# NEWS

## Guilty yet get off

FROM PAGE 1

by a court on September 19 this year for reckless driving in October 2007. Covered van driver Nurul Islam was jailed for seven years, though in absentia, and also fined Tk 20,000, in default of which he will have to serve two more vears behind bars.

In another rare judgment, the High Court on May 11 directed the Bangladesh Beverage Industries Ltd to pay Tk 2.01 crore in compensation to the wife and two sons of Mozammel Hossain Mintu, former news editor of the daily Sangbad. Mintu was hit on December 3, 1989 by a vehicle of the company and died on

December 16. Experts say as there is no comprehensive law, guilty drivers return to the road with the same vehicles, while employers of unregistered drivers cannot be tried.

As per section 304 (B) of the Penal Code, killing of a person due to reckless driving is a bailable offence and the highest punishment for it is threeyear jail or fine or both.

Only the accused drivers can be implicated with sections 279, 304 and 304 (B) of the Penal Code. But there is no law to try the vehicle owners even though they employ such drivers, commented Tarana

There is no legal provision to keep the seized vehicles in police custody until the case is dissolved, although those should be kept in custody as evidence, she added.

Sub-inspector Didarul Alam of Ramna Police Station has been investigating the murder case concerning Willes Little Flower School student Hamim Sheikh. Hamim was killed by a bus of Madhumati Paribahan in front of his school on February 3.

The investigation officer said Madhumati Paribahan employed a fake driver for that particular bus but he is unable to implicate the owners.

He added Madhumati Paribahan released the bus through a court order around four months into the accident, while the driver is also out on

Usually, it is hard to prove the guilt of drivers, as neither the accused nor the vehicles concerned remain in custody. The transport owners meanwhile put pressure on the victims' families for negotia-

tions. Sometimes the drivers even destroy the pieces of evidence from the vehicles after having those released. It also becomes tough to identify whether the accident occurred due to mechanical fault or callous driving.

In such situation, the victims' families lose interest in continuing the legal battle.

Shafiqur Rahman, chief of Dhaka Metropolitan Police's traffic wing, said in most cases drivers with valid licences obtain bail. Incidents of obtaining instant bail too demoralise the victims' families in pursuing the case. Besides, if the drivers with

fake licences can escape the accident spots, they do not appear before court and send their colleagues with valid licence as imposters to seek bail.

Several investigation officers of accident cases said they had little to do when imposters take responsibility to save the unregistered, unskilled and guilty drivers.

It is impossible to prove that these drivers were not driving the vehicles concerned, as the guilty ones escaped the scenes leaving no trace behind, they said.

Citing an example, Shahbagh police said they learned that a driver of Labbaek Paribahan fled after his vehicle crushed ATM Anisuzzaman to death at Banglamotor intersection on April 21. Later in May another driver

of Labbaek Paribahan who had valid licence appeared before court and obtained bail, police added.

The law enforces said they come to know of incidents like this from sources, but they can do little to prove those before court.

Labbaek Paribahan sources said they have got their driver released and he is driving the bus again.

2010, the voter list (amend-

ment) act, 2010 are likely to be

BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami and

Bangladesh Jatiya Party

attended the first day of the

budget session in June but

boycotted the rest of the fifth

session. They were also absent

Talking to The Daily Star, a

Opposition lawmakers of

passed in this session.

from the sixth session.

### BNP sticks

Farroque told reporters that his

on November 30.

party has not changed its stance against joining parliament.

"We will not return to parliament unless the government meets our demands for restoring law and order, checking price hike of essentials and ending the drama over BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's cantonment house," he said.

The opposition chief whip senior BNP lawmaker said they said that at the meeting he will continue boycotting the raised different issues including House repression of opposition leaders and activists during hartal

between the government and

BNP on the cantonment resi-

dence and Tarique Rahman and

Arafat Rahman's returning

suggestions which I will place

before my leader [Khaleda Zia],'

He said the BNP parliamen-

tary committee is likely to hold a

press conference today to

clarify its position on joining the

The current session of parlia-

ment is likely be very brief as it

has been convened mainly for

constitutional obligation since

the gap between two consecu-

tive sessions should not be more

than 60 days. The last and sixth

secretariat said a number of bills

including the code of criminal

procedures (amendment) act

Police to probe

who had allegedly demanded

After failing to realise the

Sagor was an employee of

money they had tortured him

an automobile workshop in

Kutub Khali of Jatrabari, Lutfa

allegation saying, they had

detained Sagor with four of his

cohorts early November 26

after locals beat them up and

handed them over to police on

Sagor was placed on a

remand for two days and was

produced before the court on

November 29 after which he

Ismail Hossain Khan,

investigation officer of the

case said Sagor was physically

fit when they had sent the

ties brought Sagor to Dhaka

Medical College Hospital

(DMCH) after he fell sick on

the morning of November 30.

He later died that night.

Dhaka Central Jail authori-

Police, however, denied the

bribe for her son's release.

to death, she alleged.

charges of mugging.

was sent to prison.

victim to court.

infected.

claimed

Sources of the parliament

session ended on October 6.

parliamentary session.

The speaker made a few

Besides, most BNP lawmakers have already submitted their resignation letters to the party He also demanded that the speaker arrange a discussion

A few of them, however, said seeking release from parliament by the opposition lawmakers is nothing but a tactic to exert pressure on the govern-

"It would be a suicidal decision for us to resign from parliament when the next election is far away. We will even lose influence on our constituencies if we resign now," a BNP lawmaker seeking anonymity told this

correspondent. BNP standing committee member Moudud Ahmed, meanwhile, at a press briefing at his chamber yesterday said the BNP-led opposition will not join the session.

#### Dhaka may get

FROM PAGE 1

Replying to a query, Mohiuddin said, "The parliamentary committee on the local government and rural development ministry will decide on this issue after consulting the minister concerned and the city MPs."

After the meeting, State Minister for LGRD and Cooperative Jahangir Kabir Nanak said the city corporation needs to be decentralised to ensure better services for the city dwellers.

Earlier on September 22, the Election Commission decided to hold the long overdue DCC polls by December and union parishad between January and February next year.

The term of the incumbent DCC mayor expired in May

**OTHERISSUES** 

The meeting discussed, among other issues, programmes to celebrate the Victory Day.

"Since it will be the 40th anniversary of our victory, we must go for grander celebrations," Rahmatullah quoted the prime minister as saying.

Besides, Hasina asked the MPs to monitor the markets in their constituencies to check the price hike of essentials.

DMCH morgue sources Out of 17 MPs of Dhaka city, said injury marks were found 13 were present at the meeting on different parts of his body attended also by LGRD and his lungs were badly Minister and AL General Secretary Syed Ashraful Islam.

### Mob kills

FROM PAGE 1 roadside ditch.

As locals came forward sensing trouble, the criminals opened fire at them, leaving three locals -- Kazi Mohammad Siraj, Zakir Hossain and Vanu Bhushan Saha -- injured, said witnesses.

The mob caught three gang members and beat them to death on the spot. The identities of the deceased trio could not be known immediately. The rest of the gang, how-

ever, fled. Locals caught one unidenti-

fied person on suspicion and handed him over to police. Bullet-hit Siraj died at Comilla Medical College Hospital. The two other

Dhaka for treatment. Law enforcers recovered one pistol, one revolver and five bullets from the crime

wounded have been sent to

#### Industries

**FROM PAGE 16** 

however, said anything new takes some time to function. "Now the newly launched Industrial Police are working under administrative orders, but in future it will work under separate rules, which are now being formulated," he said.

Sobhan said all of the forces approved by the government could not be deployed, as their offices are not yet ready. The Industrial Police will operate in all industrial zones across the country, overseeing garment, tannery, ship breaking and shrimp industries. The unit has been formed for

proactive policing based on intelligence to prevent labour unrest that results in deaths and injuries and damage to proper

It also aims to resolve problems among the owners, workers and others involved in the

According to police sources, the government initially approved 1,580 members for the unit to work in Dhaka, Gazipur and Chittagong. Of them, 163 are inspectors and sub-inspectors assigned to gather intelligence and carry out investigation, while 1,315 are constables, nayek and assistant sub-inspectors.

Some 200 of them received a 10-day training, the sources added.

The force was also supposed to work in Narayanganj but the police department could not arrange this due to insufficient manpower.

Replying to a query over insufficient manpower and their training, Inspector General of Police Hassan Mahmood Khandaker said "The Prime Minister gave assurance of approving 3,000 more members for the Industrial Police soon. It will strengthen

the new force. He said they are also trying to resolve the accommodation

problem the force is now facing. Meanwhile, the Chittagong unit of the force formally started its journey yesterday. Home Minister Sahara Khatun inaugurated the unit at dock labour colony adjacent to Chittagong

It has 391 police members under one assistant police superintendent.

#### Pilkhana trial

FROM PAGE 1

Baset made arrogant comments without the permission of the court on December 1 for which he received a double blow, a six-month imprisonment and dismissal from his services.

Meanwhile, thirty-one suspected mutineers of 24 Rifles Battalion cross examined two witnesses after Special Court-7 resumed its day's proceedings around 9:30am.

Some 285 accused out of 667 cross-examined 20 witnesses till vesterday.

In his disposition Sepoy Fazlul, a witness, stated that sepoy Al Masum shot Major Mohammad Mominul Islam Sarkar, the then intelligence officer of battalion 24, dead just after the mutiny began on February 25 last year.

After the killing, the excited armed mutineers ran to Darbar Hall, he added.

Meanwhile, the lawyers of the accused told The Daily Star that the prosecutor is assisting witnesses unfairly while crossexamining.

"The prosecutor can not suggest anything during cross-examination as such suggestions may thwart justice by influencing witness", said advocate M Sultan Mahmud, a lawyer of the accused.

The prosecutor Lt Col Shamsur Rahman, however, refuted the allegation saying that his discussions with the other lawyers during the

proceedings might have misled the opposition lawyers. The court was adjourned till 9:00am of December 7.

"After a long fight and sacrifice of blood we established democracy in the country and we are committed to

Climate talks

trations.

meanwhile, are lukewarm or

hostile to a second period if it

does not include the world's

burning of fossil fuels has

brought concentrations of

carbon dioxide, a colorless,

odorless and tasteless green-

house gas, to record concen-

stem these emissions, the

world is on track for worsen-

ing drought, floods, storms

and rising seas, spelling a

threat for hundreds of mil-

will indirectly cause nearly

one million deaths a year and

inflict 157 billion dollars in

damage, according to esti-

misery will be heaped on

more than 50 of the world's

poorest countries, but the

United States will pay the

almost all countries in the

world will realise high vulner-

ability to climate impact as

the planet heats up," accord-

ing to the study, compiled by

a humanitarian research

organisation and climate-

Nothing wrong

had diverted nearly \$100

million aid money to its sister

1998--are based on a trove of

letters and documents relat-

ing to the transfer, which the

documentary's director

Danish filmmaker Tom

Heinemann said he had dis-

covered in the Norad archives

denied any wrongdoing,

saying it had transferred 96

million dollars of aid to

Grameen Kalyan and had it

back as loan the same day to

enlarge funds for micro-

high officials of police.

were also present there.

Saleh Ahmed, persona

secretary to the opposition

leader, and assistant personal

secretary Shuratuzzaman

Aman, lawmake

Shahiduddin Chowdhury

Anee and Khaleda's counsels

Nasiruddin Ashim and Kaiser

Kamal were present a

Jahangir Gate of the canton-

ment when the vehicles carry-

ing the goods were moving

day alleged that many of the

household belongings were

former lawmaker said the BNP

chief is looking for a suitable

house in the city's Gulshan or

spoke of non-cooperation

from the Cantonment Board

tion in parliament left the

house on November 13. The

Cantonment Board gave her

72 hours from yesterday to

take away her possessions,

establishing the rule of law in

Describing her govern-

ment's various steps for the

welfare of the judges and the

judiciary, the premier said the

judges can now perform their

duty neutrally and without

steps to ensure a congenial

atmosphere for the judges and

attempts of the autocratic

military rulers violating the

constitution and attempting

to control the judiciary,

Hasina said she personally has

experienced how the judiciary

peace, and to ensure transpar-

ency and accountability in the

judiciary, her government has

facilities for the judges includ-

Ahmed, State Minister for Law,

Justice and Parliamentary

Affairs advocate Quamrul

Islam were, among others,

She said that to bring

Referring to various

the judiciary," she said.

could be controlled.

judiciary.

the judges.

present.

We have taken severa

the country," she added.

The leader of the opposi-

in shifting her belongings.

not found.

Baridhara.

said Ashim.

any fear.

Perform neutrally

Amanullah Aman yester-

Talking to journalists, the

Khaleda's counsels also

BNP leader Amanullah

On Friday, Grameen Bank

The claims--settled in May

concern Grameen Kalyan.

"In less than 20 years,

highest economic bill.

vulnerable countries.

FROM PAGE 1

in Oslo.

borrowers.

A report found the biggest

mates presented at UN talks.

By 2030, climate change

lions of people, they warn.

Without urgent action to

Scientists say unbridled

biggest carbon polluters.

**FROM PAGE 16** 

gases and aiding poor countries exposed to climate change.

The two tracks are essentially interlinked, which explains why delegates fretted over a repeat of the logjam that drove last December's climate summit in Copenhagen to the brink of disaster.

One track gathers all 194 parties under the UNFCC, including the United States, while the other gathers the 193 parties to the Kyoto Protocol -- everyone but the United States.

Developing countries have said they will commit to a deal in the first track provided there is a deal in the second track for renewing commitments under the Protocol after the first roster of pledges expires at the end of 2012.

But on Monday, Japan bluntly gave notice it would refuse to sign up to a second commitment period.

There was "no sense" in renewing its pledges if the Protocol's cuts, applying just to rich economies, covered less than 30 percent of the world's emissions, it said. Top carbon emitter China

does not face these constraints as it is a developing country, while the United States, which is number 2, abandoned Kyoto in 2001. On Friday, a group of left-

wing Latin American countries warned an overall deal in Cancun would be "very difficult" without a Kyoto second commitment period.

The so-called ALBA group -- Bolivia, Cuba, Ecuador, Nicaragua and the Caribbean island nation of Dominica -led hardline opposition at last year's summit to the Copenhagen Accord, a lastminute compromise cobbled together by a couple dozen leaders.

The European Union (EU) is Kyoto's biggest champion, but even so there are differences of opinion toward the treaty within the 27-nation bloc, a European diplomat said. Canada and Russia,

#### Shifting Dreaming FROM PAGE 16

Cantonment Board and Inter FROM PAGE 16 Services Public Relations and from stomachache," Jamal

Tofazzal, Jamal's father, has been pressing oil seeds for around 30 years. He is now incapable of hard labour.

said.

He said, "We earn Tk 60-70 a day selling around five kilogrammes of mustard oil. Two years ago, the income was between Tk 100 and 120. Rise in oil-seed prices has reduced the income drastically."

"Had I a bullock, my children would have better lives, the father choked with emotion.

It kills Jamal's mother when she sees the child take up the yoke and move around the expeller. She keeps dreaming of a happy life when their

son is all grown up. Baroghariya is a mongaprone village and most of the people here are living below the poverty line. There are a lot like Jamal here.

Mansur Ali, 60, a local, said that the vast majority of the villagers are poor there. So they are hardly able to help each other. However, the hard struggling of Jamal and his family is an example for others, he added.

The constitution and existing

traditional laws of the country

would be the guideline for the

remain alert so that the cul-

prits get punished instead of

She asked the judges to

Citing the proverb 'justice

delayed, justice denied', the

premier also said that the

judges should be more cordial.

that most of the people of the

country are poor, and many

lack the courage to go to the

court due to its time-

finalise the cases at the earliest

possible time," she said, add-

ing the judges have to remem-

ber that the call of justice

never cries in silent and quiet

rich and poor," she said.

"Let there be justice for all,

The rule of law and democ-

racy are complementary to

each other. It cannot be estab-

lished in absence of democ-

racy, just as democracy cannot

not be strengthened in the

absence of the rule of law, she

believes in democracy and the

The present government

"I have asked you all to

In this connection, she said

FROM PAGE 16

judges, Hasina said.

the innocent people.

consuming nature.

places.

mentioned.

rule of law, she said.

#### RMG unrest FROM PAGE 16

the workers gathered at Jamgara Government Primary School compound and started chanting slogans against the authority. At one stage they gathered by the Dhaka-Tangail highway in a bid to block it. The clash ensued when the

agitating workers tried to put a barricade on the highway around 9:30am, said Sirajul Islam, officer-in-charge (OC) of Ashulia Police Station. The workers also started

throwing brickbats at the law enforcers, to which the police retaliated with tear gas shells and rubber bullets, added the OC. The workers were dispersed around 10:00am. Sub-inspector Shahen Shah Parvez said "I with a team of six

police personnel reached the spot. The workers hurled brickbats at us leaving one of my colleagues and myselfinjured." The SI added they took shelter behind a shop and on information another team

rescued them. At least eight factory workers sustained injuries during the clash, said locals.

Managing Director of the factory Hossain Shah Zaved, however, claimed the factory management was compelled to shut down the factory temporarily fearing more unrest.

The workers had been agi-

tating since Wednesday demanding almost double the rate per piece for production of sweater. Zaved termed the demand unusual. The factory will resume

production once normalcy returns, he said, adding a negotiation between the workers and the management was going on to resolve the crisis. Police arrested three factory

workers at noon in this connec-Meanwhile, around 3000 workers of Palmal Sweater Ltd abstained from work at its factory at Ashulia from 11:00am

demanding pay hike. SI Parvez said police personnel were deployed in and around the factory to avert any breach of peace.

factory said they would sit with the workers today to settle the

One of the directors of the

He added the workers left the factory in the afternoon.

### Fire burns

**FROM PAGE 1** 

workshop, the SI said, adding, however no causality was reported.

Fire fighters reached the spot and doused the fire at 6:00am with the help of locals but could not save the belongings as the most of the families were asleep.

#### Army men

**FROM PAGE 16** said the victims and eyewit-

Incensed, locals confined the army men. Later, some other army officers along with the military police rushed to

the spot and freed them. Harun-ar-Rashid, additional deputy commissioner of metropolitan police (Tejgaon), told The Daily Star at 1:40am the army men were taken back to barracks as arrestees.

Contacted earlier, Capt Ashraf and his colleague Capt Badrul Haque had refused to talk to this correspondent. They even declined to give their identity.

Boutique owner Talha said the landlord was pressing them to vacate the shop though the deal allows them to stay till December 31.

The building owner however claimed the deal expired a year ago.

#### Health ministry

FROM PAGE 16 including any non-cadre officer to the short list.

The association questions, when promotion of at least 500 cadre doctors are halted even for 10 years, then what is the point of promoting the noncadre doctors to the cadre

"A vested quarter is trying to promote non-cadre doctors who are less qualified and in no way eligible for the senior posts of the cadre service," said Nazmul Islam, secretary of the association. While talking to The Daily Star yesterday health secre-

tary Humayun Kabir also admits that no non-cadre doctor can be promoted to the senior cadre posts. But non-cadre doctors argue that Bangladesh Civil Service Recruitment Rules,

taken steps to digitalise the 1981, says doctors who The government has taken passed Bangladesh Civil measures to increase various Service exams or have been regularised through Public ing enhancement of their Service Commission are salaries, the premier informed members of health cadre. Cadre doctors say follow-

BJSA Chairman M Jahangir ing the regularisation the Hossain presided over the non-cadres took undue conference while Law, Justice privilege. and Parliamentary Affairs If these non-cadre officials Minister Barrister Shafique

British lawyer, Mark Stephens, has said stem from a "dispute secure a position of seniority, over consensual but unproit would mean less qualified tected sex." He said Assange doctors are overtaking eligiwas happy to speak to Swedish ble doctors. It would ultiprosecutors and had provided mately create unrest in the his contact details to authoricadre service, they said.

### Israel sad as Brazil recognises Palestine

AFP, Jerusalem

Israel yesterday said it was disappointed by Brazil's decision to recognise a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders, saying it flew in the face of efforts to negotiate a peace

The decision was announced by outgoing Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva in a public letter addressed to Palestinian leader Mahmud Abbas, which was made public by Brazil's foreign ministry on Friday.

"The government of Israel expresses sadness and disappointment over the decision by the Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva a month before he steps down," a statement from the Israeli foreign ministry said.

"Recognition of a Palestinian state is a breach of the interim agreement which was signed between Israel and the Palestinian Authority in 1995 which said that the issue of the status of the West Bank and Gaza Strip would be discussed and resolved through negotiations," it said.

Such a move also contravened the 2003 Middle East roadmap for peace, which said a Palestinian state could only be established through negotiations and not through unilateral actions, the statement said, warning that unilateral steps would harm attempts to build trust.

"Every attempt to bypass this process and to decide in advance in a unilateral manner about important issues which are disputed, only harms trust between the sides, and hurts their commitment to the agreed framework of negotiating towards peace."

Lula's letter was sent in response to a personal request made by Abbas on November 24, the Brazilian document said.

"legitimate aspiration of the Palestinian people for a secure, united, democratic and economically viable state coexisting peacefully with

Although the international community backs Palestinian demands for a state on land seized by Israel in the 1967 Six Day War, most Western governments insist that the state should be established through a negotiated peace agreement with Israel.

and the Palestinians teeter on the brink of collapse following the end of a temporary ban on Jewish settlement building in the West Bank. Abbas says he will not return to negotiations while Israel continues to build on

far refused to impose a new Over the last few weeks, Abbas has repeatedly said he would explore other options if peace talks with the Israelis collapse -- one of which would see him seeking United Nations' recognition of a

officially informed them that attempts to secure a new Israeli settlement freeze had failed, but US officials refused

and 2009, and Lula made the first-ever trip by a Brazilian head of state to Israel and the Palestinian territories in March this year.

### Will WikiLeaks survive minus Assange?

Its founder is a wanted man, its systems are under attack, it is condemned from the capitals of the world.

But although the future is uncertain for WikiLeaks, the website dedicated to releasing classified information has opened a Pandora's Box of

WikiLeaks, which has triggered global governmental alarm by releasing reams of classified US diplomatic cables, is facing attacks in cyberspace and in the legal sphere. The site is assailed by hackers and has been booted from its US server. Frontman Julian Assange is in hiding and faces allegations of sexual

"Whatever happens to the domain name and the actual organization, the idea unleashed by WikLeaks is going to continue," said Joshua Benton, director of the

agreed.

still there.' Little is known about the

with no permanent address. papers and magazines around the world, but he has not appeared in public for a

Assange, who is somewhere in Britain, is the subject of a European arrest warrant issued by authorities in Sweden, where he is accused of rape, sexual molestation and unlawful coercion.

If British police arrest him, he will likely be caught up in a lengthy legal fight against extradition and could be jailed, his ability to operate as the face of WikiLeaks curtailed even further.

The letter refers to the

The move by Brazil comes as peace talks between Israel

land the Palestinians want for a future state. But Israel has so

Palestinian state based on the 1967 borders. On Thursday, a Palestinian official said Washington had

to confirm or deny the report. Abbas visited Brazil in 2005

AP, London

secret-spilling that will be difficult to reverse.

misconduct.

Nieman Journalism Lab. Ben Laurie, a data security expert who advised WikiLeaks before it launched in 2006,

'The concept is not going to die. It's really hard to keep things shut down if they want to stay up," he said. "Look at everything else people would like not to happen online phishing, spam, porn. It's all

WikiLeaks. It has no head quarters, few if any paid staff but a famous public face in Assange, a wiry 39-year-old Australian computer hacker He's on the cover of news-

day-to-day functioning o

Assange denies the Swedish charges, which his

ties there and in Britain. Assange also has made powerful enemies in the United States, especially since WikiLeaks released thousands of secret logs from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan earlier this year. With the latest leaks, US politicians have called for him to be prosecuted for espionage or worse. Former Republican vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin asked

pursued with the same urgency we pursue al-Qaida and Taliban leaders?" Assange acknowledged

on Facebook: "Why was he not

Friday that "I have become the lightning rod.' "In the end, someone must be responsible to the public and only a leadership that is willing to be publicly courageous can genuinely suggest that sources take risks for the greater good," he said during a question-and-answer session

on The Guardian newspaper's website. "I get undue attacks on every aspect of my life, but

then I also get undue credit as some kind of balancing force.' It's not just governments and the law with whom Assange conflicts. He is a divisive figure who has been accused of overshadowing WikiLeaks' work and appears

#### former colleagues. Pakistan army

to have fallen out with several

FROM PAGE 16

In the military's first response to the allegations, spokesman Major General Athar Abbas said Saturday "the army has a demonstrated policy of supporting the political process within the confines of constitution of Pakistan.

Abbas also said that Kayani

"holds all national leaders in esteem," including the main opposition leader Nawaz Sharif. Zardari is the widower of former prime minister

Benazir Bhutto, who was assassinated in December 2007. He took power in 2008, returning Pakistan to civilian rule after nearly a decade under former general Pervez Musharraf. According to a cable

quoted by The New York

Times, Kayani told the US

ambassador during a March 2009 meeting that he "might, however reluctantly," pressure Zardari to resign. Kayani was quoted as saying that he might support

Asfandyar Wali Khan, leader of the opposition Awami National League Party, as the new president -- but not Sharif, Zardari's arch-enemy.