



PHOTO: STAR

Law Minister Moudud Ahmed makes a point to Chief Whip of the Opposition Abdus Shahid at an orientation programme in the city yesterday.

## Find out exact number of HIV positives

### Moudud tells orientation programme

#### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Moudud Ahmed yesterday said an extensive survey is needed to find out the actual number of HIV-infected people in the country.

"Although we have been claiming that the number of infected people in the country is very small, we don't know the exact number," he said while speaking at an orientation programme in the city.

Citing the example of Aids situation in India, Moudud said a recent survey in the neighbouring country revealed that the number of HIV-positive people is alarmingly high.

Bangladesh Parliament Members' Support Group on Prevention of HIV/Aids and Human Trafficking organised the programme at Sheraton Hotel, with Deputy Speaker and Support Group Chairperson Akhter Hamid Siddiqui in the chair.

Lawmakers from different political parties took part in the orientation session and pledged to initiate a

campaign in their respective constituencies to raise awareness about the deadly disease.

The government will enact laws, if necessary, to prevent spread of the disease, said the law minister.

He also called for launching a massive awareness campaign and said people should not hesitate to discuss the issue openly.

Deputy Speaker Akhter Hamid Siddiqui said there are many misconceptions about the disease. A person might contract Aids knowingly or unknowingly, he said.

He said awareness programmes such as seminar and symposium would be arranged in every constituency under the leadership of lawmakers to combat the disease.

Speaking at the working session, Chairman of parliamentary standing committee on defence Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Mahbubur Rahman said that for many African countries, Aids has turned out to be a more dangerous problem than the civil war they have been facing for years.

"Only three or four Bangladeshi soldiers have so far been infected with HIV," he said.

He also said discipline and strict adherence to religious practice can help prevent the spread of the disease.

Former state minister for health Prof M Amanullah, Whip Md Ashraf Hossain, Chief Whip of the Opposition Abdus Shahid, Mashiur Rahman and Shah Md Ruhul Quddus also spoke.

The speakers suggested steps to remove social superstitions and stigma regarding HIV/Aids and involving local government representatives and imams of mosques in the awareness programmes.

Prof Nazrul Islam, chairman of virology department in Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, Major General Dr ASM Matjur Rahman, chairman of Technical Committee of National Aids Committee, and Evaristo Marowa, UNAIDS country coordinator, spoke at the working session.

## Russian varsity confers doctorate on Hasina today

UNB, Dhaka

People's Friendship University of Russia (PFUR) will confer honorary doctorate on Awami League president and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina today in recognition of her contribution to democracy, peace and human rights.

Rector of the PFUR Professor Vladimir M. Filippov will present the certificate of doctorate degree to Hasina at a ceremony to be organised by the university at its auditorium.

A 25-member Scientific Council Board comprising professors of the PFUR nominated Sheikh Hasina to receive the prestigious doctorate degree after assessing her long struggle for democracy and her contribution in the field of peace and human rights. Students from 116 countries of the world are studying in the University.

"Much enthusiasm has been created among the Bangladeshi community living in Moscow on the occasion of the conferment of doctorate degree on former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina," according to a message received from Moscow yesterday.

The university authorities have colourfully decorated the podium with huge portraits of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Sheikh Hasina. The picture of pigeon, the symbol of peace, has been imprinted in the middle.

## DU Senate session begins today

DU CORRESPONDENT

A two-day annual Senate session of Dhaka University (DU) begins at 3:00pm today, with Vice Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz in the chair.

On the first day of the session, DU Treasurer Prof Syed Rashidul Hasan will place an annual budget of Tk 108.13 crore for 2005-06 fiscal without increasing tuition and admission fees.

In the proposed budget, 67.73 percent of the total budget has been allocated for salary and allowance of the teachers and other staffs while 12.95 percent for the academic sector, 11.92 percent for general activities and others sectors and 11.10 percent for pension.

## No political parties firm against communal forces

### Speakers tell memorial meeting on Jahanara Imam

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

No political parties since the country's liberation had shown any firmness to quell the rise of communal forces as they wanted to go to power at any cost, said the speakers at a memorial meeting yesterday.

The memorial meeting was organised by Ghatk Dalal Nirmul Committee at the Cirdap auditorium in the city marking the 11th death anniversary of its founder Jahanara Imam.

"Political parties are reluctant to go against the communal forces as their main target is to capture state power," said journalist Kamal Lohani.

Bangladesh cannot progress without democracy that goes futile without secularism, said Prof Anisuzzaman of Dhaka University while delivering a speech on Secularism and Bangladesh.

"Those of us who believe that democracy cannot prosper without secularism should dedicate whatever they have to combat communalism and bring back secularism in social and state life," he said.

Anisuzzaman said zealots have been launching attacks on Ahmadiyya community with a demand to declare them as non-Muslims in Bangladesh.

"It seems that the Shia community is going to be the next victim," he added.

Prof Kabir Chowdhury, who chaired the session, said a state has nothing to do with religion, it's just a private affair of

an individual.

"Mosque and Madrasa-based politics of the war criminals has launched a war against Bangalee culture and nationalism," said Dr MA Hasan, convener of the War Crimes Fact Finding Committee.

Prof Ajoy Roy said the war criminals must be brought to trial and communalism should be eliminated from social life.

Political parties must demonstrate unity and solidarity on the issues of people's interests, said Prof Borhanuddin Khan Jahangir, Nirmul Committee advisor.

The speakers also condemned the 'crossfire' killings by Rapid Action Battalion, and the recent comment of Salahuddin Kader Chowdhury on national anthem and poet Rabindranath Tagore.

The Nirmul Committee awarded women activist Hena Das and the War Crimes Fact Finding Committee with Jahanara Memorial Medal for their significant contributions to the movement that Jahanara Imam launched against the war criminals.

Vice-president of the Nirmul Committee Shyamoli Nasrin Chowdhury and General Secretary Kazi Mukul also spoke on the occasion.



PHOTO: STAR

Prof Kabir Chowdhury speaks at a meeting in memory of Jahanara Imam at the Cirdap auditorium in the city yesterday. On his left are Prof Anisuzzaman and Prof Ajoy Roy and on his right is Mahila Parishad President Hena Das.