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## Bac backs doubts over potency of anti-graft body

ZAYADUL AHSAN

The Bureau of Anti-corruption (Bac) in a recent report to the prime minister seconded the deep doubts expressed by the civil society about effectiveness of the proposed independent anti-corruption commission.

reach -- compared to Bac's present activities -- instead of making it more powerful. "Whether the commission would be able to play an effective role is the biggest question," the report says. The bill on what the civil society calls a government-controlled independent anti-corruption commission is likely to be passed in the current parliament session. Sources said the government is planning a

hasty approval of the bill that was sent to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Law on July 10. The committee that did not hold any meeting over the last two months will sit for maiden talks today to approve the bill. Transparency International, Bangladesh, an anti-corruption watchdog, has demanded some

## Fire at substation Mirpur, Pallabi without power for 10 hours

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A big fire at a power sub-station at Mirpur in the city damaged its transformer yesterday morning, snapping power supply both in Mirpur and Pallabi areas for about 10 hours.

Fourteen fire fighting units from their headquarters and Mirpur and Tejgaon stations rushed to the spot and took about three hours to douse the blaze.

Fire service sources said the fire at the 132/33 kilovolt sub-station originated from a cable at about 8:30am. The loss in the fire was estimated to be about Tk 3 crore, they added.

The Dhaka Electric Supply Company (Desco) installed a new transformer, partially resuming

## WTO talks risk breakdown

### Poor states threaten to block 'bad' farm deal; US, EU accused of trying to split G21

STAR DESK

As rich and poor nations struggle to find a compromise deal to save the Cancun trade talks threatened by disputes over farm subsidy, Singapore has been asked to mediate the tottering farm talks and is expected to produce a draft compromise text early this morning (BST).

A powerful alliance of poor and developing countries under the

umbrella of Group of 21 (G21) has threatened to block a deal rather than accept a bad one.

Poor nations have accused Europe and the United States of trying to break up the new alliance bent on rewriting global trade rules.

The G21 -- spearheaded by China, India, Brazil and South Africa -- has threatened the traditional dominance of rich countries during the trade talks. It has demanded that rich countries slash more than \$300

billion a year in subsidies -- more than six times the amount they give to poor countries as aid -- which protect their farmers from cheaper imports and let them export to nations whose farmers get no such support.

The big question now was whether the alliance could remain united, or whether "the US would pick countries off one by one", a spokeswoman for aid agency Action Aid said.

So far, the G21 was standing firm, and new members were expected to join in the next few days, she said. The G21 could shift the power at the 146-nation WTO talks towards the poor world for the first time, she added.

The G21 says the rich world needs to keep the promises it made two years ago to cut tariffs.

The EU and US say poorer countries must agree to broader legal and

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## Move to expel Arafat draws world flak

AFP, Jerusalem

Israel's decision to expel Yasser Arafat has drawn warnings from around the world that the move would threaten the Middle East peace process, as Palestinians vowed to fight to the death to protect their veteran leader.

The Israeli security cabinet approved in principle Thursday night the expulsion of Arafat as a rapid response to two suicide bombings earlier in the week.

That sparked a spontaneous outpouring of support for the 74-year-old leader on the streets of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, with Arafat vowing he would never be taken alive.



NO ONE CAN KICK ME OUT: Arafat blows a kiss to supporters outside his office in the West Bank City of Ramallah yesterday.

## Cheap medicine pact under fire from NGOs

IPS ONLINE

Some WTO members may be patting themselves on the back for the agreement on low-cost medicines for poor countries, citing it as proof that they can indeed work together, but NGOs in Cancun for the Fifth World Trade Organisation Ministerial Conference say there is little reason to celebrate.

"The deeper problem has not been resolved," Michael Bailey, spokesman for the Britain-based non-governmental organisation Oxfam International, told IPS. The only thing the WTO did, he said, is open a very small door that is difficult to pass through.

Ellen Hoeh, of Doctors Without Borders (Médecins Sans Frontières), based in Paris, had similar criticisms. The agreement says poor countries may have greater access to

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Demonstrators hold placards at a rally in Dhaka yesterday to mourn South Korean farmer Lee Kyang Hae who knifed himself to death to protest the policies of World Trade Organisation now holding talks at the Mexican resort of Cancun.

## Anti-WTO protest rally in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hundreds of protesters yesterday mourned the suicide of a South Korean farmer at a demonstration in Dhaka against the world trade talks in Cancun and demanded punishment to the guilty.

Some left-leaning parties staged separate demonstrations against discriminations to poor nations at the meeting of World Trade Organisation (WTO) ministers in the Mexican resort.

"We want punishment to those responsible for the death of farmer Lee Kyang Hae," Shireen Akhter, president of Karmojibi Nari, told a rally at Shabbagh.

"We will not allow the Cancun meet to succeed if it does not take the demands of poor nations into

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## Tigers lose trail midway

HASAN MASOOD from Faisalabad

A sensational middle order collapse saw Bangladesh swallow a 74-run defeat against Pakistan in the second game of the five-match one-day international series at the Iqbal

Stadium in Faisalabad yesterday. The visitors, chasing a Yusuf Youhana inspired Pakistan total of 243 for eight, got off to a flyer thanks to a 82-run second wicket stand between opener Habibul Bashar and one-down Rajin Saleh, who kept them on course. They teamed up in the middle after another Mohammad Ashraful (3) flop. The 19-year-old was caught at slips by Inzamam-ul Haq in the very first over. Ashraful had lost his wicket in the opening over of the first ODI, as well.

Bashar and Saleh were going along nicely before the former fell to a poor decision by the umpire. Bangladesh's premier Test batsman was on 25 when Zimbabwean umpire Russel Tiffin adjudged him lbw to Abdur Razzak even though the ball clearly deflected off the bat.

Bangladesh lost their third wicket on 90 when one-day specialist Tushar Imran (1) was bowled by

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## AL to decide on joining JS session tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League Parliamentary Party (ALPP) will decide tomorrow on joining the current session of parliament.

The main opposition party kept off the inaugural sitting of 9th session of the 8th parliament on Thursday. The session will be a brief one, ending on September 19.

Talking to The Daily Star last night, AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil said, "We will decide at Sunday's (ALPP) meeting whether to join the session or not." He however added, "What is the use of joining the session when the treasury bench does not allow us to speak in parliament?"

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## Announcement

Today's edition of 'The Daily Star' includes 'Cancun Special' on page 8.

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