

## Govt to curb plight of children in conflict with law

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed is likely to instruct today all concerned including secretaries of four ministries concerned for necessary legal reforms to curb the plight of the children who come in conflict with the law, sources said.

The chief adviser holds a meeting at his office at 10:30am today where secretaries of women and children affairs ministry, social welfare ministry, home ministry and law, justice and parliamentary affairs ministry have been asked to place specific recommendations and brief him on the development of legal reforms.

Bangladesh ratified the

Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990 whereby the country is under an obligation to review and harmonise its legislation with the international standards.

But after more than 18 years of ratification, the country has yet to start the process of legal reform in favour of the children, said the child rights activists.

Different countries including several South Asian countries have already adopted new separate laws to deal with children in conflict with the law, and 69 countries have so far adopted children's code in line with the UN Convention.

The Committee on the Rights of the Child that monitors the imple-

mentation of the Convention worldwide has repeatedly asked Bangladesh to carry out the legal reforms.

In its periodic report in 2003, the Committee expressed concern on the unclear status of the Convention in the domestic legal framework of Bangladesh and its insufficient steps to bring existing legislations to full conformity with the Convention.

Besides, various studies conducted on the issue have identified a number of gaps in the national legal framework concerning children's rights in Bangladesh, particularly in the administration of juvenile justice.

## Rab unearths Tk 100cr gas pilferage in N'ganj factory

Four arrested

UNB, Narayanganj

The Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) in a joint drive with Titas Gas officials, arrested four staff members of GMS Glass Factory in Siddhirganj yesterday morning on charges of pilfering a huge amount of gas worth Tk 100 crore.

During the raid, the Rab members found evidence of 'large-scale pilferage' by the factory owned by two relatives of former Awami League lawmaker Shamim Osman, who is now a fugitive.

The arrested factory staffers are marketing manager Ranjan Majumder, commercial manager Abdul Awal and VAT officers Lutfur Rahman and Manjur Ahsan. The factory owners went into hiding to evade arrest, said an official source.

The Rab also found evidence of meter tampering at the factory.

## Kidnapped official rescued

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday rescued an official of a private firm 27 hours after he was kidnapped in the city.

Abdul Alim, an official of Asia Pacific Communications Ltd at Dhanmondi, was rescued from a house in Keraniganj.

He was kidnapped by three people including one of his colleagues Mamunur Rahman on his way to office from Jurain at Shyampur on Sunday morning.

After kidnapping Alim, the kidnappers called his brother over the cell phone and demanded Tk 5 lakh in ransom identifying them as members of the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab).

Moyeen Uddin filed a general diary with Shyampur Police Station in this connection.

He told The Daily Star that he had also inquired at different Rab offices about his brother.

Later, acting on a secret information, South Keraniganj and Shyampur police conducted a joint raid at Hasnabad area in Keraniganj and rescued him from a two-storey building at around 1:00pm.

## Asians inter-arsity debate ends today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The quarter final of the 15th All Asians Inter-Varsity Debate Championship 2008 was held at United International University (UIU) yesterday.

The closing ceremony of the programme will be held at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre at 6:30pm today.

Prime Bank Ltd, Southeast Bank Ltd, NCC Bank Ltd, BRAC Bank Ltd, Citi Bank NA, MOJO, Rahimafrooz, ACI Ltd, Berger Bangladesh Ltd, International Organisation of Migration (IOM), Nescafe, Biman Bangladesh Airlines, ATN Bangla, The Daily Star, Prothom Alo, Radio Forth, Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel, St Joseph Higher Secondary School, United International University, Computer Source Ltd, Masthead PR and Farzana Shakil Makeover Salon Ltd are the sponsors of the event.

## Obituary

Shibshankar Chakraborty, former company secretary of Apex Tannery Group, passed away due to old age complications at Birdem Hospital in the city yesterday at the age of 81, says a press release.

He left behind his wife and a host of admirers to mourn his death.

His body will be kept at Dhakeshwari Temple from 8:00am to 9:00am, Shiddeshwari Kalimata Temple from 9:30am to 9:45am and Bholanandagiri Ashram at KM Das Lane from 10:00am to 12:00am today for the people of all walks of life to pay their last respect to him.

His funeral will be held at Razbargh crematorium at 1:00pm.

**DHAKA TODAY**

**Seminar**  
Marie Stopes in cooperation with BGMEA, National AIDS/STD Programme and Save the Children-USA organises a seminar on HIV/AIDS and prevention strategies with garment factories. Venue: Hotel La Vind. Time: 6:30pm.

**Seminar on climate change**  
A seminar and film screening on climate change will be held. Venue: RC Majumdar auditorium, DU. Time: 10:30am.

**Rotary Dhaka**  
The regular meeting of Rotary Club of Dhaka will be held. Venue: Sonargaon Hotel. Time: 5:30pm.

## Full text of CA's address to nation

BSS, Dhaka

Following is the text of the address to the nation by Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed aired by Bangladesh Betar and Bangladesh Television yesterday:

**Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim**  
**Dear Countrymen, Assalamu Alaikum,**

I appear before you today at a critical juncture of the national life. We took over the responsibility of the government on January 12, 2007 in the backdrop of inevitable changes. We are near to the threshold of the final phase of our desired political transition today on the basis of the reform programmes of about 16 months.

After assuming the responsibility, the main objective of the caretaker government was to conduct holding of a free, fair and neutral election acceptable to all. It aims at ushering a new healthy and democratic post election political trend. To achieve this goal, we required a flawless voter list and creation of a congenial environment to hold the election. You know, the preparation of a flawless voter list was the common demand of all political parties. To achieve this, we immediately accomplished the task of reconstituting the Election Commission and consequently the Election Commission engaged itself in preparing a flawless voter list.

Registration of almost 6.5 crore voters have already been completed. For this, I sincerely congratulate the Election Commission, Armed Forces, field administration, and all development partners. Simultaneously, I also express my gratitude to the countrymen for extending all assistance and support to the efforts, making successful these historic activities.

To create environment to hold a free, fair and proper and meaningful election acceptable to all, one of the major conditions is to clampdown on black money and use of muscle power, establish rule of law and carry out anti-corruption drives improvement of law and order and above all, made effective and dynamic the state-run institutions. You know, our government is working uncompromisingly to achieve these goals and has already been successful to a great extent in creating a election-friendly environment. In this context, on behalf of the government, I would like to make a clear announcement about the date of the next Jatiya Sangsad election. The election would be held on any day in the third week of December next. The Election Commission will make announcement of the specific date and election schedule as per rule.

I hope all questions, suspicious and speculations centring election will come to an end after this. The sunrise of the new-year after December next, will greet a newly elected people's representative government in office. And it will be made possible by the democracy-loving people of Bangladesh, its supportive political parties, concerned government and non-government organisations and the people of the right thinking civil society.

We have almost reached now the final phase of the election process. Our aim is to establish a proper sustainable democratic process in the country by holding a free, fair and acceptable election as per the earlier announced roadmap. It is true that the achievement of this goal is not possible by the caretaker government alone. It requires an indifferent national unity. In the light of this reality, steps have been taken to initiate a dialogue on the basis of proposals made by various political parties and professional organisations. We held pre-dialogue discussion staggering over 22 days before starting the main dialogue. Five advisers of the government completed the pre-dialogue discussions working relentlessly and trying intensively to understand the views of the parties. I firmly believe, by holding the pre-dialogue discussion, we have been able to send the message of our earnest desire in building the foundation of respect and trust in political parties. The five advisers of the government have prepared the dialogue document and presented their views to me containing the main objective of the dialogue, its procedure, and different action programmes that may be taken. In this context, I would like to announce that we would sit in formal dialogue with political parties starting from May 22. Letters will be sent from tomorrow (Tuesday) from my office to various political parties inviting them to join the dialogue.

I firmly believe, in this historic dialogue we will be able to reach consensus on all important national issues. It will reflect the hopes and aspirations of all political parties, groups, professions and the people of the country at large. It cannot be denied that the national consensus to be reached in this way needs to be given a moral compulsion and permanent shape. In the light of this, a 'national charter' needs to be adopted through concerted discussion of the government, political parties, representatives of all groups and professions. A proper and fair electoral framework will be established through this national charter. It will help launch a healthy and stable democratic process in the country.

**My dear countrymen,**  
I have already mentioned that the government has accomplished various programmes aimed at making the election meaningful. It is at the final stage of the process to promulgate soon the Election Commission proposed amended electoral law, rules and regulations.

We hope that the political parties will spontaneously come forward to take steps towards reform keeping conformity with the electoral law, rules and regulations.

I firmly believe that the political parties would remain committed to playing an effective supportive role to the steps taken by the government. The nation expects that the entire election process would be free from black money, muscle power, administrative biases, nomination trade and excessive expenses for poll campaigns. Also it is expected that the political parties would reach a consensus through dialogue to create an election-friendly environment with improved law and order situation.

**Dear countrymen,**  
The Election Commission has already expressed its decisions to hold polls in city corporations and some municipalities before the national elections. Besides, polls at upazila levels are also in their work plan. It's a demand of the time to hold polls at upazila, pourasabha and city corporations as part of strengthening local government institutions aimed at people's welfare.

The government, in this context, would provide all-out support and cooperation based on the needs and demands from the Election

Commission. However, the elections at local levels would not create any obstacle to attain our target -- to hold national elections. We would remain uncompromising in regards to national elections. We would just expect that the polls at the local levels would be able to create a positive flow towards greater national elections.

Our all endeavours would turn into despair unless a healthy and stable democracy is introduced. To that end, our first task is to reach consensus on all issues towards qualitative improvement of politics. In this context, we expect a successful implementation of voluntary internal reforms of all political parties. The nation today wants to see a successful implementation of cherished reforms for creating a trend of democratic attitudes within political parties, as well as to make inroads for honest, worthy and dynamic leadership.

Side by side, the people also expect a reflection of mutual respects among political parties for each other as well as cordial and effective relationship among them. I do hope that all would realise the urgency of reaching consensus to introduce and spearhead the motto of a healthy and stable democratic system in all party and state activities.

**Dear countrymen,**  
It is very urgent to reach a consensus before elections to make the parliament effective after the elections. Different proposals have already been discussed in this context. It must be ensured that none would reject election results, nor they boycott parliament. I would hope that this thing would be discussed in dialogue with special importance.

The obligations to be realised by all to continue and proceed further the institutional and legal reforms done by the caretaker government that include separation of judiciary, Election Commission and Anti-Corruption Commission.

All know, the culture of 'lackey politics' is one of the major sources of 'evil politics'. Whatever good intentions gave birth to front organisations, the ground reality of today is that most of these organisations are now plunged into an ill culture of lackey politics that is void of ideology. It has become imperative to rescue politics from such trends, put it on track and resume a health trend through qualitative changes in politics. We have to realise these important issues through dialogues and find clear solutions to those as well.

**Dear Countrymen**  
The present world is very competitive and fast moving. All political and administrative activities should be complementary to economic development to keep pace with the world economy. Every day and every hour is very important to keep economic wheels moving on. So we have to reach consensus that we would shun all forms of destructive and negative politics. Hartal, blockade and violent agitation would be buried forever. The nation doesn't want to see any form of anarchic political activities in future.

Here, I want to raise another issue for considerations. To make power

permanent, the tendency of politicisation in different public institutions, including administration, has been expanded severely in the past. Sadly I am to say that the ill culture of such politicisation is not at all good for the nation in any sense. Running administration based on efficiency and merit is a clear reflection of a successful regime. All political leadership has to think it deeply. I hope that an effective solution would be sort out from dialogues to this effect and consensus would also be established.

You know, the serious degradation of rule of law was the main reason for creating unbridled anarchic situation before January 11 of 2007. Our government has been playing an uncompromising role to establish the rule of law. The supports from all of you and your deep respect to rule of law have together made it possible to establish an improved law and order situation in the country. I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to all political parties, professional organisations, civil society and others for it.

**Dear fellow countrymen,**  
You all will agree that the people might not be fully informed about the grim picture of corruption unless our government would have conducted the anti-corruption

steps to suspend or relax certain provisions of emergency rules and its regulations at an appropriate time for creating an atmosphere for holding election. The government is firmly determined to do everything that is required for making the election meaningful and fruitful.

**Dear fellow countrymen,**  
The record production of three main staple foods -- boro, wheat and potato -- for the first time in the country's history, is the latest example that we can achieve any success through an integrated and united effort. We have proved, through the bumper production of crops, that we can do many things if there are good wishes and initiatives.

For this great success, I on behalf of the government and the people, convey my sincere gratitude and appreciation to the farmer community. I congratulate all concerned including various ministries, field level administration and the army who played their due role for achieving the success. I hope, the trend of new reawakening would be continued during the upcoming Aman season. The government is firmly committed to provide all kinds of cooperation to the farm sector and the farmers.

**Dear countrymen,**  
The dialogue in one sense is a trust-based initiative. There may be disputes, rivalry and competition within us. But in eventual judgment, these are not our main features. The nation expects from us a healthy and stable transition. We will have to overcome all narrowness, vengeance and mistrust in proceeding towards that end.

I know, we have the courage to discard these challenges. This is the time to express our determination. We don't have any scope to go backward. All the hearts of 150 million people of our beloved motherland developed an irresistible dream in view of the reality of the time. This dream is for a political and economic transition and to stand before the comity of the world with a national identity, flourished with the spirit of self-confidence.

**Dear fellow countrymen,**  
We think the role of common masses in the process of electoral and political reforms is to be most crucial. We don't want to go back to the situation which had witnessed violent political conflicts. We want a qualitative and meaningful change in the governance and political structures. The people will have to take the responsibility to ensure that the political parties are run according to the law and the constitution in a democratic atmosphere. You will also have to ensure that honest, competent, patriotic, meritorious and efficient candidates dedicated to public welfare are elected to represent the people in parliament.

We will have to keep in mind that the key to build an enlightened future for society and state lies with the people or voters. I will hope, all voters of the country will perform this duty accurately on the day of the election. Allah willing, we will definitely succeed in installing an honest, patriotic, transparent and really accountable government through the accurate exercise of our voting rights.

The next election is also opening up a golden horizon for politicians who intend to unveil the door of a golden future for the motherland. I hope, the honest, competent and enthusiastic politicians will also properly take this advantage.

**Dear countrymen,**  
At this transition point of the history, I would like to express my hope that we will be able to remove the apparent differences of our opinions or thoughts through cordial discussions and exchange of opinions since our goal is the same. Definitely, we will have to instill in the soil of this country the democracy and democratic system, values and rules and regulations. And it will have to be done for a permanent period. We will have to ensure this sustainable system to announce our democratic entry with pride in the world stage defying all odds or barriers.

Before conclusion, I would like to reiterate some points of my today's statement.

1. The election for the ninth parliament will be held in the third week of December this year. 2. We will start the formal dialogue with the political parties of the country from May 22. 3. The ban on indoor politics across the country will be lifted tomorrow. 4. According to the necessity, we will suspend or relax the relevant sections of the emergency rules and regulations at appropriate time to create a favourable atmosphere for the election and ease the poll campaigns. 5. Efforts will be made to formulate 'National Charter' on the basis of consensus on relevant matters prior to the polls so qualitative changes are censured in government and political systems after the election.

The responsibility of making the dialogue a success lies with all of us. To say in one word, there is no scope for failure in this regard. In terms of aspirations, the nation is united today. Here lies our main strength. The successful eventualities of the journey we started on January 11, 2007 is at our doorstep. We will definitely reach our aspired goal with our united efforts.

The present caretaker government will no more be in office at the end of this year but it will leave behind a sustainable democratic system based on a firm foundation. We extremely hope that the hopes and aspirations of the struggling people of Bangladesh will get a real shape through this foundation.

May Allah help us in rebuilding that enlightened and democratic future. Allah Hafez.

## SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT DU Probe demanded

DU CORRESPONDENT

Pragatisheel Chhatra Jote (PCJ), an alliance of left-leaning student organisations, yesterday demanded proper investigation into the incident of sexual harassment of a female student of psychology department of Dhaka University (DU) by a teacher of the same department.

They also demanded formulation of anti-sexual harassment rules and formation of a complaint cell at the university to avoid recurrence of such incidents.

At a press conference, the student leaders also alleged that a fanatical group is trying to use this sensitive issue to create an unstable situation at the university.

Gulam Kibria Shaheen, Luva Tabassum, Hossain Ahmed, Habib Imran Jani, Preetam and Saikat were present at the press conference held at the Madhu's Canteen.

Earlier, the PCJ leaders also met Vice Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz at his office and placed the same demand.

Prof Faiz told reporters at his office that he would form a probe committee today after receiving a formal decision of the department's academic committee and raise the issue at the next syndicate meeting scheduled for May 16.

The academic committee of the psychology department has relieved the accused teacher of examination-related activities at the department.

A group of female students, under the banner of 'Alokita Chhatra Forum' also formed a human chain on the VC office premises while another group of students staged demonstration under the banner of 'General students'.

Later, both the groups met Prof Faiz separately and demanded punishment to the accused teacher.

Talking to The Daily Star, the accused teacher dismissed the allegations as baseless. "I think some teachers of the department are involved in a conspiracy against me," he added.



PHOTO: STAR

Managing Director of Prime Bank Shahjahan Bhuiyan, middle, hands over a cheque for Tk 20 lakh to Executive Director of Oithya Onneswan Prof Sufi Mustafizur Rahman, right, at a press conference at the National Press Club in the city yesterday for Wari-Bateshwar excavation project. On their right is Captain Imam Anwar. (Story on Page 16)

## LOCAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

### 'Raise budgetary allocation to strengthen it'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at the concluding session of a national workshop yesterday stressed the need for increasing budgetary allocation to strengthen the local justice system and ensure marginal people's access to resources.

They also laid emphasis on integrated efforts of the government, non-government and civil society organisations to make the local justice system effective.

The two-day workshop on 'Local Justice System' was organised jointly by the World Bank and Bangladesh Legal Aid Services Trust (BLAST) at LGED auditorium in the capital.

Speaking as chief guest at the concluding session, chief adviser's Special Assistant Raja Debashish Roy said the traditional justice system of indigenous people needs to be included in the existing justice system with proper research and due respect.

He also called for making the land commission for indigenous people effective.

Dr Shamsul Bari, member of Blast Trustee Board, chaired the session which was also addressed by Kim McQuay, country representative of Asia Foundation, Ian Morrison, project director of CIDA (Bangladesh), and Xian Zhu, country director of the World Bank.

## Govt to miss June deadline

FROM PAGE 1

generation in the last three years.

Owned by Moazzem Hossain, brother of former BNP lawmaker Mohtarraf Hossain of Feni, Energy Prima claimed it had partnership with a Russian power company. But the Russian company never appeared in the field. Sources said Moazzem, accused in a corruption case filed by the Anti-corruption Commission (ACC), bagged the deal using his political connections.

The Proposal Evaluation Committee (PEC) of the Power Cell accepted Energy Prima's bid ignoring a number of serious questions. Energy Prima was a joint venture of Russian Geo-Spectrum Group, Energy Prima and Hosaf Meter Industry when the bids were submitted but the legal documents of this joint venture were not registered under the Companies Act.

Energy Prima and Hosaf Meter are both owned by Moazzem Hossain. Energy Prima's business has been shown as "local agent", without explaining who it represents and how it is related to the power sector. Geo-Spectrum on the other hand is a Russian power plant manufacturer and not a rental power developer.

During a meeting with the PDB yesterday, representatives of Energy Prima said of its four projects it might be able to launch a 50MW plant in Kumargaon in late May, and launch another 50MW plant in Shahjibazar in mid June. The remaining 70MW may be added in July.

Strangely enough, the PDB seemed to have taken this delay very lightly. At the meeting, the Energy Prima representative also appeared to be relaxed about the failure to meet the deadline.

However, the energy ministry is insisting on the \$500 per day per MW compensation a contractor has to pay to the PDB for failing to launch power plants within 120 days.

This means Energy Prima should be paying \$85,000 a day from May 15 for failing to meet the deadline. This may gradually reduce when it brings its power plants online one by one.

But Energy Prima is not the lone defaulter. Awarded a 30MW power project in Bholra, Venture Energy Resources also lack the experience

in building any power plants. "So far they mobilised almost nothing at the Bholra plant site," said a source, adding, "It is most likely that this contract will fail completely."

The sixth bid winner Alstom did not even try to proceed with its contract to set up a 20MW power unit in Bheramara. Sources said the PDB has already cashed Alstom's bank guarantee submitted against the contract.

The seventh bid winner Aggreko, which is globally known as a rental power developer, made some progress with its 40MW scheme in Khulna. However, PDB sources could not confirm if Aggreko would be able to launch its plant from May 28.

All of these plants are supposed to operate on a three-year contract as a short-term measure to minimise the load-shedding scenario.

The price of this power will be

costlier than that generated by conventional power plants. In January, the energy secretary convinced the caretaker government's cabinet to approve these costly bids arguing that the power will be delivered within 120 days and the value of having this power is much higher.

"But now we are ready to accept the fact that we will not get timely power supply," said a source.

The government last month awarded a 50MW rental power deal in Ashuganj to Green Power, another inexperienced company that competed in the rental power bid earlier.

The Power Cell floated the rental power bids in October, drawing 13 offers from five companies in seven locations. On November 19, the cell held another tender to draw offer for the eighth location and received two more such offers.



## Rise in temperature likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at one or two places over all the six divisions in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Mild heat wave condition over Khulna and Barisal divisions and the regions of Noakhali and Chittagong may continue.

Slight rise in day temperature is expected over the country during the period, Met Office said.

Highest temperature 38.7 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Rajshahi and lowest 21.4 degrees Celsius at Sayedpur.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:33pm today and rises at 5:16am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	35.3	26.2	63	49
Chittagong	33.3	23.7	59	71
Rajshahi	36.5	24.6	63	53
Khulna	35.2	24.0	78	62
Barisal	35.4	24.5	71	65
Sylhet	35.7	25.6	57	77
Cox's Bazar	35.1	23.4	--	71