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Sen preaches 'constructive disagreement'

Nobel laureate economist Amartya Sen yesterday highlighted the role of "creative and constructive disagreement" in the higher seats of learning and said that Bangladesh emerged as a sovereign entity through such a process, reports BSS.

Lauding the role of intellectual debates, Dr Sen observed, "Apart from equipping a student with necessary skills and knowledge, universities across the world are practising the culture of questioning and nourishing the tradition of debate".

Prof Sen was addressing the afternoon session of the 40th general convocation of Dhaka University as convocation speaker after receiving honorary Doctor of Science degree from Chancellor of the university President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed.

Dhaka University conferred honorary Doctor of Laws degree

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We must bring students back to track: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the student community must be brought back from the path of evil to that of decency, justice and truth, reports UNE.

"Our aim is to nurture wisdom, merit and talent of students and give them the opportunity to pursue those for the welfare of the country", she said.

Addressing the 40th general convocation ceremony of the Dhaka University, the Prime Minister said, "We don't want to hear the high sound of arms and bombs any longer" and mentioned her government's steps to root out terrorism from the society.

Dhaka University at its 40th general convocation, held after long 30 years, conferred honorary Doctor of Laws on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

At the function, Prime Minister said the rule of military junta pushed the student community towards darkness during last two decades.

They provided students with

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Opposition's 'demonstration day' tomorrow

The BNP-led opposition alliance will observe countrywide 'Demonstration Day' tomorrow to protest police action on student activists, who called hartal in the city yesterday.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the Liaison Committee yesterday evening at the official residence of Leader of the Opposition in Parliament with BNP vice chairman M Shamsul Islam in the chair.

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Sehri, Iftar timings

Ramadan	Dec	Sehri	Iftar
10	19	—	5-19
11	20	5-11	5-19
12	21	5-11	5-20

Prayer Timings

December 19		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-8	5-17
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	3-42	4-00
Maghrib	5-16	5-22
Tarabi	7-00	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation



The two celebrated recipients of the honorary degrees pose for photo with the Dhaka University Chancellor, President Shahabuddin Ahmed, in the middle. Sheikh Hasina's is a doctorate of law and Amartya Sen's a doctorate of science. — Star photo by Sk Enamul Haq

BCL, forces guard campus, others confined to halls

By DU Correspondent

Entry to the Dhaka University campus was heavily restricted and students other than ruling party supporters were barred from leaving their dormitories during the convocation yesterday.

Students and activists were also not allowed to move around the campus or stage demonstrations as the high-profile ceremony attended by the President and Chancellor

Shahabuddin Ahmed, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Nobel laureate Amartya Sen and other dignitaries was on. The invitees included ministers, bureaucrats, diplomats and some 1700 students in convocation robes.

Securitymen, aided by student volunteers, refused to relax the restrictions during the PM's presence from 10am to 12:30pm.

Even students moving in

groups were denied access to the campus. The number of students and people on the campus was far less than normal.

Alongside police and members of other law enforcing agencies including paramilitary BDR, a large number of ruling party supporters and pro-AL BCL activists guarded each point of entrance.

Inside the campus, the ruling

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Exiled in own territory All the gates to the DU dormitories closed and entry to the campus restricted, it was an uneasy situation for students and others as the convocation went on yesterday. It all drew angry protests from activists opposing the honour to Sheikh Hasina, which led the authorities to restrict their movement and attempts to bring out processions on the campus. The photo shows the protesting pro-BNP female students, locked inside the Rokeya Hall, try to defy the restriction and wave black flags wearing black bands. A large posse of cops watch when ruling party activists ridicule their confined counterparts from the other side of the gate. The question that came in public mind was: why some students were let in and others not? — Star photo by Amran Hossain

Opposition, ruling AL in Ctg draw battle line over polls

From Nurul Alam

CHITTAGONG, Dec 18: A battle line has been drawn between the ruling Awami League and the opposition alliance here over the January 3 Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) polls.

Political crisis in the port city deepened after announcement of the CCC polls schedule on December 7. Since then, the

opposition alliance comprising BNP, Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ) has been staging street demonstrations and holding rallies demanding cancellation of the schedule. It boycotted the polls and vowed to resist it.

The alliance enforced a 36-hour hartal in the city from 6 am on December 13 to resist fil-

ing of nomination papers. But defying protests, the ruling party fielded candidates for the posts of mayor, commissioners of 41 wards and 14 reserved seats for women commissioners. The party expressed its firm determination to go ahead with the polls schedule.

Incumbent mayor and Gen-

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First convocation in 29 years DU honours Hasina, Sen

By DU Correspondent

Dhaka University held its first convocation since 1970 yesterday, despite a six-hour hartal called by students who opposed plans to grant Sheikh Hasina an honorary doctorate of law.

Over 1,700 students and guests attended the peaceful ceremony, held under the watchful eyes of police. Some pro-BNP professors boycotted the event to protest the university's decision to present the Prime Minister with the degree.

In its citation, the university lauded the prime minister's dedication to peace, women's empowerment, and the eradication of poverty and illiteracy.

In her acceptance speech, Sheikh Hasina recalled the dreadful early morning of August 15, 1975 when Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was assassinated in a military coup. Bangabandhu was scheduled to attend the Dhaka University's convocation later that day. The convocation was postponed and never rescheduled.

Hasina, choked by emotion, said she took great pride in receiving a degree from her alma mater. She said she placed the degree above all the others she has received from universities abroad.

The university also awarded Prof. Amartya Sen, winner of last year's Nobel prize for economics, with an honorary doctorate of science.

"Prof. Sen has aptly been called the conscience of economics. Through his scholarly endeavours, he has striven to elevate the so-called dismal science of economics to the status of a more humane discipline," read Prof. A.K. Chowdhury from the citation highlighting Prof. Sen's academic achievements.

"The policy makers in these countries will do well to re-read some of his work and see what lessons can be learnt in re-designing the development priorities and political practices for the benefit of the deprived segments of their societies."

He has by choice identified

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Pratichi Trust

By Staff Correspondent

Nobel laureate Amartya Sen yesterday declared his plan to set up Pratichi Fund in Bangladesh and India with his Nobel Prize money to remove illiteracy and lack of basic health care especially among the disadvantaged young women.

The two charitable Trusts of similar nature are to be set up in Bangladesh and India after the name of his family home Pratichi in Santiniketan, India.

Sen said he could give 4,00,000 lakh US dollars after paying taxes to set up the two Trusts, Pratichi (India) Trust and Pratichi (Bangladesh) Trust. Pratichi Bangladesh will have 1,00,000 US dollars.

Pratichi Bangladesh, will be run by a Board of Trustees. Terming Professor Rehman Sobhan, as "my friend" Amartya Sen said, he (Prof Sobhan) has kindly agreed to be the Managing Trustee of this "tiny Trust."

Speaking at the Dhaka University convocation Amartya Sen said, "The Nobel award I received last year (1998) has given me a small opportunity to promote the causes to which I feel committed, mainly through giving me a bit more voice than I would have otherwise had."

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Stray violence marks hartal: 25 injured

By Staff Correspondent

At least 25 people including two policemen were injured in stray incidents of violence during a six-hour hartal in the city yesterday, called by the Opposition-backed students' organisations.

Police said 10 pro-hartal activists were arrested from different areas of the city during the strike from 6am that disrupted life.

The students' organisations called the hartal to protest conferring of honorary Doctorate Degree on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina by the Dhaka University at its 40th convocation yesterday. The convocation was the first since independence.

The hartal was called by Jatiyabadi Chhatra Dal, students' wing of BNP, Jatiya Chhatra Samaj of Jatiya Party, Islami Chhatra Shibir of Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Chhatra Majlish, students' wing of Islami Oikya Jote.

The areas around Jagannath University and BNP offices at Naya Pallon and Bangshal were the main trouble spots.

The two policemen — Malek and Rafiq — and at least ten other people were injured when

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Chandrika hurt, 11 killed by suicide bomber

COLOMBO, Dec 18: A woman suicide bomber exploded herself in a bid to assassinate President Chandrika Kumaratunga who narrowly escaped with injuries, police said adding 11 others were killed in the attack, reports AFP.

The woman was getting ready to embrace Kumaratunga just as she was due to leave Colombo's Town Hall square after addressing her final election rally before Tuesday's presidential polls.

"The woman was prevented from getting close to the president," the police official said. "Several of the president's bodyguards were killed."

Police said the attempt was similar to the attack on former Indian premier Rajiv Gandhi who was blown up by a woman suicide bomber while at an election meeting in South India just before his re-election bid in May 1991.

Kumaratunga was rushed to the Intensive Care Unit of the



Chandrika Kumaratunga

private Nawaloka Hospital, a police spokesman told AFP. He said Colombo's top police officer, TN de Silva was among those killed.

Sri Lanka imposed an indefinite curfew in the capital and neighbouring districts following the incident.

The curfew will go into effect immediately, the defence ministry here said.

2 more shot dead at Feni

From Our Correspondent

FENI, Dec 18: Two more people were shot dead in the town within a span of 12 hours.

The dead were identified as Harun-or-Rashid, 20, son of Abu Bakar of village Sreepur under Choddhagram thana in Comilla district and Abul Kalam of Faridpur district.

According to police, the victims were coming to Feni town from Lalpur Area riding a motorcycle at around 4 am. When they reached Sonagazi bus stand in the town, a group of unknown assailants tried to stop them. Being failed to halt them, the assailants opened fire that resulted in death of the two on the spot.

Police recovered the bodies and sent them to Feni hospital for autopsy.


Police are yet to unearth the reason behind the killing till filing of this report at 7:30 pm today.

Earlier at 4 pm yesterday, BCL leader and commissioner of Feni Pourasava Anwar Hossain and Sarimik Dal activist Zakir Hossain were shot dead during a gunfight between BCL

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Another Victory in December!

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