

Laws against rape need to be reviewed

"Rape laws in Bangladesh need to be reviewed in the light of international human rights standards," said the participants at a workshop on "rape laws and medical evidence" in the city yesterday, reports BSS.

The workshop was held at the Bangladesh Institute of Law and International Affairs.

Existing practices of investigating and prosecuting rape as violating women's right to equality, dignity and personal security. Such practices too often focus on a woman's sexual history and her character instead of on the violence perpetrated against her. "We reject the notion that a raped woman should be shamed and stigmatised," said Sigma Huda, a human rights activist.

Medical reports which reflect stereotyped notions of women's sexuality can effectively destroy a raped woman's chance of legal redress. "We have even found medical reports where 12 year-old girls are described by doctors as 'habituated' to sexual intercourse," she said.

The participants stressed the need for placing greater reliance on a raped woman's statement as well as to providing adequate medical support to ensuring effective prosecution of rape cases.

6 extortionists held in city

By Staff Correspondent

Detective police arrested six alleged extortionists and recovered some arms, ammunition and bombs from a house at Khilgaon in the city yesterday.

Police raided the house at about 9 am and recovered two revolvers, one pistol, and eight rounds of bullets, police sources said.

The arrested were identified as Rashed, Biddut, Faisal, Ripon, Shahed and Hanif.

JCD rally today

The Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), the student wing of ruling BNP, will hold a student rally at Panthapath in the city this afternoon. BNP Chairperson Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia will attend the function as chief guest, party sources said.

Pak army officers

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charged on December 20 under the Pakistan Army Act and clauses of Pakistan's penal code.

They have been accused of "conduct to the prejudice of good order and military discipline, conspiring to wage war against Pakistan and attempting to seduce any person from his allegiance to the government."

Ctg Mayor

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gramme of barricade over Dhaka-Chittagong highway and said this was due to the observance of country-wide barricade programme yesterday.

Mohiuddin claimed that the demands raised by him were the demands of the people of Chittagong. "But I don't press for implementing the demands overnight. The government may fulfil those in phases also."

Without naming, Mohiuddin alleged that a minister was creating obstacles in the functioning of Chittagong City Corporation. The minister was also trying to get the files of the corporation in other ministries shelved, he further alleged.

Welcome New Year

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ers as soon as the clocks clicked 12 midnight.

In the capital, people were in a jubilant mood. They were seen busy yesterday in last minute purchase of greeting cards and flowers to share the moments of joy with near and dear ones.

Some buildings in the city were illuminated colourfully. Jubilant people marked it with enthusiasm hoping from one family or social party to another.

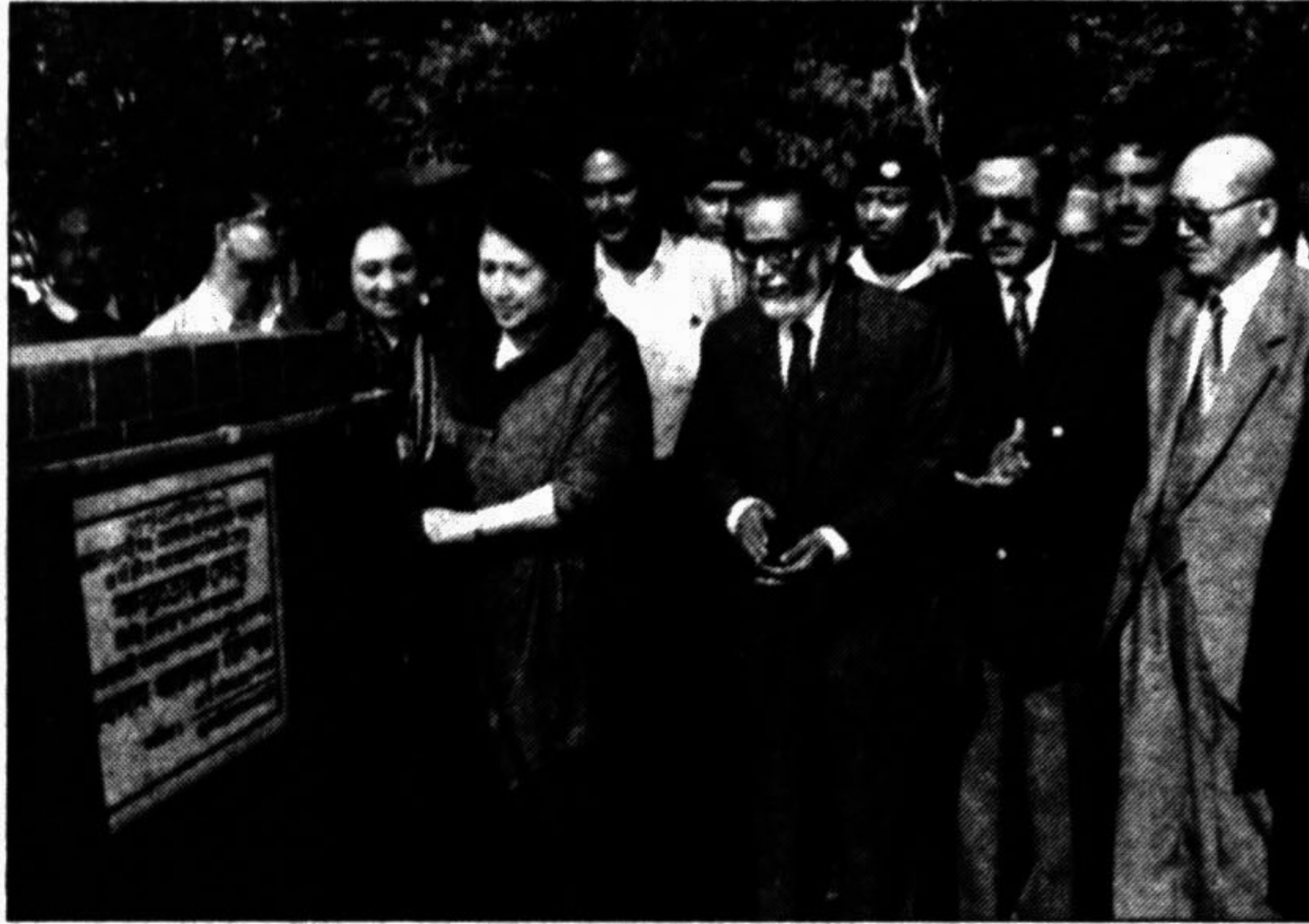
In the world scenario, some positive development took place in 1995. Remarkable among those are — continued peace process in the Middle East despite the tragic assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who along with Simon Peres and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat won Nobel Peace Prize for 1994, end of war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, peace process in trouble-torn Sri Lanka and release of Aung Sung Sue Kyi, symbol of democracy in Myanmar.

Another interesting development that drew attention of the people at large was revival of communist parties under multi-party democracies in Russia and Poland.

There are tragedies also. Some 25,000 people perished in a disastrous earthquake in Japan, peace remains a nightmare in Afghanistan, Kashmir Valley remains volatile, Karachi remains a boiling pot due to ethnic strife, a bomb devastated the World Trade Centre in the US city of Oklahoma, completely undermining the consensus against nuclear explosions, France did it a number of times in Mururoa Atoll in the Pacific.

The 14-year-old marriage of the most discussed royal couple of British aristocracy Prince Charles and Princess Diana has hit the worst phase following the Queen's request to them to divorce.

In Bangladesh, the lingering political crisis is going to step into its third year amid frustrations among the masses.



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia laid the foundation stone of Karotoa Bridge at Debiganj in Panchagarh district yesterday. — PID photo

NGO rally

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A number of NGO leaders and political personalities including Dr Kamal Hossain, Dr Kazi Faruque Ahmed, Khushi Kabir, Advocate Sigma Huda were seen talking to police personnel at the venue.

Dr Kamal Hossain told the Daily Star that police was obstructing setting up of the stage unlawfully.

"We have court verdict to hold the rally at this venue," said Advocate Sigma Huda. "This gives us the right to erect the stage."

"We are going by the law," said Dr Faruque. "When we took permission for the rally, nobody told us that we need permission of the DC Traffic. Now they have come up with this excuse."

Later, the NGO leaders left the venue to take permission from the Inspector General of Police for holding the rally. But nothing could be known till filing the report late last night.

Meanwhile, a single member Special Vacation Bench of the High Court yesterday stayed an order issued by the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) regarding cancellation of a permission granted earlier for use of land speakers at a national rally of grassroots organisation in the city today.

PM lays foundation of 4th friendship bridge

DEBIGANJ (Panchagarh). Dec 31: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia today urged all to keep continuity of the success story of development and help consolidate the democracy in the country, reports UNB.

"The success in development activities throughout the country is the success of democracy. It's the success of your inspiration for work," she said. "Let's together strengthen this trend of success, let's consolidate democracy."

Begum Zia was speaking at the foundation-laying ceremony of a bridge across the river Karotoa at Debiganj in Panchagarh in the afternoon. It will be the fourth China-Bangladesh Friendship Bridge in the country.

The long-cherished 577.40-metre-long bridge will cost Tk 60 crore. The bridge on Boda-Debiganj-Domar-Jaldhaka road is being financed jointly by the governments of Bangladesh and China.

Laying the foundation, Begum Zia told a huge gathering at the River View Girls' School ground that development of communication network is one of the important ways of achieving economic

advancement. "If we can build a smooth communication network, it will be easy to ensure a balanced development in the country," she said.

JCD factions trade gunfire in Ctg: 1 hurt

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Dec 31: A gunfight between rival factions of the pro-BNP Chhatra Dal today rocked the Pahartoli College campus, according to police.

At one stage the gunfight spread in the Pahartoli railway school premises. One person Md Azad (30), received bullet wounds during the gunfight, police said.

Azad was admitted into Chittagong Medical College Hospital for treatment.

Police said the trouble began at around 11 am today when two rival JCD groups started firing at each other and lobbed a series of cocktails. They also chased each other during the clash, creating panic in the area.

DU teachers go on token strike today

By DU Correspondent

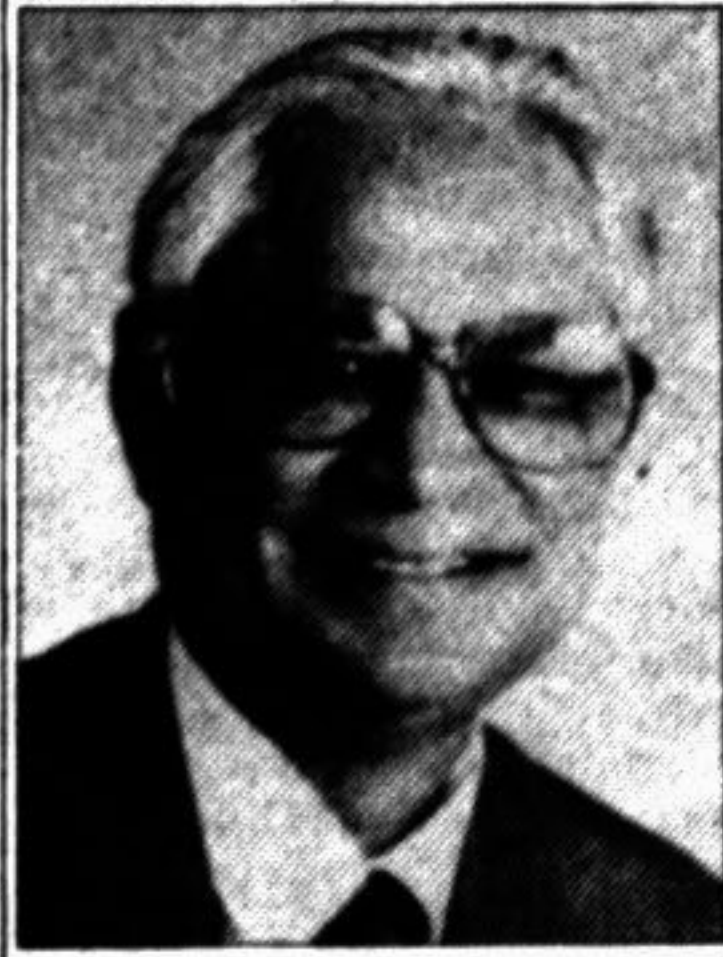
The teachers of the Dhaka University will observe a two-day token strike starting from today demanding immediate arrest and exemplary punishment of those involved in the killing of Nuban Ahmed.

Nuban Ahmed, a young teacher of the Department of Economics, was seriously injured by some miscreants on December 17 at the South Plaza of the Sangsad Bhaban and succumbed to his injuries at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital on Tuesday last.

Book Fair '96 begins today

A fortnight-long book fair with an array of books from home and abroad begins in the city today, reports UNB.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia will inaugurate the Dhaka Book Fair '96 at 11 in the morning, officials said. The fair, organised by National Book Centre of Bangladesh, sits on the open ground of Army Museum adjacent to Bijoy Saroni.



Samson H Chy elected MCCI President

Samson H Chowdhury has been elected President of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Dhaka, for next year, reports UNB.

The election was held yesterday at the Chamber's 91st annual general meeting. Chowdhury was the Vice-President for 1995. A leading entrepreneur, Chowdhury is the Chairman of Square Pharmaceuticals Ltd and Square Textile Mills Ltd.

Maj. Gen. Arjad Khan Chowdhury (Retd) has been elected new Vice-President. He is the Managing Director of Rangpur Foundry Limited.

The members of the committee are Zafar Ahmed, Iftakharul Alam, M Shamsul Alam, Syed Tareque Md. Ali, M. Anis Ud Dowla, SA Azim, Abdul Hafiz Chowdhury, Frank Gamble, Mrs Laila Rahman Kabir, Golam Mustafa and Afroz Rahim.

The Midnight File

India, Pakistan exchange list of N—installations today

NEW DELHI, Dec 31: In sharp contrast to western attempts to portray the subcontinent in a negative nuclear context, India and Pakistan will exchange a list of their nuclear installations and facilities tomorrow as part of a broad framework of confidence building measures (cmb) agreed upon by the two countries, reports FTI.

Rally of the poor in city today

By Staff Correspondent

Grassroots-level non-government organisations from across the country will hold a massive rally of poor men and women in the city's Manik Miah Avenue at 11 am today.

Disclosing this at a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday, the organisers said the rally will call for building a poverty-free society in the country.

The rally is being organised by the Trinamool Janasangathan (grassroots organisation), backed by the Association of Development Agencies (ADAB), an association of NGOs.

The organisers told newsmen that they were expecting that nearly one lakh poor people representing grassroots level organisations from across the country would attend the rally.

"We will organise a social revolution to achieve the goals," said Hare Krishna Roy Palash, an NGO activist in Barisal.

Another member of the preparatory committee, Momtaz Alam, read out the 'announcement' of the rally, in which they demanded that the government give 50 per cent of the development budget for poverty alleviation. Kazi Faruque Ahmed, Chairman of the ADAB and

convener of the national advisory committee for the rally informed that about 700 NGOs are working for holding the rally.

Khushi Kabir of Nijera Kari a member of the national preparatory committee also replied to questions at the press conference.

UN compensation

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the cheques of this compensation to the injured and the relatives of those killed during the war, who are treated as 'B' category claimants. The compensation varies from 2500 to 10,000 dollars per person.

In all, 95 'B' category claims were received by the government and sent to the UNCC through Bangladesh mission in Geneva for providing necessary compensation.

The UNCC has also decided to compensate another 11 'B' category claimants out of the rest.

Speaking at a simple ceremony on the occasion, held under the auspices of the Bureau of Manpower at Kakrail, the labour and manpower minister reiterated that the government was very much aware of the suffering of the Bangladeshi repatriates.

Army joins

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ing for the police officers themselves. Justice Sadeque mentioned that they were now being treated as appointees on deputation of the Election Commission for the election period.

"That is why," he cautioned, "the EC will take necessary action if anybody found involved in irregularities, negligence and corruption."

Justice Sadeque advised them to take action after being aware of pre-election irregularities and crimes against those responsible.

Election Commissioner Justice Md Abdul Jalil and Additional Secretary of the Commission SM Zakaria were also present on the occasion.

A total of 259 OCs from across the country attended the workshop in the first phase.



ADAB chairperson Kazi Farooq Ahmed speaking at a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday. Khushi Kabir of Nijera Kari seen on his right. — Star photo

New capital adequacy system

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views that the existing liability-based system does not hinge the banks against such situation.

The central bank is expected to notify the scheduled banks about the new system by next week and they will have to implement it within two months of notification, the sources said.

Those banks which will face problems in implementing the new system will be given two years' time to acquire capital adequacy.

Under the existing system, a scheduled bank has to maintain a minimum six per cent of its demand and time liabilities, or Taka 20 crore, in case of banks registered in Bangladesh and taka 10 crore in case of banks registered outside the country, whichever is more as capital adequacy.

The demand liabilities include current account, call deposit and 11 per cent of savings account while time deposit liabilities consist of 89 per cent of savings account and term deposit.

In modern banking system, this rule regarding capital adequacy has been abandoned in both developed and developing countries. The Switzerland-based Bank for International Settlement (BIS), an international regulatory body for banks, recommended introduction of risk-weighted capital adequacy and a minimum of eight per cent of

risk-weighted assets as capital adequacy, said a Bangladesh Bank source.

To give legality to the new risk-based capital adequacy, the central bank, with prior approval of the government has arranged legal coverage under Article 6 (13) Ka of Bangladesh Bank Company (amendment) Law, 1995.

Earlier, Finance Minister Saifur Rahman in his letter on March 9, 1994 to the Managing Director, International Monetary Fund (IMF), had mentioned about introduction of the new system of capital adequacy. Different international organisations like the IMF, the World Bank and Financial Sector Reform Project (FSRP) members had also repeatedly recommended introduction of risk-based capital adequacy system.

A Bangladesh Bank committee examined the new system and recommended it for adoption before sending it to the Banking Division of the Finance Ministry for approval.

Under the new system, according to Bangladesh Bank, risk of both on and off-balance sheet items will be reflected, which will help analyse the risk of bank's credits and advances as well as of borrowers.

If the loans are provided against guarantees, the risk of the guarantor will also be considered in the risk management.

Meanwhile, bankers have

welcomed it as a positive move.

Kazi Abdul Mazid, Managing Director of National Bank Ltd, said in his immediate reaction. "This will be good for the banking sector as a whole as it will give more flexibility to the banks in handling their resources. Under the existing system, bank's growth are restricted. But under the new system the banks will be able to grow with prudent risk management."

Managing Director of a nationalised commercial bank said on condition of anonymity, "this system would be very helpful for the banking sector if quality of assets are accurately assessed."

A risk analyst of a foreign bank said, "Government sector loans will be risk-weighted which will contribute towards increasing the capital base of the nationalised banks and will enhance their international acceptability which is important for an emerging economy."

However, another banker in the private sector pointed out that the banks will primarily face problems in determining the risk as there is shortage of qualified risk-analysts.

Meanwhile, a source in Bangladesh Bank said the government is thinking to train some bank officials on this management under the forthcoming Commercial Banks Restructuring Project.

Season's Greetings
And All Good Wishes
For the New Year

Sonali Bank

Bangladesh Telegraph & Telephone Board Special Notice regarding overseas telephone calls at 25% reduced rate

It is notified for information of the valued telephone subscribers that for the convenience of overseas telephone callers it has been decided to reduce the overseas call charge by 25% on Fridays and all Government holidays. This will be effective from 1st January 1996.

Besides, facilities for making overseas telephone calls during off peak hours everyday from 11 am to 8 am at 25% rebate rate will remain in force.



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