

### WB, donors are yet to renew lending in energy sector

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday lamented the staggering system loss and underlined the need for increasing management efficiency for making power sector economically viable so that donors withdraw the credit freeze on it, reports UNB.

World Bank and other donors are yet to renew lending in energy sector which they suspended in 1992 due to system loss and inefficiency," he said as chief guest at the Sixth Conference of Power Generation Officers' Association at WAPDA auditorium.

The Finance Minister feared if system loss could not be brought down to a tolerable level of at least 20 per cent, donors might not be interested again to invest in this capital-intensive sector in future.

"What shall I say in response to the donors' query regarding energy in the next board meeting of World Bank in January?" said Saifur, also Chairman of the Board of Governors of World Bank and IMF.

increased," he said and assured that the government would actively consider various financial incentives of the Power Development Board officials.

He said the government had invested maximum in this sector and would continue in future as it is considered a priority sector like education and health.

Addressing as special guest, the Energy Minister said at present 18 power stations were producing nearly 2000 megawatt power through 52 units against their installed capacity of 2650 megawatt.

### BMA token strike begins today

The Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) will observe a two-hour token strike for three days from today to press home their 21-point charter of demands.

According to a BMA handout, the doctors will refrain from work from 11 am to 1 pm to press for their demands. The emergency sections, however, will work during the token strike.

### Jute workers oppose MOU

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Justment credit (JSAC) reportedly for a 3-year programme to revitalise the country's ailing jute industry.

But convenor of the action council Abul Bashar told a news conference that as per conditions of the MOU, 18 jute mills of BJMC will be handed over to private owners, total jute production reduced to 180,000 metric tons from 750,000 tons, and workers and employees will face massive termination.

### Dinesh Singh

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The Ministry because of the mounting criticism of the latter's inability to cope with the rigours of office with his impaired health.

Dinesh has already been told to distance himself from the day-to-day affairs of the ministry and when the Prime Minister finds it convenient, he may give him another portfolio or even keep him in the cabinet without portfolio.

### Yeltsin greeted

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in holding parliamentary elections.

He hoped that friendly relations and cooperation between Bangladesh and the Russian Federation would be further strengthened.

Begum Khaleda Zia wished the Russian President all success in the continuing endeavours towards full democracy, national reconstruction and rapid development.

### Jamuna Bridge project

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technical issues about the bridge, river training, course of the river, erosion, resettlement of displaced people, environmental issues, its economic impact on north Bengal, impact on the nation's gross domestic product (GDP) and even about the priority of the bridge in the economic planning of Bangladesh.

48-hours at the Aricha Ferry-ghat. They, in turn, insisted that the waiting period is much shorter.

The Japanese team also argued that the money could be better spent on other priority projects, particularly in the area of human resources development, the diplomatic sources said. It is being seen by Japan as more of a political than an economically viable project.

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Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia seen talking to some women volleyball players while visiting different sections of the National Indoor Stadium after its formal inauguration at Mirpur in the city yesterday.

### PM opens indoor stadium, pool

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday inaugurated a most modern international-standard indoor stadium and swimming complex at Mirpur as countdown began for a regional sports extravaganza in capital Dhaka, reports UNB.

The VI SAF Games is going to be held only after two days. Our sports establishments will be resounded with the footsteps of South Asia's hundreds of sportsmen. I am hopeful, the SAF Games will bring success and prestige through our united efforts," she said opening the National Indoor Stadium and Swimming Complex, constructed at a cost of Tk 46.26 crore within nine months and 22 days.

She said there is a deep relation between a country's socio-economic development and development of sports and culture. "So, we have given due importance to sports and cultural sectors in our development planning."

The swimming pool and indoor stadium have been built as part of our ongoing efforts in this regard, Begum Zia added.

The swimming complex cost Tk 12.10 crore while the indoor stadium Tk 34.16 crore. Both were constructed on the eve of the VI SAF Games beginning here tomorrow.

### Khaleda goes to Gournadi today

From Staff Correspondent  
BARISAL, Dec 18: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia is expected to visit Gournadi and Hizla of Barisal tomorrow.

She is scheduled to arrive in Gournadi at 11 am and address a public meeting at the Government Gournadi College ground.

She will inaugurate the Palli Biddiut Samity at Hizla and address a public meeting at the Hizla College ground.

### Ironic end to rescue mission

By Staff Correspondent  
A road accident victim died when the Fire Service vehicle carrying him to the hospital met another accident at Goran on the Dhaka-Aricha highway yesterday noon.

On receipt of an information, a Fire Service vehicle from Manikganj rushed to Jaigr and picked up the victim, lying unconscious on the highway. But on its way back to Manikganj an Aricha-bound truck dashed and overturned the vehicle, killing the victim and injuring all the fireman on board.

### Tax lawyers

From Page 1 Col 5  
or disrespectful towards the law," the secretary general said.

The lawyers demanded withdrawal of the Finance Minister's decision, terming it 'illegal'.

Referring to the minister's speech on the budget in 1991, they said that the government was yet to introduce income tax for the government officials while the non-government officials were paying taxes on their incomes.

### Murtaza charged with insurgency

KARACHI (Pakistan), Dec 18: A special court today charged Murtaza Bhutto, the jailed brother of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, with insurgency and attempting to topple the government by force, reports Reuters.

The prosecution has enough evidence to establish the involvement of the accused in the case," said the judge at the special court for speedy trials in the southern city of Karachi.

### Hasina

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but BNP rejected those," Hasina told the meeting.

Stressing the need for spreading education, she said the Bangladesh government had set up 11,000 primary schools in the country.

If voted to power, Awami League will take steps to eradicate illiteracy from the country within 10 years, she said. It will set up agro-based industries to generate employment and cottage industry to employ women.

### Chief Justice

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the sphere of productivity."

## The Midnight File

### SAARC meet on disabled ends

ISLAMABAD, Dec 18: The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) ministerial conference on disabled persons concluded here today with the adoption of Islamabad resolution. The 13-point resolution reiterated the commitment of SAARC countries to create awareness among the masses about the needs and problems of the disabled persons, reports Xinhua.

### India okays human rights body

NEW DELHI, Dec 18: The Indian parliament today gave its approval to the country's first national Human Rights Commission, with powers to probe rights violations by the security forces. The lower house passed a bill to set up the commission here and similar bodies in various state to meet the growing concern in the country and abroad about human rights violations," reports AFP.

### Avalanche kills 10 Pak soldiers

ISLAMABAD, Dec 18: An avalanche on the world's highest battlefield in the disputed Himalayan region of Kashmir has killed 10 Pakistani soldiers, including an officer, an army officer said today. The troops were returning from frontline positions on the Siachen Glacier where Pakistani troops face the Indian army when they were buried by the avalanche on Thursday, he said, reports Reuters.

### \$3.15m ADB loan for water project

Bangladesh will receive 3.15 million dollar as loan assistance and a grant of 250,000 dollar from the Asian Development Bank for the Southwest Area Water Resources Development Project of the country, reports UNB.

The ADB has approved the interest-free concessional technical assistance loan and the grant Thursday, said a press release yesterday.

The loan is expected to solve the water resource management problems in Bangladesh.

### Varsity officers go on strike

By DU Correspondent  
Administrative officers of seven universities in the country observed a day-long strike yesterday to press home their two-point demands.

The Bangladesh Inter-University Officers' Federation earlier threatened a ten-day strike beginning yesterday demanding amendment of the down-graded pay structure and the inclusion of officers' representatives in the university Senate, Syndicate, Finance Committee and Academic Council.

At the Dhaka University, all the administrative officers abstained from work yesterday.

The officers of the DU, Chittagong University, BUET, Rajshahi University, Jahangirnagar University, Islamic University and Agricultural University will continue their strike till December 27.

### BNP Sunamganj body dissolved

BNP Sunamganj District Committee has been dissolved as per the decision of the National Standing Committee of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, according to a party press release here last night, reports BSS.

The President of the Sunamganj District Committee Dewan Shamsul Abedin has also been expelled from the party.

Fazlul Haque Aspin has been appointed convenor of Sunamganj District Committee. The names of the new convening committee will be announced later on.

### Saifur

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by the Islamic Economics Research Bureau, the Islamic Bank Bangladesh Limited and Al-Baraka Bank Bangladesh Limited, was addressed by Industries Minister M Zahiruddin Khan, Commerce Minister M Shamsul Islam, Chairman of the seminar committee Mohammad Ataur Rahman, Mir Quasem Ali and Mohammad Yunus.

Zahiruddin Khan said, the economies of the Muslim countries are complementary, not supplementary. So there is enormous scope for economic interaction among the Muslim nations, he added.

### Role of women

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greater role in economic activities.

## Indigenous people demand protection of their rights

### By Staff Correspondent

It was a rare show in the capital Saturday as the spacious Engineers' Institution premises turned into a melting pot of the diverse indigenous cultures of the country.

Several hundred people, belonging to some 30 plus indigenous or ethnic communities, converged for the first time in the country's history to express their solidarity with the International Year of the Indigenous People, 1993.

The Engineers' Institution buzzed with different languages spoken by the indigenous people, clad in their traditional dresses.

However, their language was common, plain Bengali, when they spoke of their rights and their cultures.

The congregation was organised by a committee composed of the members of Parliament to celebrate the UN-declared International Year of the Indigenous People.

In a declaration which came out of the function, the country's indigenous people and other ethnic minorities, better known as the tribals, demanded protection of their cultures and heritage, languages, education and socio-economic development through legislation and constitutional guarantees.

The declaration also called for setting up a separate ministry for the welfare of the country's tribal population.

Poet Shamsur Rahman attended the function as the chief guest while Chakma king

### Debashish Ray presided.

Prof. Kabir Chowdhury criticised the comment of the Foreign Minister and urged him to withdraw his remarks.

Abul Hasan Chowdhury said the rights of the indigenous people should be guaranteed through necessary constitutional amendments.

Prof. Niru Kumar Chakma said the country's minority indigenous communities needed protection and more attention of the government.

Criticising the comments of the Foreign Minister, Kalpa Ranjan Chakma said minister had attempted to deny the existence of the indigenous communities.

Chakma King Debashish Ray, in his speech, urged the government to recognise the existence of the indigenous people in Bangladesh.

He also stressed that the government should ratify the UN and other international protocols and conventions relating to human rights and special rights of the indigenous people.

One of the main causes of discontent among the indigenous people was the violation of their land rights, he pointed out.

The day-long programme was rounded off with a cultural soiree participated by several tribal groups.

Earlier, the indigenous people held a rally at the central Shaheed Minar.

A colourful procession was brought out from the Minar which ended at the Engineers' Institution.

### BANGLADESH BAR COUNCIL INAUGURAL CEREMONY

Chief Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed addressing the inaugural ceremony of the Legal Education Programme organised by the Supreme Court Bar Council at the council auditorium in the city yesterday. Seated (from left to right) are former Chief Justice Badrul Haider Chowdhury, Advocate Shamsul Haque Chowdhury, Dr Kamal Hossain and Barrister Amir-ul-Islam.

— Star photo