

'115 more
test HIV
positive
this year'

World AIDS Day observed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amid calls for immediate and comprehensive preventive measures against HIV/AIDS, Bangladesh yesterday observed the World AIDS Day as elsewhere in the world.

Different governmental and non-governmental organisations held discussions, cultural functions, screening of documentaries and brought out processions in the city to observe the day. This year the theme was "Live and Let Live".

Speaking as chief guest at a discussion held at Dr Milton Auditorium at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, Health and Family Ministry

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3



PHOTO: STAR

NGO activists march in a procession in front of the National Museum marking the World Aids Day yesterday. An estimated 13,000 people are said to be living with HIV in Bangladesh.

Universities now need PM's
nod to appoint teachers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has asked the public universities to obtain the prime minister's approval for appointment of teachers and staff.

Public universities will also require approval of the University Grants Commission (UGC) -- the higher education watchdog -- and the education and finance ministries.

The UGC has recently lifted an embargo on the appointment of teachers and officials to the 21 public universities.

However, many teachers view the new appointment rule an interference in the autonomy of the public universities guaranteed under the Public University Act, 1973.

Education Minister Osman Farruk however brushed aside the

allegation and said the new rule has been introduced to eliminate irregularities in the appointments.

"We have asked the UGC to produce an unified appointment rule for all public universities after investigating irregularities in the appointments," he recently told the BBC Radio.

All appointments to public universities were suspended for two months for this reason, he added.

But former education minister ASHK Sadek in an interview with the BBC Radio said the new rule may hinder the autonomy of the universities.

Earlier, the UGC formed a committee on the appointment and promotion of teachers and staff.

The committee recommended four first divisions/classes for appointment to science, engineer and commerce departments, three first divisions/classes for other departments and two first divisions/classes for English.

The committee recommended at least 15 publications to be eligible for promotion to professor and eight to associate professor.

There are widespread allegations that public universities often recruit teachers and staff in excess of allocated posts with political motives and press the UGC for additional funds.

Less qualified candidates get preference over the deserving ones in university teachers' appointment due to groupings linked to political parties, the allegations go.

Soft loans for
settlers in hills
planned

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will provide soft loans to Bangalee settlers in the hill tracts to end discrimination in favour of the indigenous people who already enjoy this facility.

Upon a directive from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), the finance division has recently submitted a draft proposal to Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman.

Currently, the government provides loans at 5 percent interest rate for industrial and agricultural ventures by the indigenous people in Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban districts as special economic zones. Joint ventures between highlanders and plainlanders also enjoy this facility.

The four nationalised commercial banks and Bangladesh Krishi Bank, which usually charge b e t w e e n

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

Deported workers
go back to Korea on
fresh work permit

RAFIQ HASAN

Bangladeshi workers in South Korea, deported on expiry of their tenure, get work permit and government permission anew and return to their jobs.

Till Sunday night, 1,495 Bangladeshi workers who had returned home have gone back to Korea, according to sources at the Ministry of Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment.

Some workers returned to Korea within two days without visiting parents and relatives. Most came by airways of Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand and took the return flights, the sources said.

The Korean government extended the tenure for another

two years for those who already stayed three years. Workers spent five years in Korea have been asked to go back and renew the visa and government permission.

The Korean embassy in Dhaka is issuing visa within a day only to workers having new work permit in Korea.

The officials at the ministry ruled out any possibility of massive exodus of illegal workers from Korea, as the Korean government is allowing them to work if they have authorised papers.

The expatriates welfare ministry has introduced a special desk at Zia International Airport (ZIA) and three counters at Bureau of Manpower Export and Training

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

BDR deployed
at Banshkhali
for joint raids
Rallies, sit-in in Ctg from
today to protest carnage

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

One platoon of paramilitary BDR (Bangladesh Rifles) was deployed in the Banshkhali coastal area for joint raids with police to arrest the criminals who recently incinerated 11 members of a Hindu family at Shilpara in the area.

Police officials said the BDR was called out to help police in the ongoing operation at the Banshkhali coast to arrest the killers. They said a number of suspects have been nabbed for

quizzing.

Meanwhile, Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) of Satkania circle in southern part of Chittagong, Clarence Gomes, has been asked to investigate the Banshkhali carnage.

Earlier, the officer-in-charge (OC) of Banshkhali Police Station was made investigation officer of this case, but was removed from the case as he could not make any headway.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6



PHOTO: PID

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia speaks at a function marking the Armed Forces Day at Senakunja at Dhaka Cantonment yesterday.

Sonia scents victory
in key Indian
state polls

AFP, New Delhi

India's main political foes claimed they were heading for victory as millions voted yesterday in key state assembly elections seen as a dress rehearsal for the 2004 general polls.

"We are expecting good results," the main opposition Congress chief Sonia Gandhi said as people voted in numbers in the states of Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Delhi, which are currently ruled by her party.

Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) made similar claims, as the police reported sporadic attacks on polling stations by Maoist guerrillas in Chhattisgarh.

"BJP is very confident of winning in all the four states because these areas have suffered by the misrule of the Congress," party spokesman Prakash Javadekar told AFP.

The BJP came to power in 1998 leading a 23-party disparate coalition but in the past four years the

Congress wrested power in half of India's 28 states as well as in half a dozen town halls and village councils.

Some 94 million voters were eligible to vote in the four states and people enjoyed an extended weekend Monday as most offices, schools and businesses remained shut for the balloting.

In Chhattisgarh, Maoist guerrillas opposing the polls ran away with voting machines from five polling booths in Bijapur assembly and fought a gunbattle with the police elsewhere in the state despite the high security.

More than 500,000 election workers backed by 400,000 police and troops were on guard as the 102,056 polling centres opened 8:00 am (0230 GMT) for nine hours of voting.

Pollsters say a high turnout often indicated dissatisfaction with those currently in power, which would go against the Congress. Other surveys, however, predict the Congress will retain its control over three states while the BJP could wrest power in

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

Slain journalist's
wife objects to
extended charge
sheet, files
petition

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Slain Daily Janakantha journalist Shamsur Rahman's wife yesterday submitted a petition to the Court of District and Sessions Judge, Jessore objecting to the extended charge sheet in her husband's murder case.

Selina Akhter Lucky, Rahman's wife, filed the naraji petition rejecting the new charge sheet submitted on September 14. The court fixed January 7 to hear from the complainant.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

Police run after
Ctg mayor for
information
about Jamal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police detectives are now running after Chittagong Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury to gather information about business magnate Jamaluddin Ahmed Chowdhury abducted over four months ago.

The investigation officer (IO) of Jamal abduction case, the Detective Branch (DB) of Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) Inspector Yusuf Ali, has been seeking an appointment with the mayor to get information about

SEE PAGE 11 COL 8

Prayer Timings		
December 2		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	5-15	5-40
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	5-15	5-21
Esha	7-00	7-30
Source: Islamic Foundation		