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Shapla Cub Awards distributed PM assures help for expansion of scout movement

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the government has undertaken specific measures to bring up the children as worthy citizens, reports UNB. "We have taken a national working plan for the development of children," she said while addressing the "Shapla Cub Awards" distribution ceremony at ICC in the morning. Bangladesh Scouts "Shapla Cub Awards" has been introduced for the first time in the country to encourage the children in cub and scouting movements. The Prime Minister assured the cubs, scouts and girls guides of all possible help and assistance from the government for the expansion of the movement. She said the present government is committed to checking child marriage, repression and trafficking of children and child labour. Appreciating the scout movement in building the children as worthy citizens, Hasina said the movement gained momentum under the guideline of father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The Prime Minister recalled the memories of five rover scouts killed in a road accident at Dhamrai while returning from a jamboree last year. She distributed family saving certificates worth Tk one lakh to the family of each scout killed in the road mishap and also to the family of an injured scout.

Assam flood situation turns worse

GUWAHATI, July 5: The flood situation in Assam turned worse today with the waters of Brahmaputra and other rivers submerging fresh areas in the 15 affected districts, reports PTI. Official sources said the rivers are flowing above the danger level in many parts of the state due to incessant rains for the past few days.

Pete Sampras

From Page 1 from 1976-80. Sampras also moved into a second-place tie with Borg and Rod Laver on the all-time list of Grand Slam victories, just one behind the record of 12 held by Roy Emerson. By reasserting his grass-court superiority, and extending his Wimbledon record to 44-2 since 1992, Sampras ended a year-long slump in which he failed to get past the quarterfinals of the last three Grand Slam events. For Ivanisevic, it marked his third defeat in a Wimbledon final. He lost to Andre Agassi in 1992 and Sampras in 1994. "It's just really sweet," Sampras said. "I can't believe I've won this." The match was dominated by big serves and featured few extended rallies, another example of the power tennis which has typified Wimbledon finals in the 1990s. Ivanisevic had 32 aces and Sampras had 12. But the key statistic was Ivanisevic's 20 double faults. The match turned in the sixth game of the fifth set when Sampras broke for 4-2, ripping a backhand return at Ivanisevic's feet. The Croatian couldn't dig the ball out, dumping a forehand volley into the net. After Sampras held for 5-2, a distraught Ivanisevic buried his head in his towel and muttered to himself in Croatian during the changeover. Sampras then broke him at love in the next game to end the 2-hour, 52-minute match. "Goran played a great game to break me in the fourth set, and the fifth set is anybody's ball game," Sampras said. "It was just a couple of points here and there. I was very nervous in the fifth set. I was able to raise my level just a little bit. The next thing I knew I won the match. It was kind of a weird feeling."



Taxi Cab Service opened in the city yesterday. — Star photo

Statement of Nargis' uncle

From Page 1 Abul Kashem in his statement before the CMM's Court said, Mukkuda, mother-in-law of Nargis and maid Rezia, who worked at the flat, came to his house and informed him about the incident. Then he rushed to the spot and found Naim dead. A professor of Sociology at Dhaka University commenting on the incident said, it was "a sudden outburst of blows and counter blows and conflict in personal, family and social life." "This sort of incident usually does not have any motive," the sociologist said preferring anonymity. Police investigation so far revealed that Nargis was not happy in her conjugal life for the last few months, said a DB official. The relation between Nargis and her husband deteriorated since doctors detected an infection inside her mouth. Nargis feared that she had a cancer and alleged to her husband that he was not providing her with proper treatment. DB officials said Hasan took Nargis to a number of doctors to convince his wife that she was not suffering from cancer. "How come a mother slaughter her son?" This was the only question from people who heard about the incident. Dr Tazul Islam, a psychia-

PCJSS meeting not held

By Special Correspondent A scheduled meeting of the top leaders of Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) did not take place at Khagrachhari yesterday, PCJSS sources said. But they would not say whether their top leaders held a closed door session yesterday to review their meeting with PCJSS thana and district leaders on Saturday. Neither they would disclose to newsmen the progress of Saturday's review.

Special envoy

From Page 1 the two countries where major discussions were held on bilateral and regional issues. The Pakistan High Commission in a press release said the special envoy, apart from delivering a message from the Pakistan Prime Minister to his Bangladesh counterpart, is likely to "brief Bangladeshi leaders on Pakistan's perceptions of security in South Asia following detonation of Nuclear tests by India, and Pakistan's response to correct the balance of power in the area." The special envoy will also address a select gathering on the current situation in South Asia, and meet several local leaders for an exchange of views on matters of mutual interest.

Effects of El Nino being studied to help farmers face weather change

By Special Correspondent Bangladesh is studying the effects of El Nino to develop a model to help farmers face the global phenomenon that governs the weather pattern when ocean currents in the Pacific coast off Peru warm up or cool down. "We are monitoring the phenomenon that is responsible for rains or drought worldwide to help our farmers cope with the whims of the brat of the Pacific," said Dr A M Chowdhury, Director of the Space Research and Remote Sensing Organisation (SPARSSO). He told The Daily Star yesterday that the farmers needed help to chart their crop calendar keeping themselves updated with the changing mood of nature, to better cope with it, varying the sowing and planting periods. The model will be prepared by the SPARSSO and the Bangladesh Agriculture Research Council (BARC). "It has become imperative in the backdrop of past performance of El Nino, in Spanish meaning Christ's child, and its reverse, which Latins fondly call La Nina or the girl," the weather expert said. Now La Nina was casting its eye on Bangladesh for the past few days, bringing much needed rains, since El Nino went 'retreating' in May. The reverse is likely to trigger 36 feared drowned 14 hours before being rescued. The sunken fishing boats, FB Noor Alam, FB Faruk and FB Arzoo-2, had no life-saving gears or radio on board, they said. Owners of the three boats, Motaleb Khan and Hossain Khan of Barguna, also said that the missing persons could not be traced and they were feared to be drowned. Pak offer From Page 1 not clarify whether Pakistan will sign the CTBT before India or after it but analysts felt it was obviously a major shift in the country's stand as till now Islamabad's de facto stand was that it would sign the CTBT only after New Delhi does so. While replying to a query, Altaf conceded that it was a change in Pakistan's stand saying, "change in the sense that (earlier) we were ready to do anything that India was ready to do in terms of signing CTBT or NPT." The foreign ministry spokesman also stressed that the situation has changed after May 28 when Pakistan carried out its nuclear tests. The first signs of Pakistan's shift in stand on the crucial CTBT issue was visible during last week's visit of foreign secretary, Shamshad Ahmed, to the United States when he had met senior officials of US State department including acting secretary of state, Strobe Talbott. Ahmed had told newsmen after the meeting that Pakistan was in a process of evaluating its position on CTBT and NPT. He further said that Pakistan would take a decision on the CTBT and NPT issues. "When we will think that now is the time to do so." While referring to the bilateral dialogue process with India the spokesman said that Pakistan was in favour of an "integrated approach" while stressing that the peace and security issue in the South Asian region should be linked to the Kashmir issue.

Jatiya Sangsad debate

From Page 1 constituency. Abdul Latif Mirza, an AL member from a Sirajganj constituency, took the floor to claim that it was the BNP which had been disrupting law and order across the country. Quoting a recent newspaper report, the AL legislator said that police recently arrested a BNP activist who is allegedly involved in organised crime like snatching cars from different parts of the country. Khan Tipu Sultan, another ruling party MP, echoed his colleague. "The opposition is deliberately disrupting the law and order," he said. Sultan was also critical of Begum Khaleda Zia, Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, for her failure to disown the said "car snatcher who is also a killer". Home Affairs Minister Rafiqul Islam who present in the House at that time did not seek for the floor to say anything about the opposition allegation. Mashur Rahman of the BNP claimed that prices of some consumer goods like rice, onion and green chilly were going beyond the reach of the poor. "It is an irony that the Prime Minister loves to blame Begum Khaleda Zia for the price hike, when a ruling party MP is the official leader of the rice wholesalers," he said. "We rejected From Page 1 and amounted to floor-crossing. Barrister Abul Hasib submitted that the 'consensus government', as propagated by the government, has no sanction of the Constitution. Acting Attorney General A Wadud Bhuiyan, opposing the writ petition, submitted that Dr Alauddin and Hasibur Rahman were appointed by the President as per Article 56(2) of the Constitution which cannot be challenged in any court as per Article 51(i) of the Constitution. He further submitted that there is no provision in the Constitution against formation of 'consensus government'. "There is no bar to appoint any MP from any political party to the office of Minister of the government, since the Constitution says that 910 of the number of Ministers shall be appointed from amongst the Members of Parliament", he submitted. The Acting Attorney General also submitted that there is no evidence that the two BNP Members of the Parliament have violated Article 70 of the Constitution and as such their seats in the Parliament have not been vacated. Ctg landslides From Page 1 Banskhal and Saktania. In Chittagong port, the rainfall had disrupted cargo handling activities, port officials said. Traffic movement also thinned here due to continuous rainfall. Met Office here recorded 295 mm rainfall in the past 36 hours till 6 pm today.

World Cup

From Page 1 previous games. For the Netherlands the Arsenal attacking duo of Bergkamp and Overmars have been embarrassing defenders all through the World Cup, and Bergkamp's last minute goal to oust Argentina in the quarterfinals is one of the goals of the championship. Kluyvert, sent off in their opening game against Belgium, looked sharp again on his return and Edgar Davids, Phillip Cocu and Ronald de Boer are influential support players. But Jari Simons, hailed as the world's most expensive defender after his 10-million-pound (16.7 million dollars) move from PSV Eindhoven to Manchester United, has been guilty of errors that gave away goals. After scoring nine goals in three first round group games, the French forwards seem to have forgotten how to find the net. Although midfield stars such as Zinedine Zidane, Youri Djorkaeff and Emmanuel Petit have supplied plenty of ammunition, strikers David Trezeguet, Thierry Henry, Bernard Diomedé and Stéphane Guivarch couldn't score against either Paraguay or Italy and the lone French goal in those games came from central defender Laurent Blanc. At least the defense, with Blanc and Marcel Desailly looking consistent, have only yielded one goal in five games. Croatia, the complete outsider left in the competition, upset three-time titlist Germany 3-0 in the quarterfinals. Robert Jarni, Goran Vlaovic and Davor Suker hit the goals after the Germans had a player sent off. But the Croatians have stars from the Italian and Spanish clubs who have tested club soccer at the highest level and won't feel out of their depth, even against the home team.

Microbiology

From Page 1 the government was not making best use of whatever expertise the country had. Dr Naiyium Chowdhury said, "in 1993, the government had set up a national committee on biotechnology productivity to identify limitations and application of microbiology in the country. Till now, there is no outcome of the committee report." The speakers said, extensive application of microbiology in areas like genetic engineering, biogas, biofertiliser and production of various enzymes should be given due attention. They emphasised wider application of chemicals produced from microbes for hygiene and environment friendliness. Dr Munirul Alam of Microbiology Department of the DU said the science and technology ministry had 'little interest' in research activities in the sector. Others who participated in the discussion are Prof M Mozammel Haq, Dr Shamir Kumar Shah and Mohammad Elias. The mini roundtable, held at the conference room at The Daily Star office, was moderated by Editor Mahfuz Anam. Participants in The Daily Star mini-roundtable on 'Prospects of Microbiology in Bangladesh' held at the conference room at its office yesterday. —Star photo



Participants in The Daily Star mini-roundtable on 'Prospects of Microbiology in Bangladesh' held at the conference room at its office yesterday. —Star photo

Shinepukur secures foreign loan

From Page 1 group's record with banks like IFIC and AB Bank". Legal or illegal, the key question raised by the banking circles is that such a guarantee has been given to a company which is facing charges of manipulating stock market and whose sister concerns borrowed tens of crores of taka under fictitious accounts from different banks and later owned them after the Bangladesh Bank detected the frauds. The Sonali Bank headquarters received a proposal from its Dhaka local office for approval to issue a bank guarantee for 17 million US dollars (equivalent to about Tk 78 crore) on account of Shinepukur Holdings Ltd, which had arranged the loan from ANZ Investment Bank in London. According to the Shinepukur proposal, it has taken up projects to develop two townships, Sun City at Savar and Gulshan Lake Town at Badda. It said the company had purchased 4.3 acres of land at Badda and 67.86 acres at Savar, investing approximately, as it claimed, Tk 44 crore. The company said it would purchase additional 10 acres of land at Badda and 60.14 acres at Savar, for which it had made initial payments. Shinepukur said the foreign loan would be used to finance

purchase of the additional lands at Badda and 60.14 acres at Savar and development of the plots in the two townships for sale to members the public. According to documents obtained by The Daily Star, ANZ Investment Bank, London, has agreed to extend the loan facility under a mode of financing called Morabaha, an Islamic Banking Scheme, against the guarantee of Sonali Bank. According to the ANZ terms, the two-year loan is renewable by another year. The interest rate is 12 months' London Interbank Offer Rate (LIBOR) plus 3.5 per cent. LIBOR is now 5.7 per cent, which puts the total interest rate at 9.2 per cent. However, bankers point out that the rate, in reality, would be much higher if the annual depreciation of the Taka is taken into account. Last year, the Taka was devalued by over five per cent. If this trend continues, the interest rate would stand at around 18 per cent in two years, making it equivalent to local interest rate. This will increase the liability of SB as it has given unconditional guarantee in US dollar and second charges over assets financed, said a banker. According to Sonali Bank, Shinepukur has offered five types of securities: a cash margin of Tk four crore, already purchased property valued at Tk 44 crore, the lands to be purchased valued at Tk 52 crore, pledge of shares of companies of Beximco valued at Tk 15 crore and corporate guarantee of the company. Sonali's credit committee, reviewing the Shinepukur proposal on May 27 this year, decided to send it to the Board saying that the projected sale price of plots at Savar appeared to be high, given the prevailing market price in the area. The committee also pointed out that the lumpsum margin of Tk four crore against the guarantee value of Tk 78 crore stood at only five per cent which should be 10 per cent. Later, the Board approved the proposal of Shinepukur with conditions that the cash margin of the bank guarantee should be 15 per cent. "The issuance of the above bank guarantee will not affect the current fund position of the bank. On the other hand, the bank will be in a position to earn some fees/commission without any investment or involvement of our fund," Sonali Bank officials argued while seeking approval of the Board. However, the Board said, on mortgage of 10 acres of Badda land to be purchased by the company, the percentage of margin will be reduced to the extent of 10 per cent and the excess margin of five per cent will be returned in cash provided the

defended the deal as 'bankable' and, therefore, the board decided to give the guarantee. "The loan is being secured for real estate which is an industry. What is the problem if funds come from outside adding to the country's investing money?" he said. "Without development of land how can one build houses?" Khan shot back when pointed out that the loan was being secured to finance purchase of lands and development of plots. "The prudence of a bank's decision to give guarantee depends on whether the company has strength to bear the liability. In this case, the company has the strength," he said. When pointed out that the company could secure loans from local sources since the project does not have any import component, Khan said, "The borrower felt that it is cheaper to get foreign loans at around eight per cent. It is less than half the local rate." But The Daily Star again pointed out that if the annual depreciation of Taka is taken into account, the interest rate would go up by about 18 per cent and that Sonali Bank itself could give loans to Shinepukur. Khan replied, "This is equivalent to local interest rate. No local bank could give such a big loan and consortium of loans is also not popular here."

Dhanmondi

From Page 1 vices are less than satisfactory and its roads are often clogged with traffic. Some plot owners in Dhanmondi said they were not worried about what the government could offer to them in terms of utility services. "Time is coming when, we know, we will have to generate our own power and pump out our own water," said a resident who has just signed a contract to convert his two-storied two-unit house into a six-storied apartment block. As per PWD documents, in Dhanmondi residential area, there are 800 plots each measuring one bigha or more 194 plots of 10 katha to one bigha each and 90 plots of less than 10 katha each. In the late 40s, 594 acres of land were acquired for Dhanmondi residential area. At present, the residential plots cover 294 acres, roads 71 acres, lake 92 acres and lakeside green space covers 18 acres. These exclude Abahani and Dhanmondi fields measuring 10 acres each. PWD sources said the problem worsened after 'plot subdivision' to a minimum of five katha each was allowed. In some cases, instead of one six-storied building the plot owners constructed four, taking advantage of the sub-division law. This put more pressure on the existing facilities in the area as more flats were built, they said. The government has so far remained firm about the height of buildings in the area despite heavy lobbying by developers for permission to build high-rise structures. In a recent directive, the Prime Minister said that in no circumstances permission could be given to construct buildings more than six storied in Dhanmondi residential area. The directive, however, said if an owner builds a basement parking, that will not be considered a part of the six stories.