

# Metropolitan

## Discussion on PIB study report Political consensus must to stop hartal culture

By Staff Correspondent

"Politicians should reach some sort of consensus to stop the culture of hartal (general strike) in the country which is reining economy."

This was the crux of deliberations of the speakers at a discussion on the study report on "the hartal picture in newspapers 1947-1999."

Held at the Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB) on Thursday, the discussion was addressed, among others, by finance minister Shah A M S Kibria, information minister Professor Abu Sayeed, president of Communist party of Bangladesh Muzahidul Islam Selim, professor Harun-or-Rashid of Political Science Department of Dhaka University and Afzal H Khan MP with PIB governing body chairman Chahidul Haque in the chair.

PIB director general professor Abdus Salam delivered the welcome address and journalist Ajoy Dasgupta presented the study report.

Finance minister alleged that the opposition BNP was calling hartal again and again without showing any reason.

"The opposition parties are bringing miseries for people in the name of hartal. This is a violation of fundamental human rights," he said.

Referring to hartals against CHT accord and Ganges water sharing treaty, he said BNP should stop calling hartal as the people have accepted that accord and treaty.

Kibria claimed that the Awami League called hartals earlier for protecting the voting rights of the people. "But BNP is trying to create unrest through calling hartals in the country for grabbing the state-power only," he observed.

Referring to the 'act of terrorism', he complained that strikes were being enforced forcibly in the country through creating panic.

"I think, they (opposition) do not believe in democratic elections. They want to mar the sanctity of the constitution by grabbing power through unconstitutional means" he said, adding the people would not allow them to do so.

He said that the economy was on the right track as the price situation was stable in the country. "Generally, the prices

were stable. Prices did not increase during the last Eid which is a symptom of sound economy," he said.

But, he said, some people are expressing concern about the law and order situations in the country. "I would like to say that this situation was being created intentionally by the opposition," he added.

Abu Sayeed said there should be a consensus for facing the challenges of the 21st century. "Our main objective is to alleviate poverty, develop human resources and achieve economic freedom. There is no difference of opinion on it among the political parties," he said.

Mentioning the unilateral announcement of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for not resorting to hartals, even if she becomes the opposition leader, in future, he said it was expected that the opposition leader will make similar announcement on hartal.

Muzahidul Islam Selim said the politics is now worse than any time in the past. "I did not see this sort of bad politics in my political career. I think time has come to organise a 'save politics' movement like the 'save country', 'save industry', 'save farmer' movements," he said.

### Society for Parasitology confce Jan 25

Bangladesh Society for Parasitology (BSP) will hold its fifth annual conference on January 25 at 10.00 am in the NIPSON Auditorium, Mohakhali, says a press release.

State Minister for Health and Family Welfare Dr Amanullah Khan will be the chief guest while Professor Dr Muhammad Hossain, Vice-Chancellor of Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU), Mymensingh and patron of the Society and Professor Dr M A Quader, Vice-Chancellor, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, Dhaka will be the special guests at the inaugural function.

BSP President Professor Dr Hefazuddin Shaikh and BSP Secretary General Professor Dr M Motahar Hossain Mandal will speak on the occasion.



Sylhet Bibhag Unnayan Parishad staged a rally in front of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday protesting Indian aggression in the border region. — Star photo

### Combing operation: 1187 held

A total of 1187 persons were arrested and four illegal weapons, five bullets and five explosives were seized on the 274th day of the countrywide combing operation by police, Bangladesh Rifles and Ansar, reports BSS.

The combined forces arrested 515 persons on different charges from across the country including four metropolitan areas and seized the arms, ammunition and explosives. They also arrested 668 wanted accused a three terrorists during the drive.

A total of 205 persons including 40 warrantees were arrested from Dhaka Metropolitan area and seized two explosives while 19 persons including three warrantees from Chittagong Metropolitan area.

Thirteen persons including three wanted accused and a terrorist were arrested from Khulna Metropolitan area while nine persons from Rajshahi Metropolitan area.

A total of 207 persons including 154 wanted accused were arrested from Dhaka range with one weapon and two bullets while 233 persons including 170 wanted persons and a listed terrorist were arrested from Chittagong range with two arms and three bullets.

### Rape of 2 tribal girls condemned

Hill Women's Federation Thursday condemned the incident of abduction and rape of two tribal girls by a gang of Hathazari in Chittagong recently, said a press release.

The teenage girls were abducted by a group of miscreants from Chiknachara village in Hathazari on December 30 last year. They held the girls hostage for fifteen days and also raped them, it said.

Both the victims were rescued on January 15 and cases were filed with police in this regard, it added.

### 'Push-mela' integral part of our culture'

Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzak yesterday called for upholding the culture and heritage of Bangladesh, reports BSS.

He was speaking as the chief guest at the inaugural function of a push-mela at Ramna Batamul.

Poet Shamsur Rahman an journalist Abed Khan also spoke on the occasion, while actor Jamaluddin Hossain chaired it.

The minister said push-mela, an inseparable part of the culture of Bangladesh, is celebrated every winter with joy and festivity. But in the past, this fair could not be held due to the obstruction of the 'red' quarters who had long been engaged in jeopardising the spirit of the Liberation War and sovereign identity of the nation, he said.

He called upon all patriotic forces to come forward to resist the anti-liberation and fundamentalist forces.

Poet Shamsur Rahman called for turning the push-mela into a cultural movement and *Basanta utsab* were introduced by Poet Rabindranath Tagore himself.

### Govt introducing law to protect AL: Khoka

By Staff Correspondent

Convenor of city BNP Sadek Hossain Khoka yesterday alleged that the government is going to introduce a law in the name of public safety, which is actually for the security of Awami League, says a press release.

Khoka also said that the jails of the country have been filled up with opposition leaders and activists while criminals have confounded public life.

The city BNP convenor also urged to every one to make today's rally of Khaleda Zia at the Paltan Maidan a success, it added.

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Visitors at a painting exhibition of Artist Rafiqul Islam at the Alliance Francaise de Dhaka yesterday. — Star photo

### Kidnappers stab 3 men

By Staff Correspondent

A gang of kidnapers stabbed three young men as they tried to rescue a woman at Bastahara in Kafrul area on Thursday night, according to police and hospital sources.

The gang tried to kidnap a female garments worker from No 3 Bastahara area, but local people foiled their bid.

As the people went to the aid of the women, the kidnapers stabbed Anwar Hossain, 30, M Ismail Hossain, 30, and Jahangir Hossain, 32, and fled the scene.

Two of the injured, Anwar and Ismail, are now undergoing treatment at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Kafrul Police said they were investigating the incident.

### BKL reception to Hasina Feb 14

Bangladesh Krishak League (BKL) will accord a grand reception to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on February 14 at Paltan Maidan on her winning the prestigious 'Ceres Award' of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), reports BSS.

An emergency meeting of Reception Preparatory Committee will be held at 1, Minto Road at 5 pm on January 24 to make the programme a success.

Convenor of the committee and State Minister for Land Affairs Rashed Mosharraf and Members Secretary Haroon-or-Rashid Howladar have requested all concerned including the leaders of the BKL to attend the meeting on time, a press release said.

### 40 stolen autorickshaws recovered

The Detective Branch (DB) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police recovered 40 stolen autorickshaws from Haliganj thana in Chandpur district on Wednesday and Thursday, reports BSS.

Police also arrested 25 people, 22 from Hajiganj and three from Dhaka city, for their alleged involvement in the theft.

A team of DB police, arrested Rustom Ali, Manik and Billal from Mirpur area on Wednesday night.

On the basis of their confessional statement, police on Thursday conducted extensive drives in different areas of Hajiganj thana and seized the autorickshaws.

Police suspected that the three are the members of an organised gang. They stole all these vehicles from the capital and took them to Hajiganj.

### Chehlum

By Staff Correspondent  
Chehlum of Kutubul Alam, a noted folk singer, will be held at his residence in Chapainabagan today.

On the occasion, a *milad mahfil* will be held at his Pathanpara residence after Zohr prayers.

Relatives and friends have been requested to attend the *milad*.

Kutubul Alam died at BIRDEM Hospital in Dhaka on December 14 last year.

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