NEWS

WikiLeaks' Assange, an enigma with a mission

Assange says he worked in a

number of different fields, as a

security consultant, a

researcher in journalism and

WikiLeaks in 2006 with around

10 others from the human

rights, media and technology

fields, although no other co-

and began leaking secret docu-

ments well before its master

stroke of releasing some 77,000

secret US files on Afghanistan

the 68th meeting of the

home's monitoring cell on

sensational cases, the minister

said they have asked the inves-

tigation officer of Sabbir mur-

der case to inform them of the

had also asked the authorities

concerned to place the

Ibrahim killing case as a sen-

sational one at the next moni-

more sensational cases in the

monitoring cell. The cases are

freedom fighter Rafiqul Islam

killing case of Gafurgaon and

computer engineer Rakib

Newaj Saikat killing case

under Adabar police station,

Shamsul Haque Tuku and

other senior officials attended

made by the prime minister of

an online Bangla news agency

on Monday reported that

Manmohan had criticised

Yunus for "funds anomalies" at

not mention which papers had

browsed through some key

Indian newspapers online, but

did not find any recent

Manmohan comments on

Yunus, founder of Grameen

Minister Dipu Moni yesterday

said the allegations of funds

anomalies at Grameen Bank

should be investigated prop-

erly, as people want to know the

On queries from journalists

Meanwhile, Foreign

published the "comments".

The agency, however, did

The Daily Star last night

Citing Indian newspapers,

Prof Yunus

State Minister for Home

The meeting included two

toring cell meeting.

She also said the meeting

The site went online in 2007

founder is publicly known.

in July this year.

Sabbir

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progress.

she said.

the meeting.

FROM PAGE 1

Grameen Bank.

Bank.

added.

He says he founded

started his own IT company.

AFP, London

Julian Assange, who was arrested for rape yesterday, has worked hard to keep his own private life shrouded in mystery as his WikiLeaks website spills the beans on US diplo-

The 39-year-old Australian, the founder and frontman of the whistleblowing site, was virtually unknown at the beginning of this year but is now one of the world's most talked about figures.

"We are creating a new standard for free press," Assange told AFP during an interview in August, adding that "by doing so, we are hoping to liberalise the press across the world."

Yet while Assange may have transformed into a champion of transparency, he keeps his own life tightly under wraps, divulging little about himself.

He even managed to keep his date of birth secret until Interpol divulged it was July 3, 1971, when issuing an international arrest warrant at the request of Sweden, where he is wanted for rape and other sex

Born in Townsville, northeastern Australia, Assange says he spent his early childhood living on and off on the nearby Magnetic Island with his Assange has described his

childhood as nomadic, saying in all he attended 37 different schools. Living in Melbourne in the

1990s, the teenage Assange discovered a new talent: hack-

But his new interest did not go undetected and he was charged with 30 counts of computer crime, including allegedly hacking police and US military computers.

He admitted most of the charges and walked away with

After his brush with the law,

SSC exams

FROM PAGE 16 announced this at a press

briefing at his ministry. The minister said examina-

ion schedules have been prepared keeping in mind the fixture of the World Cup Cricket tournament that will be jointly organised by Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka from February to April.

The examination routine has been prepared in such a way so that the examinees would not be deprived of watching the matches, Nahid

It's transit

organised the event.

in the capital. Dhaka Chamber

of Commerce and Industry

Rahmatullah, former director

(transport) of United Nations

Economic and Social

Pacific (ESCAP) in Bangkok,

spoke at a roundtable styled

A Precondition to Accelerated

ent on roads," he said.

added Rahmatullah.

'We are now too depend-

In the first five-year plan

from 1973-78, the government

the annual development

programme budget for road

communications, which has

now reached 65 percent,

country is not in a position to

offer transit facilities to its

neighbours because of poor

infrastructures like road

capacity, railway, navigability

and handling capacity at

Commission for Asia and the

In the afternoon session, M

FROM PAGE 16

Growth'.

at her office, the minister said it is more important to unearth No examination would be facts than protecting an indiheld on the day and the followvidual's reputation. No one is ing day of the world cup above the law, no matter how matches to be held in influential he or she is, she Bangladesh, he added.

There would be no exami-Last week, a Norwegian nations on February 19 and 25 television documentary and March 4, 11, 14 and 19, he alleged that Grameen Bank had said, adding that all the examinations will end by March 23 diverted nearly \$100 million aid money to its sister concern before the quarter final round of the world cup cricket tour-Grameen Kalyan.

On Friday, Grameen Bank denied any wrongdoing, say-Nahid said the government ing it had transferred 96 million would distribute textbooks at free of cost to all primary dollars of aid to Grameen Kalyan and had it back as loan students on January 1 and observed the day as 'Textbook the same day to enlarge funds Day' across the country. for micro-borrowers.

He said the textbooks would reach district level by Mahmudur's December 15, upazila level by December 21 and to all pribail plea mary educational institutes by December 24.

rejected

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday refused to entertain a bail petition by Mahmudur Rahman, acting editor of the daily Amar Desh, in connection with the contempt of court charge, for which he was sentenced earlier.

The Appellate Division on August 19, 2010 sentenced 'Infrastructure Development: Mahmudur to six month's imprisonment, and fined him Tk 1 lakh for publishing a report on April 21 under the headline "Chamber manei sarkar er pakkhey stay' (Chamber bench means stay allocated nearly 32 percent of orders in favour of the govern-

ment). Mahmudur's lawyers filed the bail petition with the apex court on December 5 in the He also observed that the contempt of court charge.

> During the hearing, chamber judge of the Appellate Division Justice SK Sinha advised Mahmudur's counsels to move the bail petition after filing an appeal with the same court to review and obtain a copy of its August 19

> verdict. Barrister Abdur Razzaq, a counsel for Mahmudur, yesterday told The Daily Star that

his client will suffer in jail if the copy of the verdict by SC is not released. Barrister Rafique-ul Huq

also appeared for the peti-

tioner.

CONSTRUCTION SITE

Pedestrian dies as brick falls on his head

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A pedestrian yesterday met his end as a brick crashed on his head from an underconstruction building at Jatrabari of the capital.

The deceased Noor Alam 30, a banana trader, was a resident of Chhapra Mosque area of Shanir Akhra.

Locals said Alam received a fatal injury as a brick hit him on the head while he was crossing the six-storeyed construction site on foot around 12:30pm.

Alam was rushed to a nearby hospital in a critical condition and later to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where doctors declared him dead around 1:00pm, they added. Alam, the only bread

earner of the family, was on his way to a banana wholesale spot at Jatrabari to buy some, said the victim's wife Kohinoor Begum.

DMCH camp police picked up a Babul, who brought Alam to DMCH, on suspicion. Jatrabari police said an

investigation is going on to know the details of the incident.

Teacher

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When Jamila declined to follow, the teacher slapped her on the face and made her hold the ears and do several sit-ups in the class, the students

Contacted Mannan Baig and Lutfor Rahman, principal of the institution, admitted the incident.

Meanwhile, students of the institute yesterday boycotted class, brought out procession, formed human chain and locked the principal in his office for four hours since 11:00am demanding punishment to the teacher.

The students called off the agitation on the principal's assurance of institutional

The principal held a meeting with teachers and the student's father for three hours. A three-member committee has been formed in the meeting. It will submit a report in three days.

Stalker's

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college vesterday morning, Ujjal asked her to marry him or he will throw acid on her.

At this, she screamed and ran back to her home without taking the exam, her family members added.

Ujjal is a BA student of the same college.

Locals, however, caught Ujjal from the spot and handed him over to the college authorities.

On information, a police team led by Md Hasan Shamim Igbal, officer-incharge of Dinajpur Kotwali Police Station, visited the college to capture him but failed, as the college authori-

ties had already freed him. Sultan Salauddin, principal of the college, said they released Ujjal upon undertakings that he would not disturb

the girl in future. Police later raided his home but could not arrest him, as he had already gone

into hiding. Family members of the victim alleged Ujjal has long been asking her to marry him. Although she has been married to another boy recently, Ujjal continued to press her

Fire in Old

for the same, they added.

On August 22, two persons died in a fire at a chemical warehouse in Lalbagh.

On June 3, 122 people, mostly women and children, died and scores were hurt in a deadly blaze, which originated from a chemical store in the densely populated Nimtoli in Old Dhaka.

Though banned by the government after the Nimtoli disaster, storage and trading in combustible chemicals are going on unabated in the old part of the capital.

The government had also directed the traders to move their stock to a safer location by August 17, but to little avail. After the fire incident yes-

terday, Bangshal police recovered around 500 small refill canisters from the house. Roksana, who lives next

door, said she saw smokes coming out of a ground-floor room and there was a bad odour. Soon, two people spirited out of the room on fire. Those on the other floors of

the building got trapped as the fire blocked the exit. But locals were quick to

bring the fire under control, averting heavy casualties.

Fire service told The Daily Star that they were not Edn not served

FROM PAGE 1 to serve those needs; removing illiteracy within such time as

may be determined by law." Ending over three-hour long discussion, the House adopted the national education policy. Twenty lawmakers participated in the discussion on the motion piloted by AL legislator Suranjit Sengupta.

The premier said her government plans to decentralise the education administration. The upazilas parishads will be authorised to look into overall primary education in their areas and recommend to the government necessary measures, if any. "We will free the country

from illiteracy soon and build a modern technology-based golden Bangladesh," said Hasina, also leader of the House. The government has

formed a committee headed by the planning minister to work out how to ensure free education for all students up to honours level, Hasina said. The premier described

government to ensure qualitative education, and welfare of the teachers. Describing some salient features of the education policy, she said her govern-

various measures taken by her

ment will work tirelessly to implement the policy. Earlier participating in the discussion, the AL-led ruling Alliance lawmakers lauded the education policy and urged the government to start implementing it without delay to improve the education system

A number of lawmakers also spoke about corruption in the education sector, and stressed effective steps to curb

for building a developed

Some of them said the education policy is a 'historic'

The BNP-led opposition

Contact

said the sources. The coast of

comprising officials from

government and international

agencies had been formed.

ment came to know about the

hijacking as soon as it took

place at 170 nautical miles off

is being sought to rescue the

ship which the pirates are

believed to be steering

towards Somalia," the sources

followed the ship until the

vessel went beyond Indian

waters," said another source

International Chamber of

Commerce in their web ser-

vice of live piracy report said

six armed pirates had cap-

Jahan Moni] was reportedly

hijacked by six armed pirates

and 26 people including wife

of the chief engineer were held

hostage around 67 nautical

miles west off Minicoy Island."

vesterday discussed about the

lawmaker Mayeen Uddin

Khan Badal taking floor on

point of order demanded that

the shipping minister issue a

government measures to

rescue the ship from the

Shawkat Ali said "We hope the

government will issue a state-

ment in parliament soon on

the issue," Shawkat said in

the House is worried about the

The team, with assistance from

local Coastal and Wetlands

Biodiversity Management

Project (CWBMP) officials,

identified and evicted several

illegal structures and brought

down a number of pillars sur-

rounding an area of 55 acres at

the coral preservation zone near

large amount of timber, tiles

The team also confiscated a

Due to the recent wave in

tourism, St Martin's Island has

experienced a surge of real

estate projects which can bring

dire consequences to the ecol-

ogy of the island, according to

including the critically endan-

gered Olive Ridley turtles visit

the island every winter in shoals

as an ECA in 1999 under the

Bangladesh Environment

Conservation Act (BECA), 1995.

As proposed, a high-powered

central committee headed by

the land secretary will be

state minister will be adviser

will scrutinise the applica-

tions and investigate claims

of ownership of any vested

the central committee for

tioned that although the

vested property act was made

in 2001, it is yet to be imple-

return the vested property to

the real owners to ensure

parliamentary standing

committee on the land minis-

termed enemy property

pendence, and renamed the

The vested property

independence of

social order and justice.

try for scrutiny.

before the

to the central committee.

property, and submit

disposal of the matter.

The land minister and

The field level committees

their recommendations to

The land minister men-

He said it is necessary to

The bill was sent to the

All can see

FROM PAGE 16

formed.

mented.

Many exotic marine species

The island was announced

environmental experts.

to lay eggs.

He said the nation as well as

Deputy Speaker Col (retd)

"We want to know the

statement on the hijacking.

pirates," he said.

ship's fate.

3 fined

FROM PAGE 16

the beach.

hijacked ship in parliament.

Meanwhile, lawmakers

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal

"A merchant vessel [MV

Meanwhile, the

from the ministry.

tured the ship.

"An Indian helicopter even

"Indian Navy's assistance

Lakkha island of India.

The Bangladesh govern-

They gave no further details.

larly notorious for pirates.

FROM PAGE 1

lawmakers kept off the House. Education Minister Nuru Islam Nahid placed the education policy in parliament on October 3. The House was scheduled to discuss it the next day. But some lawmakers sought deferral of the discussion for taking preparations for

But yesterday's discussion demonstrated lack of preparations as many of the lawmakers spoke rhetorically without focusing on specific aspects the education policy. At one stage, Speaker Abdul

Hamid interrupted whip Sagufta Yasmin as she started speaking on political issues. Participating in the discus-

sion, Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury said the government should increase annual budgetary allocation for education to six percent from two percent of the country's GDP for implementing the education policy.

Nurul Islam Nahid said the policy will help build a democratic and modern society free from any sort of discrimina-Kicking off the discussion,

Suranjit said many education policies were discarded in the past on political grounds.

"But this education policy is not the property of any party or the government; rather it is the country's property. Our education system will get a new look through its implementation, Rashed Khan Menon, chief

of the parliamentary standing committee on the education ministry, proposed inclusion of education as fundamental right in the constitution.

Mujib ul Haque, Jatiya Party lawmaker, proposed introduction of legal education at the secondary level make the students aware of their rights and duties.

Families live

the menace.

nation.

"We are trying to feed her something liquid, like a baby," said Shaila's sister Lazu adding that Shaila only had a few spoons of cornflakes since Monday morning.

"She is just praying to Allah. It appears she had forgotten eating and sleeping," said Farid's sister-in-law Rozina Haque. Brave Royal Shipping

Management, the operator of MV Jahan Moni in Chittagong, is saying that there would be no problem. The company is ready to pay the ransom that pirates demanded in exchange of the crew.

For the family, however, no

promise is enough. Farid Ahmed has been in the shipping profession since the beginning of his career, right after his studies in Marine Academy two decades ago. This was his first voyage in

any Bangladesh-flagged ship. The family last talked with Farid over the phone on

Saturday. "Father used to call twice, sometimes thrice, a day when he is ashore, and every alternative days while on waters,' said Faria, who is not attending college since Monday.

Her brother Farhan, a primary school fina examinee, talked with Farid on Saturday. He said, "Father asked me how I was and about my exams."

Farid was supposed to return home mid-December. "We believe the government is seriously looking into

the matter," said Lazu.

and bathroom fittings stored in The fear and emotions are the area to complete the illegal running as high in the families structures and seized four of other crewmen in MV Jahan tonnes of coral stones and five Moni. tonnes of crushed stones.

Another such is the family of Chief Engineer of the ship Matiul Mawla and Rukhsana Gulzar.

Matiul has been in the ship since April this year. His wife Rukhsana joined him in the voyage in September, before Eid-ul-Fitr, when the ship anchored in Chittagong port. The couple are now hostages.

Their two children are studying abroad.

Matiul's elder brother Mahbub Mawla said they have kept the news from the children fearing emotional break-

in ships in African countries believes the Somalians would not harm a Muslim, as they are Muslims too.

Mega projects

In the second phase, it will be set up between Sonargaon intersection and Sayedabad and from Pallabi to Uttara in the third.

"Construction of the 22km metro rail may be delayed, as there are many more things to finalise," said an official of the DTCB.

financing 80 percent of the cost (\$1.7 billion) to construct the 22km metro rail from Uttara Third Phase to Sayedabad via Pallabi. The

system and will be built mainly over government land

Meanwhile, DCC has chalked out a project to construct four underpasses between Shahbagh and Farmgate with a target to complete them by end of 2011.

was earlier scheduled to start this month but it will now be delayed by about a year. The four-lane underpasses will enable uninterrupted

vehicular movement through Bangla Motor and Sonargaon intersections on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue. Communications Minister Syed Abul Hossain said con-

thing.

A seven-member expert different projects were present committee headed by Prof at the meeting.

Mahbub, who earlier worked

Japan expressed interest in

government will pay the rest. It will mostly be an elevated

and existing roads.

The Tk 170 crore project

struction of the elevated expressway might start next month but officials in the ministry said it might take more time to finalise every-

Jamilur Reza Chowdhury is set to select a firm next week for the construction of the expressway from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport to Narayanganj.

The projects to construct Moghbazar-Malibagh flyover, circular trains service around Dhaka city, and overpasses at level crossings are also in the primary stages. Two overpass projects, Banani and Jurain, were, however, finalised and are expected to start soon.

Yesterday's meeting was convened to discuss various limitations of different pro-

Construction of the

Hatirjheel project, a tunnel

Secretary Mozammel Haque

Khan, Maj Gen Hamid Al

Hasan of army headquarters,

Brig Gen Shahidur Rahman,

Prime Minister's Military

Secretary Brig Gen Md

Salahuddin Miaji, additional

executive director of DTCB SM

Salehuddin, member of Rajuk

M Mahbubul Alam, and pro-

ject directors and designers of

Bangladesh in 1971, was left "We must have proper behind by the Hindus after coordination so that one the 1947 partition of India project does not conflict with and India-Pakistan war in the other delaying the imple-1965. mentation," said Abul The government took its ownership as per the enemy property act after the inde-

act as the Vested Property Act from Jahangirgate to in 1974. Bangabandhu International There are about 6.43 lakh Conference Centre and the acres of land documented as vested property, of which under-construction Kuril about 1.97 acres are returnflyover were also discussed in the meeting. The previous Awami Communications

League government, just before the end of its tenure in 2001, framed a new law -- the Vested Property Return Act. It had also fixed a 180-day time limit to prepare a list of property documented as

to return wrongly seized land. The subsequent BNP government amended the act, replacing the 180-day deadline with an indefinite period. But the list was never completed.

vested property to take steps

Heritage site

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northern Somalia is particusaid Momtaz Uddin. Asked about this, the DC They also said, a taskforce

denied his claim. "Under the current land acquisition law of the country, it is not possible to acquire any land belonging to mosques and mazars," said the DC.

Since the mazar lies in the archaeological site, and the mazar land was not acquired, they can build new structures there, Iftekhar explained.

He, however, said he sent a

letter to the cultural ministry

seeking its directives in this regard. "We will do what the government wants us to do." Upizila Nirbahi Officer of Shibganj Md Lutfar Rahman, who is secretary of the mazar committee, told this corre-

of any development project at Mahasthangarh. Archaeology department sources said a letter was sent to the mazar committee and the UNO of Shibganj on November 27 asking them to stop any construction work at

spondent that he is not aware

Mahasthangarh. Another letter from the department was sent to the DC on December 2 asking him to take steps to stop construction work. But nothing was done.

On November 27, the mazar unnayan committee started constructing a multistorey building on the mazar premises violating the Antiquity Act of 1968.

The Environment Development Citizens Committee of Bogra formed a human chain in the district town recently demanding steps to stop felling of trees and construction work by the mazar committee.

Archaeology department officials said thousands of ancient bricks and artefacts including terracotta were

It said in a statement that the

envoys of Russia, Kazakhstan,

Colombia, Tunisia, Saudi

Arabia, Pakistan, Serbia, Iraq,

Iran, Vietnam, Afghanistan,

Venezuela, the Philippines,

event "for various reasons".

It said that two more coun-

The United Nations' most

tries, Sri Lanka and Algeria,

senior human rights official,

Navi Pillay, has been criticised

statement said that 10 embas-

sies were absent from the 2008

an anti-China fuss by them-

deeply embarrassed by the

award -- has pressured other

governments not to send their

representatives to the cere-

countries and international

organisations" had "ex-

Jiang said "more than 100

pressed explicit support of China.

selves," Jiang said.

few clowns."

envov Martti Ahtisaari.

for saying she will not attend.

FROM PAGE 16

attend.

Beijing.

damaged by construction workers.

The archaeological site was declared a protected area on 22 November 1920.

HC weighs

FROM PAGE 16 directives to protect and preserve the site.

Secretaries to cultural affairs and home ministries, deputy commissioner and superintendent of police in Bogra, custodian of Mahasthangarh Archaeological Museum, officer-in-charge of Shibganj Police Station, president of Mazar Unnayan Committee and Unesco representative in Dhaka have been made respondents to the rule.

The HRPB yesterday filed the writ as public interest litigation on the basis of some reports published recently in various national dailies including The Daily Star that Bogra district administration and Mahasthangarh mazar unnayan committee had started displacing ancient structures at Mahasthangarh to make way for a multi-storey building.

During the hearing, petitioner and lawyer Manzil Murshid said despite restrictions by Antiquities Act 1968 and Building Construction Rules 2008, construction work near Mahasthangarh has continued unabated, spoiling the archaeological beauty of It shows, he added, the

administration's indifference to the importance of protecting Mahasthangarh. Deputy Attorney General ABM Altaf Hossain and Assistant Attorney General

19 countries China's position opposing

this year's peace prize," but

Shahidul Islam Khan repre-

sented the government.

she declined to provide details. On another occasion, she referred to "more than 100

countries." Egypt, Sudan, Ukraine, Cuba "You can see very clearly and Morocco would miss the that the vast majority of the international community will not attend the ceremony," she

said during a regular press had not replied, and 44 would briefing. However, the Nobel Institute in Oslo quickly rejected that claim, with the institute's director Geir Lundestad saying most coun-

By way of comparison, the tries would indeed attend the ceremony. Liu, 54, was a key leader in ceremony for former Finnish the Tiananmen Square pro-

President and UN special tests in 1989. Last year he received an 11-Meanwhile Chinese foryear sentence for "inciting eign ministry spokeswoman subversion" after drafting Jiang Yu said that more than Charter 08 - which called for 100 countries supported multi-party democracy and

respect for human rights in Those at the Nobel Committee are orchestrating The Nobel Foundation citation read: "Liu has consistently maintained that the

"We are against anybody sentence violates both China's making an issue out of Liu own constitution and funda-Xiaobo and interfering in mental human rights. China's judicial affairs," she It praised Liu for his "long said. "We will not change and non-violent struggle" and

because of interference by a highlighted its belief in a "close connection between Diplomats also have said human rights and peace". China -- which has been However, neither he nor

> members of his family will be allowed to receive the prize in person. His wife, Liu Xia, has been under house arrest since the award was announced, and friends and supporters have

been prevented from leaving

threats had been made on

hearing here in Britain but I

think our, his, prospects if he

were ever to be returned to the

US, which is a real threat, of a

fair trial, is, in my view, nigh on

impossible," she told the

Australian Broadcasting Corp

A court in Stockholm

Assange could now be

issued an arrest warrant for

embroiled in the extradition

process for weeks, or even

Serious Organised Crime

Agency (SOCA) told AFP

ahead of Assange's arrest that

A spokesman for the

Assange on November 18.

ahead of his arrest.

"I think he will get a fair

blogs against Assange's son.

Assange arrested

FROM PAGE 1

Assange, in a newspaper opinion piece published after his arrest, said the whistleblowing website was "fearlessly" pursuing facts in the public interest.

Assange likened his campaign to the World War reporting of Keith Murdoch, the father of media baron Rupert Murdoch, which excoriated British generals' management of the Gallipoli campaign in which thousands of Australians died. "Nearly a century later,

WikiLeaks is also fearlessly publishing facts that need to be made public," the WikiLeaks editor wrote. Assange's lawyers were not

immediately available for comment, but they have said he will fight extradition to Sweden, saying they fear he could then be passed on to the United States from the Scandinavian country. One of his London-based

said he was "isolated and

persecuted" and that death

when the subject of a European arrest warrant lawyers, Jennifer Robinson,

months.

appears in court they are given the option to consent to their extradition.

WikiLeaks has already been expelled from the United States where politicians have called for Assange to be treated as a terrorist.

Bangladesh, moderated the morning session, while Aftab-Ul Islam, chairman of SME Foundation, moderated the afternoon session.

According to him, Bangladesh could gain in two ways -- transit fees or toll and sharing of benefits. Mahbubur Rahman, president of International Chamber of Commerce

informed of the fire.