### Speaker

FROM PAGE 1 If anyone violated the provision, s/he would be disqualified to continue as a lawmaker.

Following newspaper reports, ACC officials investigated and found that Enamul's business firm, Northern Power Solution Ltd, had signed an agreement with Bangladesh Power Development Board for setting up a 50MW rental power plant in Rajshahi after he became an MP.

They also found that Enamul's other business firm Ena Properties had signed an agreement with the Rajshahi City Corporation to build a multi-storey city centre during this time.

"The ACC is not supposed to look into the conflict of interests of MPs. So, the ACC's role in this matter [of Enamul] is not clear to us. We have asked it to clarify its position," Hamid said referring to the content of the letter.

He said if Enamul engaged in corruption while implementing the contracts with the government, the ACC can investigate on it and file case against him.

#### OATH OF NEW MP

The Speaker yesterday said the oath of MP-elect Maj General (retd) Mahmudul Hasan would be delayed as unseated Jatiya Party lawmaker Abul Kashem had filed a review petition against the Supreme Court verdict. The Election Commission

(EC) on Monday declared BNP leader Mahmudul the elected MP from Tangail-5 constituency cancelling Kashem's candidacy in the December 29, 2008 general elections from here. The EC made the decision

in line with a Supreme Court verdict that disqualified Kashem's candidacy in the polls as he was a telephone bill defaulter then. "I can't administer the oath

until the review petition is disposed of. If the petition is rejected, I won't take time for the oath of Mahmudul," the Speaker told reporters yester-He said he had asked

Kashem, leader of a key component of AL-led ruling alliance, to take steps for the quick disposal of his review petition. "I can wait for four days at best," added Speaker Hamid.

Kashem who met Hamid yesterday afternoon at the atter's office, told The Daily Star that he had filed the review petition with the Appellate Division on

### Bangladesh

country's vulnerability and security risks.

As a "threat multiplier" climate change is a nontraditional security challenge that needs a strategic approach beyond the normal sphere of politics and cooperation of the government together with public and private enterprises.

He said the UK is trying to draw up an index of such risks for countries and is committed to help countries overcome the risks through

mitigation and adaptation. A large part of Asia and Africa has been marked as areas of multiple stresses which include Bangladesh, he said while talking to a

amounted to \$340 billion,

"which is why the climate

security risks have to be

cited the example of how

computer prices shot up

following tsunami that

affected manufacturing of

Climate change, he said,

"can act as a threat multi-

plier in those parts of the

world where there is already

stress regarding food, water,

health, and demographic

challenges; often in coun-

tries where governments

don't have the capacity and

resilience to look after their

citizens. And it can act as a

catalyst for conflict and

therefore increase the risk of

He underscored sharing

information on the reasons

instability".

with the situation.

chips in Southeast Asia.

To elaborate further, he

minimised".

select group of journalists yesterday. These areas represent some "choke points", which may threaten global trade

Kabir Rizvi in the capital. through increased crimes, "We think the problems piracy and conflicts, he observed. He mentioned that last year, the loss of global trade for natural disasters, mostly due to climate change,

Asked how the ruling AL

Regarding sending a formal offer to the opposi-

### JS budget

FROM PAGE 1 session must begin on or before May 28.

Finance Minister AMA Muhith earlier said the budget for fiscal 2012-13 is likely to be tabled in parliament on

and kinds of stresses to help the countries better deal

# Willing to talk

FROM PAGE 1 boycott the next general elections if it is not held under a caretaker govern-

ment. Since the abolishment of the caretaker system, no initiative either from the government or from the ruling AL was evident to resolve the political standoff. The opposition parties in the mean time have started to heat up street agitation to realise their demand.

Against this backdrop, ruling AL General Secretary Syed Ashraful Islam yesterday said dialogue between political parties was a must and there was no alternative to it.

"You will be able to know when the dialogue process will begin," he said emerging from a parliamentary body meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban yesterday.

Analysts fear politics may take a violent turn if the opposition parties intensify their anti-government movement on expiry of a 90-day ultimatum on June 10 to force the government to restore the caretaker system in the constitution. "We have been repeat-

edly urging the political leaders to sit in dialogue to resolve the political crisis. But they didn't pay heed to us. Now, we don't know whether the political parties will reconsider sitting in dialogue after Hillary's call to this effect," Akbar Ali Khan, former adviser to a caretaker government, told The Daily Star on Sunday. Akbar also feared the

political situation may deteriorate if a solution to the ongoing crisis is not reached much before the next parliamentary polls.

During her visit to Dhaka, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on Saturday urged all political actors in Bangladesh to settle their differences through dialogue and plan for holding the next general elections in a free, fair and credible manner.

It is the responsibility of political parties to find out how a free, fair and participatory election can be held in Bangladesh, she men-

The following day, visiting Indian Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee also stressed the need for holding talks among political parties to overcome the ongoing crisis.

The comments of the foreign delegates have revived the governmentopposition dialogue issue.

But both the sides seem to have remained stuck to their stubborn stance. Talking to newsmen at the parliament, AL General Secretary Syed Ashraful

Islam yesterday said the dialogue between the government and the opposition is a must.

The two sides have to decide how the talks would proceed on, added Ashraful, also the minister for LGRD and cooperatives.

BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir vesterday said his party is ready to join the dialogue on the caretaker government issue if the government announces to accept its demand in principle.

He made the remark to journalists at the residence of detained BNP Joint Secretary General Ruhul

should be resolved through talks. We have urged them [opposition] repeatedly to sit in dialogue, but they didn't respond," Mahbubul Alam Hanif, spokesman of AL, told this newspaper on Sunday.

has made the urge, Hanif, also the party's joint general secretary, said several Awami League leaders including the prime minister herself have made the urge through their speeches in and outside of the parlia-

June 7 and passed on June 28.

This will be the fourth budget of the Awami Leagueled grand alliance government since it assumed office in January 2009.

tion to sit in dialogue, Hanif

want to discuss with us." The caretaker government issue has been settled as parliament has scrapped the provision following a verdict of the Supreme Court that had declared the system unconstitutional, he insisted. Member of AL advisory

said, "This is not the rule.

Rather they should inform

us about the issues they

council Amir Hossain Amu said it is difficult to say who will take the initiative first for holding the dialogue. The ongoing political stand-off could be resolved

if the opposition responds to the ruling party's urge to sit in dialogue, he observed. BNP leader Lt Gen (retd) Mahbubur Rahman, however, did not agree with the

views of AL leaders. "We are always ready for talks. But the proposal must come either from the government or from the ruling party," said Mahbubur, a member of BNP standing committee.

During a meeting with Hillary, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia had clarified uncle of a woman who earthat the opposition wants to resolve the crisis through talks, but the government must take the initiative first, he maintained. Like many other politi-

cians, Amu and Rashed Khan Menon, chief of Workers Party, believe a solution to the ongoing crisis lies in the dialogue and the politicians cannot deny this truth.

#### Govt mum

FROM PAGE 20 in WB's latest report, the second of its kind over the alleged graft.

The query was made prior to The Daily Star report headlined "Padma Bridge project: WB may cancel funding soon" published yesterday. In the second week of

April, Goldstein and another official of the bank's Integrity Vicepresidency from Washington met Finance Minister AMA Muhith and gave him the report. Sources said the report

contained findings of the Canadian government's probe into the corruption allegations over selection of Canadian company SNC-Lavalin as the consulting firm to supervise the main bridge's work.

But when asked, Muhith on Monday declined to make any comment on it.

On the same day, Goldstein also did not make any comment when this paper wanted to learn the contents of the report.

The WB temporarily suspended its part of \$1.2 billion of the total \$2.9 billion funding for the Padma Bridge project in

September last year. Last month, the WB temporarily suspended the Bangladesh unit of SNC-Lavalin from participating in tenders of WB-funded projects over graft allegations in the project.

The suspension came as a fresh blow to the Canadian company whose chief executive quit in March after an internal probe found that he had authorised \$56 million in payments for projects that did not exist.

Officials in Bangladesh said the Canadian police were investigating the payments.

### Four killed, 10 missing in Indonesian floods

AFP, Jakarta

Floods carrying volcanic debris swept through a town in eastern Indonesia yesterday killing four people, including a nine-year-old child, and leaving 10 others missing, a government official said.

A further 15 people were ment in response to a writ injured after floodwaters petition filed after 147 opporampaged through 11 villages sition lawmakers resigned in Ternate City in North en masse from the Fifth Maluku province, national Parliament on December 28, disaster mitigation agency spokesman Sutopo Purwo Nugrohosaid.

Razzak Ali had declined to "Following heavy rains accept those and told the during the night, volcanic House that the en masse floods hit early morning at resignation in his view was 2:00am (1700 GMT), not in line with the article 67 Nugroho said, adding that more than 280 people were evacuated to government offices and schools.

(2) of the constitution. Aggrieved at the reported interference in his work,



Sadar Hospital yesterday. PHOTO: STAR DU teacher reappears

me. Please do something." FROM PAGE 20 the story of his abduction.

Alo claimed that his two colleagues -- Prof ASM Maksud Kamal of geology department and Associate Prof Amrain Hussain of political science department -- and Syedul Bakin, lier at a press conference claimed to be Alo's wife, abducted him from the capital's Uttara area Monday evening. "When I reached Road-3

of Sector-7, they slapped chloroform on my nose and boarded me in a car. As far as I can recall, I was taken to Kamal's house in Mirpur that night but I can't tell how I got to Khagrachhari," said Alo. Hours after Alo's disap-

pearance, several of his students received texts on their mobile phones that read, "They have abducted

The opposition enforced

five dawn-to-dusk hartals

from April 22 to 30 and then

threatened to launch agita-

tion programmes harsher

than hartal. The party has

so far held three demon-

strations this month,

tion's protest programmes

were brought to a pause in

view of US Secretary of

State Hillary Clinton's

Dhaka visit on May 5 and 6.

On Sunday, the alliance

declared that it wound

announce tougher agita-

tion programmes at yester-

suggested that political

parties should not hold

destructive programme

like hartals and settle down

conflicts between them

they were ready to sit for

dialogue if the government

made an announcement of

restoration of the caretaker

government system and

gave back Ilias to his family.

The Speaker's decision

comes more than two weeks

after Sohel Taj resigned as

justify his decision, however,

are not in conformity with a

judgment, the constitution

does not have any provision

authorising the Speaker to

accept or reject a resignation

mitting resignation letter by

a lawmaker in person, the

HC said the letter "need not

be written by the lawmaker

concerned; it is sufficient if it

doubt, the Speaker may

check the authenticity of the

letter or the voluntariness of

The HC gave the judg-

The then Speaker Sheikh

However, if there is any

is signed by him or her."

it, the HC observed.

1994.

On the practice of sub-

letter submitted by an MP.

The reasons he cited to

According to a 1995 HC

lawmaker on April 23.

High Court verdict.

The party leaders said

through dialogues.

**FROM PAGE 1** 

Hillary during the visit evade arrest.

day's rally.

Meanwhile, the opposi-

including yesterday's.

Asked how he had sent the text to his students and why

the abductors did not take away his mobile phone, the DU teacher did not answer, reports our Khagrachhari correspondent. not find any major injury marks on Alo. He also couldn't describe how he escaped from the abductors and came to Dighinala Police

Islam, assistant superintendent of police of Khagrachhari Sadar Circle. "His behaviour is abnormal. Everything would become clear once he is alright," said Sahadat Hossain, officer-in-charge of

Station, said Al Asad

Mohammad Mahfuzul

Meanwhile, talking to The Daily Star, two of the accused,

Against this backdrop,

Fakhrul yesterday declared

fresh programmes and said

the party's next course of

action would be declared

from mass processions. He,

however, did not say

whether BNP Chairperson

Khaleda Zia would lead the

ment for filing cases

against opposition leaders

after hartal hours on April

29, he said such steps

would add fuel to the anti-

The cases, filed against

opposition leaders includ-

ing Fakhrul, had forced

them to go into hiding to

searching the houses of

BNP leaders when they

should focus on identifying

the killers of journalist

couple Sagor and Runi,

ment of throwing the coun-

try into confrontation, he

said they would reject

elections under a political

government, and urged

Sohel Taj, son of the coun-

try's first prime minister

Tajuddin Ahmad, stepped

down as state minister for

Sheikh Hasina on April 19

this year said Sohel Taj was

still a state minister as she

did not "accept" his resigna-

say there is no need for

prime minister's acceptance

of a minister or a junior

minister's resignation letter.

apparently prompted Sohel

Taj to resign from the House

as well, as that would put an

end to the prime minister's

effort to keep him as a state

the constitution, his resigna-

tion as an MP would disqual-

ify him from continuing as a

But Abdul Hamid's deci-

As it appears now, Sohel

Taj will lose his membership

in parliament if he remains

absent from the House pro-

ceedings for 36 more con-

secutive sittings. He has

already been absent from 54

The budget session,

27th of this month, may have asked.

which is likely to begin on

state minister without port-

sion has denied him the

relief.

sittings.

Under article 58 (1) (b) of

minister without portfolio.

Hasina's announcement

Legal experts, however,

But Prime Minister

home on May 31, 2009.

Accusing the govern-

Fakhrul noted.

No relief for Sohel Taj

"The government is

government movement.

Criticising the govern-

Dighinala Police Station.

18-party's fresh demo

processions.

Bakin and Prof Kamal, denied the allegation of abduction. They also alleged that Alowas making a drama.

DU Proctor Amzad Hossain echoed the versions of Bakin and Prof Kamal. "I think Alo is mentally

Meanwhile, police did disturbed. The incident of his disappearance and reappearance were staged drama," he claimed. According to sources, Alo

had been involved in a dispute with Nurun Nahar, a physician from Chittagong At a press conference in the capital on March 25, she claimed that Alo married her in 2008 and used to torture her for dowry. The following day, Alo

called another press conference where he refuted Nurun Nahar's claim and proclaimed himself as a

that the constitution

should be amended for

restoration of the caretaker

government system to

oversee the next parlia-

Ali had gone missing 20

days ago but the govern-

ment was yet to trace him.

"Government agencies had

picked Ilias up. So, it is the

government who has to

give him back alive to his

Mosharraf Hossain and

Moudud Ahmed, Jatiya

Ganatantrik Party

President Shafiul Alam

Prodhan, Bangladesh

Jatiya Party Secretary

General Shamim Al

Mamun, and Liberal

Democratic Party leader

Redwan Ahmed, among

others, addressed the rally.

Fakhrul visited the house of

BNP's arrested leader

Ruhul Kabir Rizvi. Rizvi

was arrested on April 30 at

When his attention was

drawn to the provision,

Hamid said the Speaker had

discretionary powers to

grant leave to an MP. "So,

may allow him leave since

able to attend the House."

he did over the phone.

don't know whether he is

Sohel Taj lately, Hamid said

know when his resignation

would be accepted. I told

him it would take time since

I have to examine the consti-

tutional provision, rules of

procedure and convention,

The Speaker said Sohel

Taj might have signed the

letter, but "I am not sure

whether he was forced to

found some other flaws in

the way the letter was sub-

the letter by his aide, Kawser

Ali, who submitted it at

10:50am on April 23. The

resignation letter was also

dated April 23 and the local

time in the US was 00:50am

the hard copy of his resigna-

tion letter reached my office

in just 50 minutes?" Hamid

"So how is it possible that

Hamid said Sohel Taj sent

he added.

sign the letter."

mitted.

of April 23.

Asked if he had talked to

"Sohel Taj wanted to

Kakrail in the capital.

Earlier in the day,

BNP leaders Khandaker

The BNP leader said Ilias

mentary elections.

## EU presses

FROM PAGE 1

to resolve the problems and create an environment conducive to foreign investments.

They made the observations at a press conference organised on the occasion of the European Day yesterday at the Lakeshore Hotel in the capital.

They expressed concern over the disappearance of BNP leader Ilias Ali and the killing of garment workers' leader Aminul Islam, and called for a thorough probe into the incidents. The EU envoys also

stressed the need for dialogue between major parties to end disagreements for holding the next general election in a free and fair manner. They said human rights are the central point of EU's development cooperation with Bangladesh. The Head of the EU

Delegation in Dhaka Ambassador William Hanna Netherlands Ambassador Alphons Hennekens, German Ambassador Holger Michael, Danish Ambassador Svend Olling, Swedish Ambassador Anneli Lindahl Kenny, Italian Ambassador Giorgio Gugliemino, Spanish Ambassador Luis Tejada Chacon, Bright High Commissioner Rober Gibson and French Ambassador Michel Tringuier. William Hanna called for a

thorough investigation into the disappearance of BNP leader Ilias Ali and killing of workers' leader Aminul. He urged all to exercise restraint and engage in dialogue within or outside parliament to settle all issues. "Parliament is a good

place for dialogue," he said.

Danish Ambassador Svend Olling said the reports of political violence in the streets and disappearance published in newspapers here give a negative signal to the outside world as well as foreign investors.

Spanish Ambassador Luis Tejada Chacon said they are trying to portray a bright image of Bangladesh. Otherwise, foreign companies will move away from Bangladesh and that would be unfortunate for the coun-

The French ambassador said it is difficult to convince

### Green spaces

FROM PAGE 20

certain bacteria, shown to be beneficial for human health, are found in greater abundance in non-urban surroundings. The microbiota play an

important role in the development and maintenance of the immune system, they The findings appear in the

Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. "There are microbes

everywhere, including in the built environment, but the composition is different between natural environments and human-built areas," explained co-author Ilkka Hanski from the University of Helsinki.

"The microbiota in natural environments is more beneficial for us," he told BBC News.

The team collected samples from 118 teenagers in eastern Finland, and found that those living on farms or near forests had more diverse bacteria on their skin, and also displayed lower allergen sensitivity.

The study also allowed the team to identify one class of bacteria, known as gammaproteobacteria, which had a "special function".

Basically, our study showed that the more you had of this particular gammaproteobacteria on your skin then you had a immunological response which is known to suppress inflammatory responses ( to pollen, animals etc)."

Dr Hanski said that there was a tendency for gammaproteobacteria to be Hamid claimed to have more prevalent in vegetative environment, such as forests and agricultural land rather than built-up areas and water bodies.

While it was not possible to reverse the global trend of urbanisation, he said that there were a number of options. "Apart from reserving

natural areas outside of urban areas, I think it is

French companies to invest in Bangladesh because of the country's image problem.

German Ambassador Holger Michael suggested that Bangladesh can improve the investment climate by addressing the problems of infrastructure, electricity, transport and bureaucracy.

British High Commissioner Robert Gibson said violent demonstrations and hartal impede production and harm the economy. They try hard so that the British-aided development projects are not affected by hartals.

Replying to a query, he said the British government that arranged training for Rapid Action Battalion has no plan to arrange fresh training for the elite force.

#### 4 more

**FROM PAGE 1** and verbal versions on the incident of April 9.

The two-member team headed by Director General of Bangladesh Railway Abu Taher went to Pilkhana around 11:00am and stayed there for three hours for interrogation. Joint Secretary of the railway ministry Shashi Kumar Singha is the other member.

The railway DG said the information they already extracted from various persons were satisfactory. "We have got enough information to prepare our report," he told The Daily Star, adding that they hope to submit the report on May 14, the deadline of its submission. The four BGB officers

yesterday turned in written statements to the probe body and were all quizzed. They came up with identical description about the cash haul in the night of April 9 from the microbus of former railway minister's assistant personal secretary.

They said they allowed the microbus as it carried a sticker of Jatiya Sangsad. They also said they did not search the microbus, although driver had shouted that there was illegal money in the vehicle. They claimed to the probe body that none saw the money.

The BGB personnel told the probe team that they had released the driver, sacked APS Omar Faruq Talukder and suspended railway general manager Yusuf Ali Mridha and Dhaka division security commandant

Enamul Haq the next day. However, the driver Ali Azam Khan still remains traceless. The probe body sent him letters and also issued advertisements on newspapers asking him to appear before the panel to give his statement, but of no avail.

The panel earlier took written statements of Mridha, Enamul and Faruk and also questioned them over their involvement in the

## killed in Rangamati

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

A nine-year-old girl was hacked to death allegedly after being raped by an unidentified person in Longdu upazila of Rangamati district yesterday.

The victim was a student of class IV at Ultochhorhi Government Primary School in Atharokchhara union.

Family of the deceased and locals said Sujata with her nephew took their cattle to graze in a field near her home at ward-8 of Yerenchharhi area around 2:30pm. As they were playing, an unknown person showed up from nowhere and forcibly took the victim to the woods.

The nephew instantly informed his family members, who rushed to the spot looking for the girl. "We found the blood-

spattered body in the woods,"

said the victim's brother, adding that there were five to six sharp-weapon wounds on her body. The locals then informed UP Chairman Mangal Kanti Chakma and police of the

incident. Law enforcers recovered the body and took it to Longdu Police Station. The victim's brother alleged that his sister was

raped.

#### "The body will be sent to Rangamati General Hospital today for an autopsy," said Police Super Masud-ul

important to develop city planning that includes green spaces, green belts and green infrastructure," Dr Hanski suggested. Hasan.

# cash incident. Girl raped,