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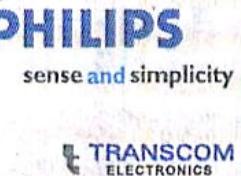
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Barge-mount power plant at Khulna shut down after fire

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

One of the two 28-megawatt barge-mount power plants at Khulna's Goalpara Power Station (GPS) was shut down early yesterday due to a fire.

Fire brigade officials blamed the fire on the negligence of those who were on duty at the time, saying an oil pipeline of the plant was found open from which the flame originated at about 12:45am.

Three fire brigade units brought the blaze under control at about 2:10am.

The executive engineer at the power station, Rezaul Karim, said two committees would be formed to probe the cause of fire in the oil pipeline.

Installed in 1980, the shuttered plant could not generate more than 10 megawatt of electricity since 2004 due to frequent technical glitches and was operational only between 6:00pm and 10:00pm since then.

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## FBCCI asks traders not to make extra profit during Ramadan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) yesterday urged the businessmen to refrain from making extra profit during the month of Ramadan out of their social responsibility.

Such obstacles must be removed immediately to free the traders from all sorts of fears and threats, he said. He requested the government to take realistic measures on reserves and ensure that no businessman is harassed.

FBCCI said country's land ports should remain open seven days a week to speed up unloading and maintain the supply chain.

It observed that the overall market management should be reviewed to allow the marginal farmers and small traders market their products easily.

"Unnecessary questions during opening Letter of Credit (LC) and

depositing or withdrawing money from the banks create fear among the clients causing negative impacts on the business and the supply chain," said FBCCI President Mir Nasir Hossain.

"We are requesting business firms and industries to ensure supply of food items for their own institutions. They might open outlets for their labour force to allow them buy products at a fair price during Ramadan," Mir Nasir Hossain told the journalists.

Lauding the government's instructions about reducing bank interest rate to 12 percent on import loans, he said if the interest rate were reduced to 10 percent, it would bring better results.

"Such reduced rates will have positive implications for small importers," the FBCCI president said. He requested the banks to keep LC margin and commission at minimal level.

Appreciating the withdrawal of

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## UK clarifies position on recent unrest

UNB, Dhaka

A British High Commission spokesman yesterday issued a statement clarifying the UK's position regarding the recent unrest in Bangladesh.

In the statement, the spokesman said: "We're pleased that a situation has been reached in which the curfew could be lifted. We understand that the caretaker government will not allow these events to deflect from its desire to prepare credible elections, as per the election roadmap. We welcome this."

He said, "We're aware of concerns over reported incidents of harassment and beating of journalists and students. The UK had urged restraint and has publicly condemned these reported incidents. We recognise the important role of the media. We call on the government to investigate reported incidents thoroughly and to take appropriate actions against those responsible."

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A rickshaw puller taking lunch at a mobile food van on a city street yesterday. Earlier each meal used to cost Tk 12 but now it has risen to Tk 20 due to price hike of essentials.

## FLOOD RELIEF, REHABILITATION

## Tk 500cr foreign funds pledged so far

BSS, Dhaka

Bangladesh has so far received commitments of Tk 500 crore from foreign countries for the country's flood relief and rehabilitation.

Of the total commitments, a substantial quantity of relief goods has already reached the country, said Foreign Ministry source yesterday.

Saudi Arabia remains on the top of the list of donors by providing relief goods worth US\$ 50 million,

the source said adding that Bangladesh did not make any formal appeal for international help. The help came through bilateral contacts and coordination.

Meanwhile, the Foreign

Ministry has initiated steps for import of food grains so that the country does not face any food shortage due to the floods.

Foreign ministers of some countries, including Canada and Iran, talked to Foreign Adviser Dr Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury over phone and expressed their sympathy for the flood victims. They also gave assurance of their support for relief and rehabilitation work.

The resident representative of the UNDP and heads of other international agencies based in Bangladesh had separate meetings with the foreign adviser on post-flood rehabilitation.

The FAO of the UN has assured

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## STUDENT UNREST

### Report on teachers' link baseless, say DU authorities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka University (DU) authorities in a press release yesterday rejected the media reports that pointed finger at DU authorities for promoting student unrest on and

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## Barkat Ullah Bulu, family sued for land grab

A CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

A case was filed against former commerce adviser Barkat Ullah Bulu, his wife Sharneema Barkat and son Omar Sharif for allegedly cultivating fish by grabbing 24 acres of khas land in the district.

Assistant land officer at Char Clarke union land office Shaheed Ullah filed the case on Tuesday night, accusing the Bulu family of digging up ponds and constructing embankment on the grabbed government land for fish cultivation.

The case followed an investigation by the anti-crime taskforce which got proof of financial losses the government incurred by the action of the former adviser to the BNP government and his family.

Locals said Bulu occupied the land by using his clout during the BNP-Jamaat alliance government.

Prayer Timing		
August 29		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-30	5-05
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-33	6-36
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation



Land grabbers gobble up a large part of Kutubkhali canal at Rayerbagh in the capital while the authorities claim that they are continuing a drive against encroachment on city canals.

3 detained RU teachers sent to Dhaka for quizzing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

The three detained Rajshahi University (RU) teachers were sent to Dhaka yesterday evening for placing them before the Taskforce for Interrogation (TFI).

Sub-inspector Mukhtar Hossain, investigation officer of one of the four cases filed against them, confirmed the matter to The Daily Star over telephone.

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) members arrested former RU vice-chancellor Prof Dr Saidur Rahman, RU Progressive Teachers' Alliance Convener Prof Abus Sobhan and Prof Moloy Kumar Bhowmik early Friday on charges of fuelling campus violence.

Earlier, the detained teachers

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## BANGLA-PAK FOREIGN SECY LEVEL TALKS

## FTA, shipping links high on agenda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh-Pakistan annual foreign secretary-level consultations start in Dhaka today, with trade agreement (FTA) and re-establishing direct shipping links between Chittagong and Karachi figuring high on the agenda.

The BNP-led four-party alliance government had agreed to sign the FTA by September 2006, which aimed to raise the bilateral trade to \$1 billion annually. However, the failure to meet over the past two years has prevented any meaningful progress on the deal.

The meeting would discuss the selection of the commodities under the trade pact, as well as eliminating existing non-tariff barriers (NTBs)

Hossain will lead the home side in the meeting.

Both Dhaka and Islamabad have been keen on signing a FTA to reinvigorate the flagging bilateral trade, which was \$210 million last fiscal year, with Bangladesh suffering a trade deficit of around \$100 million.

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The officials and business communities of both the countries have been complaining for a long time that the absence of direct shipping between Karachi and Chittagong is one of the biggest obstacles to boosting bilateral trade.

The two sides will also look to re-establish direct shipping links between the ports of Karachi and Chittagong, which were cut off in 1987, foreign ministry officials added.

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