

## 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

### 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.

Golam Kibria Shaheen, Luvna Tabassum, Hossain Ahmed, Habib Iman 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.

## Govt to miss June deadline

FROM PAGE 1

generation in the last three years.

Owned by Moazzem Hossain, brother of former BNP lawmaker Mosharraf 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 Hosaat 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 Hosaat 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 Shahibazar 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 Bholia, Venture Energy Resources also lack the experience

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.

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.

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.

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



PHOTO: STAR

Managing Director of Prime Bank Shahjahan Bhuiyan, middle, hands over a cheque for Tk 20 lakh to Executive Director of Oliya Onneswan Prof Sufi Mustafizur Rahman, right, at a press conference at the National Press Club in the city yesterday for Wari-Bateswar 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.

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.

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.

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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, City Bank NA, MOJO, Rahimafrooz Ltd, ACI Ltd, Berger Bangladesh Ltd, International Organisation of Migration (IOM), Nescafe, Biman Bangladesh Airlines, ATTN Bangla, The Daily Star, Prothom Alo, Radio Foorti, 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.

"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 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 plant from May 28.

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.

in building any power plants.

"So far they mobilised almost nothing at the Bholia 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.

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