended by her government to become self-reliant in society, reports BSS. The Prime Minister was speaking to the central leaders of Bangladesh Mohila Awami League who called on her at her official residence Ganobhaban yesterday evening. Sheikh Hasina referred to the various development activities of the government, particularly for the uplift of women and said all those activities were aimed at ensuring the genuine rights of women in society. She said efforts are on to establish the rights of women at the grassroot level and pointed out that fourteen thousand women have been directly elected in the last union council elections. She urged the leaders to motivate the women to take small credit facilities extended by the government to enable them to create self-employment opportunity. She advised the women lawyers in the party to help the distressed women by giving them counselling. The Prime Minister urged the Mohila Awami League members to help the government in the further expansion of the on-going programmes on immunisation, eradication of illiteracy and checking malnutrition. She described the winning of the Pabna by-election by the Awami League as people's confidence on the activities of the present government. Environment and Forest Minister Begum Sajeda Chowdhury, Agriculture Minister Motia Chowdhury, State Minister for Mass and Primary Education Zinatunnesa Talukdar, Advocate Shahara Khatun, president of Mohila Awami League Ivy Rahman and Whip Prof Khaleda Khanam, MP, Dhaka City Mohila Awami League president Nasibunnesa and female ward commissioners were, among others, present on the occasion.

## 10 houses gutted in Chittagong

CHITTAGONG, Dec 13: At least ten dwelling houses and two small factories were completely gutted in a fire at Imamganj, adjacent to the east gate of Chittagong College last night, reports BSS. According to the fire service sources, the fire originated from an electric heater at a house and soon engulfed the adjacent areas. One building construction net manufacturing unit was also gutted in the blaze that lasted about two hours from 2 am. Six fire fighting units were engaged to bring the blaze under control, the sources said. However, there was no report of any casualty.

## JS body discusses digging of rivers

The parliamentary standing committee on Water Resources Ministry at a meeting yesterday discussed re-excavation of rivers and canals in the constituencies of the committee members, reports APB. It also reviewed the progress of the implementation of earlier decisions. Committee members — Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzak, Anwarul Islam, Kazi Sekander Ali, M A Bari and Dr Habibur Rahman attended the meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban. Chairman of the committee Abdul Momin presided. Water Resources Secretary Dr A T M Shamsul Huda was present, a JS press release said.

## Workshop on 'election law reforms' held

RANGAMATI, Dec 13: A day-long workshop on 'Reform of the election law' jointly organised by Fair Election Monitoring Alliance (FEMA) and Study and Research Group of Manabik Sahajya Sangstha was held yesterday at the conference room of Rangamati Hill District Local Government Council here, reports BSS. The workshop was inaugurated by the chairman of the Task Force on Repatriated Tribals and Internal Refugees' Rehabilitation Affairs, Dipankar Talukdar, MP, as chief guest. Local political leaders, lawyers and elite attended the workshop.

## Govt planning steps to control rice price

The government is actively considering intervening in the market to check an unwarranted uptrend in rice prices at this peak time of paddy harvests, reports UNB. New food channels are likely to be opened soon to control the price hike. However, the types of channels are yet to be decided, officials said. First, the number of channels would be increased in the city. Later, it would be extended to other parts of the country. Meanwhile, talking to UNB yesterday, Agriculture and Food Minister Begum Matia Chowdhury said the price situation would become normal soon with the distribution of food among students under the Food for Education (FFE) and full-swing start of Test Relief and Food for Works programmes.

The Food Minister said although the production was low, this year's post-flood crop yields would be much more than that was produced in 1988. But, as the farmers have stockpiled the post-flood crops, especially the coarse variety of rice, the price of rice is not showing down trend. Regarding food stock, the minister said enough food was being imported by the government as well as private sector. "Everyday there are ships coming into the country with foodgrains." At present, government food stock is about 987,008 metric tonnes of which rice is about 292,421 MT. The minister said that the agriculture loan disbursement should be further accelerated to help the farmers recoup the flood losses. "But, it is not a success that the 'percentage culture' in loan disbursement process has been eliminated," she asked, speaking about kickbacks in loan sanction process. A committee headed by Thana Nirbahi Officer (TNO) is looking after the whole rehabilitation process, including the farm loan disbursement at thana level.

## Prof Amartya Sen arrives this week

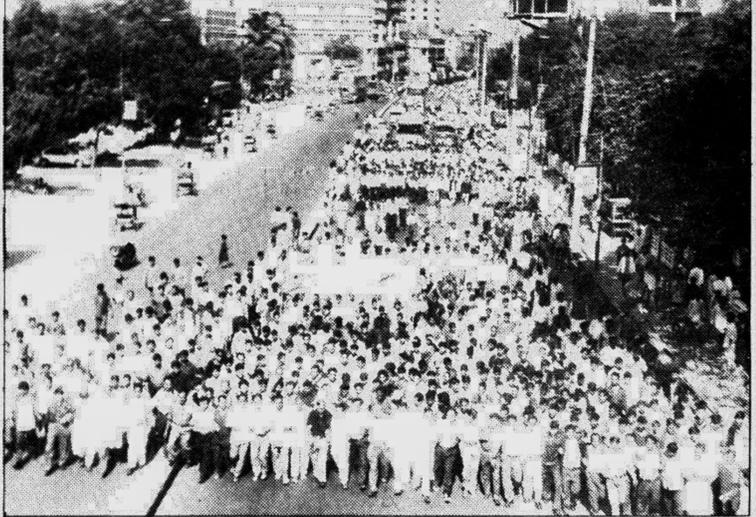
Nobel laureate economist Prof Amartya Sen will be in Dhaka between December 16 and 19, reports UNB. Sen is the second Bengali who won the Nobel Prize after poet Rabindranath Tagore. Prof Sen spent part of his boyhood in Bangladesh and studied in a school in old Dhaka. Economists and development researchers have arranged a public lecture session at National Museum auditorium on December 18 at 10 am. Sen will speak on "Social Choice." Bangladesh Economic Association, Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, Centre for Policy Dialogue and Grameen Bank will jointly sponsor the function Friday.

## Police arrest one in Magura

MAGURA, Dec 13: Police arrested a man after a gunfight between a gang of dacoits at Sreepur thana on Saturday night, reports UNB. The miscreants numbering about 13 exchanged gunfire with police at Beelnathur village at about 9 am. They were reportedly trying to commit a robbery in the area. Police chased them and arrested Nazrul Islam, 28.



Trade organisations and shops in Motijheel area remained closed during the hartal hours. Even the hawkers on the sidewalks stayed away from their stalls. — Star photo



Awami League leaders brought out an anti-hartal procession in the city yesterday. This picture was taken from the city's Purana Paltan area. — Star photo



BNP leaders and workers parading through the streets in support of the hartal called by the seven-party alliance. — Star photo



Members of the Jatiya Party brought out a procession in front of the National Press Club in support of the dawn-to-dusk hartal yesterday. — Star photo