

## ASIAN UNIVERSITY FOR WOMEN

# First batch of students welcomed in Ctg

ABDULLAH AL MAHMUD, Ctg

Asian University for Women (AUW) yesterday accorded a reception to its first batch of students promising to provide world-class education to young women in Asia and groom future leaders of the globe.

The first batch of 131 students, who have gained a place in the Access Academy Programme of the university, were accorded the welcome at the auditorium of the Theatre Institute, Chittagong (TIC).

Rokia Afzal Rahman, chairman of the Bangladesh Board of Advisers of the AUW Support

Foundation (AUWSF), and also a former adviser of the caretaker government, welcomed the students to the programme saying that with the commencement of its journey, the university is transforming a dream into a reality.

AUW is characterised with vision and dedication to educate the young women of Asia, she said, expressing hope that regional cooperation will begin to bloom from here.

The Access Academy Programme is an eighteen-month full scholarship programme sponsored by the Goldman Sachs Foundation leading to admission

into AUW undergraduate faculties.

Of the 131 students, 56 are from Bangladesh and the others from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Cambodia and Myanmar.

Jack Meyer, Chairman of AUWSF Board of the Directors, urged the new students to make use of every opportunity at the university and share their culture and knowledge with fellow students.

Judy Moody Stuart, vice-chairperson of AUWSF Board of Directors, described the university as "a women enterprise to form a 21st century international

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## Asian University

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community of girls pioneering in the field of education."

"It will change the history of Asia as well as that of the world," she declared.

M Osman Farruk, former minister for education, said with the launching of AUW, a landmark step has been taken to make 21st-century education accessible to women in Asia.

Vice-Chancellor of the university Nancy S Dye said AUW would provide unparalleled opportunities to Asian women and prepare them to lead in their respective fields anywhere in the world.

While talking to The Daily Star former education minister Osman Farruk -- who was involved in establishing the university -- termed setting up of the university as a great achievement.

"The main objective of the initiative was to bring the prospective girls of Asian countries together for interaction and better understanding among themselves," he said.

AUWSF CEO and President Kamal Ahmad said that the university would shift to its own campus at north Pahartali by the year 2010.

The Government has unequivocally approved a charter that guarantees AUW total institutional autonomy, an independent status traditionally enjoyed by the United Nations agencies.

AUW is being developed under a US\$ 400m project. An impressive list of individuals and donor agencies, led by a US\$ 15m donation from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, finance the project.

Chittagong Development Chairman Shah Muhammad Akhter Uddin has described AUW as brilliant development that will enhance the positive image of the country, and also benefit the investment scenario for Chittagong.