

# 410 awarded death sentences by Speedy Trial Tribunals

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Nine Speedy Trial Tribunals awarded death sentences to 410 people in different sensational murder cases since their formation in October 2002 while 24 convicts of capital punishment were executed during the four-and-half-a-year rule of the present government.

This was stated by Law Minister Moudud Ahmed while addressing the monthly press briefing on the activities of his ministry in the city yesterday.

In a written statement, he said there are 831 convicts of capital punishment at 53 condemned cells of different prisons in the country.

Moudud said execution of capital punishment is being delayed due to slow pace of disposal of death references in the High Court owing to delay in preparing paper books for hearing the death reference cases.

"The government has provided 10 computers, photocopy machines and additional manpower to the Supreme Court to prepare the paper books for speedy disposal of the death references. But preparing of paper books is a lengthy process," he added.

Moudud said law officers have been instructed not to linger the hearing of death reference cases seeking time from the High Court.

He said 126 death reference

cases of 2003, 176 of 2004, 175 of 2005 and 16 of 2006 had been pending in the High Court for disposal till March 8 this year.

However, 40 cases of 2003 were disposed of by this time, he said.

"A total of 779 sensational cases including Buet student Sony murder case, and college student Bushra and school student Trisha rape and murder cases were disposed of by the Speedy Trial Tribunals till April 10," he added.

According to the statement, a total of 24 court orders for death sentence were executed from

October 2001 to January 2006. Of them, one was executed in 2001, two each in 2002 and 2003, 13 in 2004, five in 2005 and one in 2006.

"A total of 1,037 cases were filed with nine Speedy Trial Tribunals as of April 10 this year. Of them, some 61 cases are now pending with the tribunals. A total of 2,296 accused in 184 cases have been acquitted. The tribunals have given over 20 years of imprisonment to 895 convicts, 10 to 20 years to 358 and one to 10 years to 287," said Moudud.



PHOTO: PIB  
Newly appointed US Ambassador Patricia A Butenis called on Law Minister Moudud Ahmed at his office in the city yesterday.

# Bangladesh Health Watch launched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Health Watch (BHW), a civil society initiative, was launched in the city yesterday with a view to monitoring the progress towards achieving the goals of good health for all.

It will monitor the progress towards attaining health-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and those included in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP).

It will also publish an annual report titled 'State of Health in Bangladesh' this year, highlighting equity issues in the health sector, a prime goal of the nation, said a press release.

BHW convener Prof Rounaq Jahan of RIB/Columbia University presided over the launching ceremony at the BRAC Auditorium while Mahfuz Anam, editor of The Daily Star, Khushi Kabir of Nijera Kori, Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury of Gonoshasthaya Kendra, Dr Azad Khan of Birdem, Dr Abbas Bhuiyan of ICDDR,B and Dr Mushtawue Chowdhury of BRAC spoke on the occasion.

The speakers highlighted the gains the nation has achieved in health sector but felt that there was no room for complacency as the country has to go a long way to reach the goals it has set for itself.

The Health Watch also formed an advisory board with the following members: Dr Rounaq Jahan, Dr Halida

Akhter, Mahfuz Anam, Dr Maleka Banu, Prof JR Chowdhury, Dr Zafrullah Choudhury, Dr Jahangir Haider, Dr Zakir Hussain, Khushi Kabir, Dr M Kabir, Dr Azad Khan, Prof Sadeqa Tahera Khanam, Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud, Dr Mahmudur Rahman, Prof Rahman Sobhan, Dr MQK Talukder and Dr Mushtaque Chowdhury (member secretary).

The Health Watch will have its secretariat at the James P Grant School of Public Health at BRAC University.

Dr Kaiser Khan of World Bank, Dr Zakir Hussain of Public Health Association, Prof Kazi Saleh Ahmed of Jahangirnagar University, Dr Iftekharuzzaman of Transparency International, Dr A M Zakir Hussain of Asian Development Bank, Dr S M A Rashid of Water and Sanitation Forum, Dr Ahmed Al Kabir of RTM/JSI, Dr Dibaluk Singh of Dustha Shasthaya Kendra, Nasreen Haq of Action Aid, Dr Jahangir Haider of READ and Dr Julia Ahmad of BWHC took part in the open discussion session.

# US envoy meets edn minister

UNB, Dhaka

US Ambassador Patricia A Butenis yesterday made a courtesy call on Education Minister Dr M Osman Farruk at his office.

The minister apprised the envoy of different steps taken by the government to reform the education system.

He also mentioned the successes regarding the expansion of education and human resources development.

Appreciating the development in the education sector, the ambassador emphasised the qualitative aspects of the on-going reforms and expansion programmes of education system.