

## MODHUMITA, MAMONI PROJECTS LAUNCHED Target to fight HIV/AIDS, save mothers, newborns

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With a view to boosting combined effort to fight HIV/AIDS and to saving lives of mothers and their newborns, two new projects were launched by Family Health International and Save the Children USA yesterday.

'Modhumita' project was launched to strengthen HIV prevention, care and treatment services while 'Mamoni' project for integrated safe motherhood, newborn care and family planning.

The projects were launched at a programme titled 'USAID-Supported Health and Population Projects' at a city hotel.

Adviser to Prime Minister Prof Syed Modasser Ali as the chief guest called on non-government organisations (NGOs) to work together for achieving the targets of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 4 and 5.

The achievement in MDG 4 and 5 that aimed at reducing child mortality and improving maternal health should have to be sustainable achievement, he added.

"Basically, the NGOs should work in such a way so that the infrastructure of the healthcare

sector and services could be expanded." Prof Modasser said the facilities of community clinics should be utilised to full extent. If there is any shortcoming in any community clinic, it should be brought to the notice of the government for immediate action.

Presiding over the programme, DGHS Director General Prof Shah Monir Hossain said various NGOs are working in different areas, but the overall status of the areas are not changing.

Misti McDowell, country director of Family Health International, and Kelland Stevenson of Save the Children, also spoke.

Denise Rollins, mission director of USAID, and Dr Mohammad Ali Belal, line director of National AIDS/STD Programme, briefly presented the programmes taken under the projects.

Dr Jafar Ahmed Hakim of Directorate General of Family Planning, Koki Agarwal, director of MCHIP, Nicholas Dean, deputy chief of mission of the US embassy, were also present.

Around 200 researchers, technical experts and partners from public health fields participated in the programme.

## FIFTH AMENDMENT 'Its cancellation might give rise to militancy'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Barrister Moudud Ahmed yesterday told the Supreme Court (SC) that if the fifth amendment to the constitution is cancelled, some political parties might lose their right to politics and eventually lean towards underground militancy.

Moudud, a former BNP law minister, said this while placing arguments before a six-member bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice Md Tafazzul Islam during a hearing on the two leave-to-appeal petitions against a High Court (HC) verdict that declared the fifth amendment illegal.

He also said the Supreme Court had held emergency rules above the constitution by vacating the HC orders for bail to some politicians during the military-backed caretaker government.

Even Sheikh Hasina, now the prime minister, had to go abroad on parole at that time, since the SC had not granted bail to her, but the same court is now questioning the military rule, he added.

Moudud also posed a ques-

tion: "Where was the constitution, when the then chief justices had administered oath to the chief martial law administrators?"

The fifth amendment legitimised all governments that had been in power following the coup of August 15, 1975 till April 9, 1979, including Ziaur Rahman's ascension to the presidency.

On August 29, 2005, the HC in a landmark verdict declared illegal and void the amendment, rendering illegal the regimes presided over by Khandaker Moshataque Ahmed, Abu Sadaat Mohammad Sayem, and Maj Gen Ziaur Rahman between those two dates.

On May 25 last year, two leave-to-appeal petitions were filed with the SC against the HC verdict.

One of the petitions was filed by three SC lawyers -- Tajul Islam, Kamruzzaman Bhuiyan, and Munshi Ahsan Kabir -- and the other by BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain.

Moudud placed arguments on behalf of the three lawyer petitioners.

## Satisfaction over execution of killers of Bangabandhu

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different socio-political organisations and professional bodies yesterday expressed satisfaction over the execution of the self-proclaimed killers of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

They said that implementation of the court verdict on Bangabandhu murder case has upheld the rule of law.

In a statement, Industries Minister Dilip Barua said the nation got rid of the disgrace and anguish of the last 34 years through implementation of the verdict.

The trial has proved that no one is above the law and has taken the country one step ahead of establishing justice and rule of law, he added.

Commerce Minister Faruk Khan placed a wreath at the mazar of Bangabandhu at Tungipara and sought eternal peace of the departed soul.

Hailing the execution of the historic trial, Dr Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh, hoped that the government would bring back the absconding accused as soon as possible and would try them.

In a statement, leaders of Citizens' Rights Movement hailed the trial. They also demanded trial of jail killing case, war criminals and other

bomb attack incidents.

Leaders of Bangladesh Mohajir Welfare and Development Committee expressed satisfaction on the execution of the death sentence to the killers, adding that their faith on judiciary has been restored.

Krishak Sramik Janata League and Janata Bank Ltd organised doa and milad mahfil after implementation of the verdict.

Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation, Bangamata Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Parishad, Mahila Muktiyoddha Parishad, Jatiy Muktibahini '75, Bangabandhu Nagorik Sanghati Parishad, Bishwa Bangalee Sammelan, Sammilita Samajik Andolon, Democratic Lawyers' Association of Bangladesh, Bangladesh Khetmajur Samity, Institution of Diploma Engineers, Bangladesh, Bangladesh Muktiyoddha Sangsad and Bangladesh Fetna Protirodh Committee also expressed satisfaction over implementation of the verdict.

Other organisations, which hailed the execution of the killers, include Non-Government Teachers' and Workers' Welfare Trust, Karmojibi Nari, Bangabandhu Lekhok Parishad, Dhaka Ainjibi Samity, Proshika, Institutions of Engineers, Bangladesh Chittagong, Bangladesh Jubo Union, Sammilita Nagorik Samaj, Bangladesh Christian Association and Krishibid Institution Bangladesh.



PHOTO: COURTESY

Gulshan Society President CM Shafi Sami hands over warm clothes to poor people at Gulshan Lake Park in the city recently. Gulshan Runners Club organised the three-day distribution programme. Runners Club President Jahangir Kabir Chowdhry, Vice-President Hasan Ali Bhuiyan and General Secretary Akram Ullah Akram were present.

## Project on oral cholera vaccine

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In collaboration with the government, ICDDR,B will launch a five-year project to assess the feasibility of using an oral cholera vaccine.

Mirpur has been chosen as the study area where 120,000 children above the age of one year will be vaccinated. Pregnant women and children under one would be excluded.

The vaccine has already been successfully introduced in countries like Vietnam and India. The chosen vaccine is safe, affordable and effective in preventing cholera, scientists said at a meeting at Sasakawa auditorium with Health Minister AFM Ruhul Haque in the chair.

One of the aims of the project

is to transfer the cholera vaccine technology and to make it more affordable for future availability and use in Bangladesh.

The project is supported by Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for five years, says a press release from ICDDR,B yesterday.

Health Secretary Shaikh Altaf Ali, IGRD Secretary Monzur Hossain, Joint Secretary Syed Omar Khaiyam, Executive Director of ICDDR,B Dr Alejandro Cravioto, Dr Firdausi Qadri, Dr Stephen Luby and representatives from ICDDR,B, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, WHO, International Vaccine Institute, Incepta Pharmaceuticals and Shanta Biotechnics Ltd were present at the meeting.



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