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ON THE WANE

Metal handicraft dealers struggle to keep their trade afloat

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DJOKOVIC CLINCHES AUSSIE OPEN

The Serb outplays Andy Murray to claim the Grand Slam for the second time

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ROAD TO OSCAR

Natalie Portman is a favourite to win Oscar for her role of ballet artiste in Black Swan

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Jubok owes Tk 2,147cr, not Tk 37cr, to people

Finds probe body; says money invested in land; asks for permanent commission to ensure the NGO returns money

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Jubok Karmasangsthan Society (Jubok) owes a staggering Tk 2,147 crore to its clients, finds a government probe into alleged financial scam by the controversial NGO.

When Jubok's activities were suspended in 2006 on charges of illegal banking practices, it claimed to the Bangladesh Bank that it had collected only Tk 37.78 crore from 2.67 lakh clients till December 31, 2005.

A six-member committee that conducted the probe submitted its

report to the finance ministry last week.

Formed in January last year, the committee recommends the government form a permanent commission to ensure that Jubok returns the money to its depositors.

Former BB governor Mohammad Farashuddin, who heads the probe body, told The Daily Star, "I believe getting them [Jubok] to return the money to the cheated clients will make a history for Bangladesh."

However, he added, Jubok operators have neither fled the country nor

wasted the money. They have invested it in land, whose price has shot up over the years.

The probe committee through a public notice imposed a ban on the sale of the land, and as a result, the land has not changed hands, Farashuddin added.

After the notice was published, 2,67,330 people claimed money by producing documentary evidence against four Jubok concerns including Jubok Housing and Real Estate Development Ltd.

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IJTEMA ENDS

Lakhs raise hands in prayers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Lakhs of devotees from home and abroad raised their hands in prayers seeking divine blessings as the three-day second phase of the Biswa Ijtema, one of the largest congregations of the Muslims, ended with the Akheri Munajat (concluding prayers) yesterday.

The massive gathering of devotees who joined the munajat spilled over to areas around the Ijtema venue on the bank of the Turag at Tongi near the capital turning into a virtual human sea.

Eminent Islamic scholar Jubayerul Hasan from Delhi led the 15-minute prayer that started at 12:25pm.

Since holding of the Ijtema began in 1967, the annual congregation was held in two-phases for the first time this year to control the huge rush of devotees. But many devotees, who had earlier joined the

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PHOTO: STAR

Devotees attend the Akheri Munajat (concluding prayer) of the second phase of the Biswa Ijtema -- one of the largest congregations of Muslims -- on the bank of Turag yesterday.

All measures taken to stop extra-judicial killings: PM

UNB, London

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said yesterday that her government has taken all measures to stop extra-judicial killings and improve the human rights situation in the country.

The premier made the remarks when Standing Committee Chairman on

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PHOTO ON PAGE 2

WC CRICKET Dhaka city's beautification by Feb 5

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Engineering Corps of Army in association with Dhaka City Corporation will complete the repair and beautification work of the capital ahead of the ICC Cricket World Cup by February 5.

Bangladesh Army, DCC

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Good genie vs evil genie

MORSHED ALI KHAN

Our honourable state minister for environment and forests claimed on Saturday that an "evil genie" is prowling the premises of our apex court and influencing the court's decisions in a bid to destroy the ship breaking industry.

That undoubtedly demands a look into what the "good genie" of the Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF) is doing to remedy the situation.

The "good genie" is breaking new grounds nowadays in the ship breaking yards of Sitakundu.

It is hell-bent to authorise scrap-

ping of worn out and highly hazardous ocean going ships at the ship breaking yards. These ships, having exhausted their lifetimes, change hands in shady global markets of cash buyers, and then sent to the beaches of the Bay. At the yards each

NEWS ANALYSIS

one is beached, stripped, and manually dismantled by hundreds of labourers in the most rudimentary outfits.

The "good genie" is least bothered about the safety of these workers or protection of our environ-

ment. Deaths and injuries of the workers in the ship breaking yards are invariably regular. News of accidents and consequent deaths or injuries hardly reach the outside world from the heavily secured yards unless there is a big blast. Within the last 11 years, according to the Department of Explosive, Green Peace and other watchdogs, 122 workers perished there in 71 accidents, and 39 workers sustained crippling injuries within the last 7 years. The figures do not include deaths from various diseases caused by highly toxic fumes and materials

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BNP for joining JS along with SQ Chy

Speaker urges opposition to raise the issue in Jatiya Sangsad

RASHIDUL HASAN

BNP lawmakers want to return to parliament, but not without their senior leader Salauddin Quader Chowdhury, who is now behind bars with links to war crimes.

Opposition Chief Whip Zainul Abdin

Farroque, on behalf of the party, called on Speaker Abdul Hamid and turned in a letter to allow the detained BNP leader to join the House along with other party lawmakers.

In reply, the Speaker urged the

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FELANI KILLING HC rejects plea for govt probe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday rejected a writ petition seeking its directive on the government to form a committee to investigate the killing of Felani, a Bangladeshi teenage girl of Kurigram, by Indian Border Security Force (BSF).

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