

# Hopeful development

## on Hudood *2/1/05*

*New Justice*  
**T**he Council of Islamic Ideology will be reviewing all Islamic laws, including the controversial Hudood Ordinance, and submitting its recommendations to Parliament. The announcement was made by the Council's chairman, Dr Khalid Masood, at a press conference in Islamabad on Monday. Dr Masood pointed out that since all the Islamic laws promulgated by the Zia-ul-Haq government have become part of the Constitution, they could only be amended by Parliament.

A consultative body entrusted with the important task of submitting recommendations to the government with regard to streamlining the existing Islamic laws and reviewing them in the light of the changing needs of the times, Dr Masood announced that the Council had looked into various laws pronounced from 1836 to 1977 and had submitted no less than 77 reports to the Parliament. He said that from 1997 onwards the Council had reviewed 340 laws and that it would be submitting its recommendations on four laws.

Debate and deliberation on Islamic criminal laws, and their interpretation in the light of the contemporary socio-political conditions, is the need of the day, and the Council is organising a three-day workshop on Islamic Criminal Law in a Globalising World starting tomorrow. The workshop will provide a valuable platform to Pakistani and foreign Muslim and non-Muslim scholars to interact on intellectual, academic and ideological lines. Hopefully it will produce discussions regarding the issues related to Islamic criminal laws (Hudood, Qisas and Ta'zir).

It is imperative to focus on the issues emerging from the Islamic laws that have created a lot of controversy in the country. Prominent among them is the Hudood Ordinance. If it is found to be flawed, it should be amended. Similarly, there is the 'Blasphemy Law' which is strongly criticised particularly by the religious minorities. All loopholes in this law must be removed to prevent its abuse, which allows for the minorities to be targeted. With the government trying to project the image of Pakistan as a modern and moderate state, the creation of an atmosphere of deliberations, exchange of views and better understanding of important religious issues and the laws that govern them is vital. And this is where the Council comes in. All its recommendations on Islamic laws must be given the focussed attention that they deserve, and if they are found feasible they should be implemented in letter and in spirit.