



President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed who is the Chancellor of Dhaka University handed over crests of honorary doctorate degrees to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Nobel laureate world renowned economist Prof. Amartya Sen at the 40th convocation of the university on Saturday. Beaming Sheikh Hasina and Prof. Amartya Sen holding the crest amidst applause from the guests at the convocation. —OBSERVER

Convocation held peacefully despite hartal

DU confers doctorate on Hasina, Amartya Sen

Varsity Correspondent

The 40th general convocation of Dhaka University was held peacefully and honorary Doctorate degrees were conferred on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Nobel Laureate Prof. Amartya Sen at the impressive convocation held at the university playground on Saturday.

The half-day hartal from 6 a.m. to 12 noon, called by BNP's student wing Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and backed by four opposition parties to oppose conferring of honorary doctorate degrees to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and world renowned economist Prof. Amartya Sen, failed to foil the convocation due to heavy security measures and spontaneous support from the university teachers and students.

The campus of Dhaka University, popularly known as the "Oxford of the East", were a festive look for the successful holding of the general convocation of the university, first of its kind since the liberation of the country in 1971.

President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed who is the Chancellor of Dhaka University led a big impressive and colourful convocation procession to the massive convocation pandal. Members of the University Syndicate, Senate, Teachers and graduate and under-graduate students took part in the procession donning traditional colourful gowns.

Defying the JCD hartal and the panic created by explosion of bombs on Friday night by the hartal activists, hundreds of enthusiastic graduates joined the

general convocation and spent the day sharing joy and pride with each other taking snaps in informal photo sessions on the campus where they once had spent their most active days.

BSS adds: Some 1,600 graduate and post-graduate students of the university participated in the general convocation.

The teachers and students of the Institute of Fine Arts constructed 48x30 feet main dais and other supportive thrones. A huge marquee was erected to accommodate over 3,200 distinguished guests and faculty members.

Four convocation gates were erected at Shahbagh, Shikkha Bhaban Crossing, Nilkhet Crossing and Palashi Crossing.

The President and Chancellor of the University, Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed, chaired the

ceremony as the two distinguished recipients of the honorary degrees sat beside him along with the Vice Chancellor, A.K. Azad Chowdhury, and deans of faculties on the tastefully decorated podium.

The Chancellor also handed gold medals to meritorious students and certificates to the Ph.D and M Phil degree holders.

Conferring the Doctor of Laws to Sheikh Hasina, President Shahabuddin said the nation was proud of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's achievements in ending armed conflicts in the Hill Tracts and signing the Ganges Water Sharing Treaty with India.

"I can assure the Prime Minister that the nation is proud of what she has achieved during the past three years bringing an

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DU confers

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end to the conflict in the Chittagong Hill Tracts and signing an agreement with India on the sharing of waters of the Ganges. These are remarkable achievements," he observed.

Turning to Amartya Sen, the President said, "Professor Sen has succeeded in giving a human face to the Science of Economics, forcefully bringing to our attention to the necessity of ensuring the right of the people to food in times of crises."

"I have no doubt that this has changed the attitude of professional economists throughout the world," he said.

Sheikh Hasina, in her speech, called upon all to join hands to move forward the democratic culture and liberal humanity.

Sheikh Hasina pointed out that law will be protected and applied in the interest of the people through judiciary and executive, and she said everybody has the right to get the shelter of laws.

"Today I am happy to get a degree by Dhaka University along with a world-acclaimed personality like Prof Sen from the same dais," the Prime Minister said.

In response to the awarding of the honorary degree, Amartya Sen called for developing the culture of "creative and constructive disagreement" in the higher seat of learning saying that Bangladesh emerged as a sovereign entity through such a process.

Prof. Sen said universities across the world have produced great personalities like Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, founding father of Bangladesh Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Aung San Su Kyi and Soviet leader Michael Gorbachev.