Abul is corrupt

FROM PAGE 1 involvement in corruption

in the Padma bridge project. "He has guts; he has patriotism.... That's why he could resign."

"Abul Hossain is not a patriot. Rather, he is a shameless person as he quit 10 months after the World Bank made the allegation of corruption against him," BNP standing committee member Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain told a seminar at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

Denouncing her remarks, Mosharraf said the prime minister has been batting for a corrupt person and she will not be able to idealise the person who has tarnished the country's image in the international arena.

"If anyone can become a patriot by indulging in corruption, then the definition of patriotism will have to be changed. The prime minister should have called him [Abul] 'shameless'," he mentioned.

Another BNP standing Gen (retd) ASM Hannan Shah said the premier should follow the example set by Abul Hossain to prove her patriotism, reports UNB. "Sheikh Hasina is a cor-

also should set an example by quitting her post," he told a discussion at the Jatiya Press Club. Many leaders of AL and its allies expressed frustration

rupt prime minister and she

over the prime minister's remarks and felt embarrassed to talk about it. "We are frustrated at the prime minister's comment

on a controversial man," an AL leader told The Daily Star, preferring not to be named. When the party chief backs

Abul Hossain, the others have nothing to say, he added. Echoing Hasina's views,

AL acting general secretary Mahbubul Alam Hanif said,

Later, prime minister's

press secretary Abul Kalam

Azad briefed UNB about the

The government was

relentless in its efforts to

make sure the next general

election was free and fair,

Azad said quoting the pre-

In that vein, Hasina

mentioned 5,200 different

elections held in Bangladesh

"All the elections -- both

at local and national levels --

were held peacefully with-

out any influence of the

government. Similarly, all

the future elections will be

held in a fair and neutral

manner," she told the British

Hasina also discussed the

latest political situation in

Bangladesh as well as the

political process, function of

the parliament and the

government's efforts to

strengthen institutions

related to democratic gover

She underscored the

need for institutional con-

tact between the parliamen-

tarians of Bangladesh and

Miliband about the develop-

ment work her government

did in different sectors in the

She thanked the Labour

leader for his continued

interest in Bangladesh and

support to its people for the

Hasina also recalled the

development of democracy.

support of the British gov-

and fair election in 2008.

ernment for holding a free

The premier praised the

Miliband's leadership in

revamping his party and

mentioned the election of

first-ever Bangladesh origin

British citizen Rushanara

Labour Party leader

Douglas Alexander and

Rushanara Ali accompanied

Miliband during the meet-

Bangladesh Foreign

The premier is now in

Minister Dipu Moni and

Ambassador-at-Large M

London on a five-day official

visit to attend the opening

ceremony of Olympic

Games 2012.

Ziauddin were also present.

House of Commons.

Ali, who is the member to the | signal."

Hasina also informed

Britain.

last few years.

nance and the rule of law.

opposition leader.

since her government

assumed office in 2009.

Govt firm

FROM PAGE 1

in London.

meeting.

mier as saying.

"Syed Abul Hossain has stepped down for the sake of the country.... He loves the country."

discussion Swechchhasebak League at the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB).

The AL leader slammed BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir for accusing the government for the alleged corruption in Padma bridge project.

"He [Alamgir] made pointless remarks by claiming that the resignation of Syed Abul Hossain from the cabinet proves the corruption charge," said Hanif, also a special assistant to the prime minister.

REACTIONS OF OTHER LEADERS

Mahmudur Rahman Manna, convenor of a newly formed civil society platform Nagorik Oikko, questioned as to why the premier had to brand a person as patriot and why this certificate had to be given in London?

If the former communicommittee member Brig cations minister had guts, as claimed by Hasina, he would have resigned when allegation of corruption was made against him, he said.

> When Tanjim Ahmed Sohel Taj resigned as state minister for home and later as a lawmaker, the premier did not brand him as patriot or said he has guts, noted Manna, an ex-organising secretary of AL. "If anyone in the present government showed guts, it was Sohel He, however, said Abul

Hossain has done good for the country by stepping down.

Workers Party of Bangladesh President Rashed Khan Menon said Abul has resigned "for the sake of national interest."

"We had urged him earlier to resign for maintaining transparency and it

corruption in the project.

In line with the condition,

the government has sent a

former secretary on leave

and got Abul to step down. It,

however, has not made any

decision about another

individual who is on the

WB's suspect list. The per-

son in question enjoys the

still has concerns about

Bangladesh's intent to fight

corruption, said the sources.

senior Jica representative in

Dhaka, met Finance

Minister AMA Muhith at the

secretariat and informed

him of the WB's latest posi-

finance minister told report-

ers, "There is nothing to give

you [the media] now." The

lica official too declined to

World Bank Country

Director Ellen Goldstein

would not make any com-

ment on the issue now, said

The WB official also said:

"We have not received any

letter from the Bangladesh

government saying it wants

the World Bank to review its

said the government on

Wednesday wrote to MN

Prasad, an executive director

representing Bangladesh at

the WB, informing him of the

recent developments in the

In the letter, the govern-

ment expressed its resolve to

address other WB concerns,

if there were any, when

formal discussions between

the two parties would begin,

official said, "The govern-

ment will make its next move

once Prasad gives the green

contradictory views of the

finance minister and the

prime minister about the

construction of the bridge

have been sending wrong

signals to the lenders, said a

source, adding that this

exposes the lack of coordi-

nation within the govern-

Following Abul Hossain's

resignation, the finance

minister in a written state-

ment on Wednesday called for

ment.

Another finance ministry

said the official.

A finance ministry official

an official of the bank.

After the meeting, the

tion.

comment.

decision.'

country.

On Thursday, Kei Toyama,

In this context, the WB

status of a minister.

FROM PAGE 1

would have been better had he resigned earlier," he mentioned.

Menon, however, did not He was addressing a comment on the prime minister's remarks on Abul Hossain.

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal President Hasanul Haque Inu said only the people can certify a political leader as a patriot.

Had Abul Hossain resigned earlier, the government could be successful to get the loan from the World Bank, he told this newspa-

Chief of Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Janata League Abdul Kader Siddique said people did not expect such a comment from the prime minister. "Her comment shows lack of accountability in our democracy."

Anwar Hossain Manju chairman of Jatiya Party (Manju), said the prime minister could make such a comment if she was convinced that the allegations made against Abul Hossain were "fictitious."

Former Dhaka University (DU) vice-chancellor Prof Emajuddin Ahmed questioned, if Abul Hossain is a patriot, then who is not?

The premier's support for him will give a message to people that "the plunderer of public money" has legitimate right to be in a political party, added the former VC.

Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique, incumbent VC of DU, said the prime minister has appreciated the resignation of the minister, which is an example to show respect for democracy.

The World Bank in September last year had suspended its \$1.2 billion credit for the \$2.97 billion Padma bridge project making allegation of corruption.

The lead financier cancelled the funding last

a review of the WB decision.

Earlier, the prime minis-

ter had said the government

would build the long-

own resources.

cherished bridge with its

cancelled its \$1.2 billion

financing for the 6.2-

kilometre bridge over the

Padma. The bridge will

connect the capital with the

tuation of Jica and the Asian

Development Bank wil

expire on July 31 this year.

US drought

may hike

The tenure of loan effec-

southwestern districts.

The WB on June 29

WB not happy yet

Prices of edible FROM PAGE 1

availability of some leading

brands such as Rupchanda and Teer, which were short in supply during the last five days.

Traders at Palassy Bazar were selling the five-litre bottle of Rupchanda brand at Tk 665, which was Tk 680 a week ago. Price of one-litre bottle

of different brands was Tk135-140. It was Tk132-135 a week ago, according to Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB). Prices of some iftar items

including pulse and gram, however, remained stable compared to the previous Pulse and gram were

selling at Tk112-115 and Tk 80-90 per kg respectively, the TCB data shows. Sugar price yesterday remained stable thanks to

sugar at Tk 55-56 a kg. The government last week slashed the price by Tk 5 per kg. Therefore, staterun Bangladesh Sugar and Food Industries Corporation is selling sugar

The price of both packed and loose flour, however, went up further yesterday. Packed flour was traded at

at Tk 55 instead of Tk 60.

Tk44- 48 a kg, which is 3.37 percent higher than a week ago. Loose flour was sold at Tk 40-42 which was Tk 37-38 a week ago, the TCB data shows. The prices of some vege-

tables and spices such as cucumber, aubergine, potato and onion also remained unchanged.

Traders at Karwan Bazar were selling cucumber at Tk 25 a kg and charging Tk 30-40 for each kg of aubergines.

The price of eggs yesterday fell by Tk 1 per four pieces, which sold at Tk 33-34.

Row over

FROM PAGE 1

overtake Bachchu's rickshaw when they were crossing a road near the Jagannath Hall of DU around 12:30pm, said Sirajul Islam, officer-in-charge of Shahbagh Police Station, quoting Bachchu.

As Bachchu delayed in making way for Saju's rickshaw, the two exchanged heated words.

At one stage, they stopped pulling their rickshaws and got involved in a punch-up. Suja became unconscious when Bachchu punched him in his chest.

Students of DU caught Bachchu and whisked Suja to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, where the doctors declared him dead.

They later handed over Bachchu to police.

Tangail district Chhatra

of Police AKM Hafiz Akter

said the three abducted

Pritish Chandra Bosu, 52, an

employee of the family

planning department, from

Tangail General Hospital

area at gun point on

phone they demanded Tk 10

lakh from the victim's wife as

ransom and also threatened

to kill Pritish if the money

After the family informed

the matter to police, the law

enforcers tracked the phone

and launched the drive in

Hugra Char area under the

A team of Tangail Model

Police Station led by its

Officer-in-Charge Nazrul

Islam raided the place

yesterday morning, arrested

the three and rescued

Key Zardari aide

parliament seat

minister, a close aide to

President Asif Ali Zardari,

was sworn back into parlia-

ment yesterday just weeks

after being forced to step

down over his alleged British

elected unopposed at a by-

election in the same seat for

the Senate, or upper house

of parliament, which he held

prior to his June suspension,

paving the way for him to be

reconfirmed as a cabinet

Rehman Malik was

wins back

AFP, Islamabad

citizenship.

minister.

was not given, he said.

Sadar upazila.

The same night, over

Tangail's Superintendent

3 League food prices FROM PAGE 20

League.

Wednesday.

AFP, Washington

The drought in America's breadbasket is intensifying at an unprecedented rate, experts warned Thursday, driving concern food prices could soar if crops in the world's key producer are decimated.

The US Drought Monitor reported a nearly threefold increase in areas of extreme drought over the past week in the nine Midwestern states where three quarters of the country's corn and soybean

crops are produced. Almost two thirds of the continental United States are now suffering drought conditions, the largest area recorded since the Drought Monitor project started in

"If you are following the grain prices here in the US they are reflecting the anticipated shortages with a price increase," Fuchs said.

"In turn, you're going to see those price increases trickle into the other areas that use those grain crops: cattle feed, ethanol production and then food stuffs."

Officials have said the Meanwhile, the recent drought will drive up food prices since 78 percent of US corn and 11 percent of soybean crops have been hit and the United States is the world's biggest producer of those crops.

The current drought has been compared to a 1988 crisis that cut production by 20 percent and cost the economy tens of billions of

The full impact of the drought on food prices won't

PM's remark

FROM PAGE 1 its dissolution.

This means all lawmakers would still be holding office and seeking re-election when the nation goes to polls. This raises the question if there would be a level playing field during the next election.

Countries like the UK, the birthplace of the Westminster system, India, the world's largest parliamentary democracy, New Zealand, Canada, and Australia do not have such provisions in their constitutions. Parliaments in those countries get dissolved before elections. In many countries,

including the UK and India, the outgoing cabinet stays in office during the parliamentary polls. The outgoing cabinet acts as an interim the government intervention. Retailers were selling government and refrains from making any major and policymaking decisions during that period. The prime minister

should have specified names of countries where such constitutional provision exists allowing all lawmakers to stay in office and seek re-election. Otherwise, people might get confused by her remarks. The odd provision had

actually been present in

"Any day they (Americans)

want it, we will sit with them

at a negotiating table," the

Cuban president pro-

claimed, clad in military

But he insisted the con-

versation would go both

ways: "Equal to equal, we

will also discuss subjects

concerning the United

maintained a five-decade

economic embargo on

Assistant Secretary Mike

Hammer said that while the

United States was willing to

talk with Cuba, the

Communist authorities first

had to ensure rights for their

repeatedly stated that the US

government is open to

forging a new relationship

"This administration has

The United States has

State Department

FROM PAGE 1

uniform.

States."

Cuba.

people.

Cuba offers US

Bangladesh constitution since 1972. But the rule did not apply as none of the parliaments since then and until 2001 actually completed their tenures.

With the introduction of caretaker government system from 1996, the provision was removed and a new provision was introduced that elections would be held within 90 days of a parliament's dissolution. The seventh parliament

was the first to complete its five-year tenure in 2001 and after its expiry a parliamentary election was held. The eighth parliament also completed its five-year tenure. But the ninth parliamentary election, scheduled for January 22, 2007, could not be held on time due to proclamation of the state of emergency in the wake of grave political turmoil. Through the new amend-

ments to the constitution, the ninth parliament dissolved the caretaker government system and restored the provision of the 1972 constitution that says the constitution again and elections should be held remove the provision that within 90 days prior to a parliament's dissolution on expiry of its five-year tenure. This has ensured that

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's government

with Cuba, but Castro's

government must begin by

allowing the Cuban people

remains in power during the next elections and functions in full swing.

member team of All Party British Parliamentary Group for Bangladesh met her, she made the remark apparently to defend the cancellation of the caretaker government system and her government's staying in power during the polls. She had made the remark on a number of occasions before as well.

Her government staying in power during the polls has triggered widespread fear of possible political unrest ahead of the next polls as the main opposition BNP-led political parties have declared that they would not take part in the polls if the ruling Awami League-led government stayed in office. Prime Minister Sheikh

Hasina, if she meant what she had said, has to make some more moves to restore people's confidence in her government. Her government must amend the allows legislators to remain in office during the polls. Otherwise, the demand

for a non-partisan government would only get louder.

Journos allowed

FROM PAGE 20

Awami League Joint General Secretary Mahbubul Alam Hanif as the mediator. Senior officials of the

hospital including its director and doctors' association leaders, and journalist leaders around 8:30pm yesterday went to Shahbagh Police Station and separately asked for withdrawal of the cases.

Following Wednesday's incident, journalist leaders filed two cases with Shahbagh police. On Thursday, doctors lodged two cases against journalists over the same incident and with the same police station.

However, even though the hospital authorities at that meeting lifted the restriction that the journalists need to take prior permission before entering the hospital, they were not allowed before 9:00pm yesterday.

journalists from different newspapers and television channels were asked by the security guards at the emergency department gate to take permission from the resident physician (RP) of the section. However, as the RP was not at his office, journalists failed to get. They could not enter the hospital through four other gates.

DMCH correspondent of ABC Radio, told The Daily Star. "We entered the hospital without permission shortly after 9:00pm as we asked police for withdrawal of the cases we filed against the doctors over added.

Uddin Chowdhury Bulbul,

deputy director of DMCH, yesterday told The Daily Star that some junior doctors did not accept the authorities' decision. "I hope that we will be able to convince them soon," he added.

ists was imposed on July 22 following a news item published in national dailies and telecast on television channels about the alleged assault of a patient by a doctor.

Doctors of the hospital also assaulted journalists several times following the news. On Wednesday, interns harassed journalists when the patient, the alleged victim of July 19, went to the journalists' office at the hospital to share his experience.

The doctors also locked the Castro's seizure of power on gate of outdoor section of the hospitalThursday morning.

> said, "We will try to resolve the problem through discussion with the doctors and open the outdoor section tomorrow (today) morning."

FROM PAGE 20

demand for the restoration of the caretaker government system.

BNP high-ups were interested in bringing Gonoforum, Krishak Sramik Janata League, JSD (Rob), Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh (BDB) and Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) into the

A budget of £9.3 billion Gonoforum general secre-(\$14.5 billion, 12 billion tary Subrata Chowdhury euros) has been spent on bringing the Games to London for an unprecedented third time, but the first time since 1948.

It has been seven years in coming, and tonight London is facing its acid test.

And the United States

One killed

FROM PAGE 20

Bryant.

others managed to return into Bangladesh territory, said subedar Al Helal of Burimari BGB camp quoting the victim's family members and locals.

The Indian soldiers then took him to 104 BS Bari camp in Cooch Behar district of West Bengal and tortured him inhumanely.

On Thursday, BSF sent a message to BGB claiming that Alam drowned in the Saniyazan river when he was bringing some cows. Later they found the body floating in the river and recovered it.

Victim's wife Mohsena Begum Sumi said she initially could not identify her South Africa's Oscar husband's body as his face and head were badly mutilated due the torture by the BSF. She identified the body only after closely watching the clothes and hands.

the restoration of the care-

with Jamaat. We will hold a convention soon in the capital to express our views." CPB General Secretary Mujahidul Islam Selim, said, "We have ideological differ-

alternative political force." BNP leaders have been in contact with JSD (Rob) President ASM Abdur Rob

League President Abdul Kader Siddiqui, said party insiders. Abdur Rob told The Daily Star that they were trying to form a third political force

keeping aside BNP, Awami League and Jamaat.

already met the BNP chair-

Chowdhury had attended the main opposition's June 11 rally and expressed solidarity with the demand for

person and clarified his

taker government system. But the BDB was not interested to join the BNPled alliance, said sources.

The show is on

FROM PAGE 1

Olympic legend Steven Redgrave is the favorite but another man has emerged despite not winning a Olympic medal in his

Sir Roger Bannister, the

On London's biggest sporting day for quite some time, the weather returned to something that can be defined as profoundly British. The cool air, stiff breeze and the rains came following the uncharacteristically bright sunshine that had dominated the last few days.

On the streets volunteers dressed in the bright pink jackets or purple shirts of the Olympics seem present in every corner. The British are generally toned down but even through their stiff upperlip demeanor you can see that the excitement is palpable, if not yet overflowing. Olympic lanes are clearly marked out and tailbacks are commonplace on London's narrow

But roadside bars are with big screens and special menus. London's famous parks too are full to the brim, with Victoria and Hyde Park both hosting live events on giant screens and accompanying them with interesting tidbits like ziplines or 'have-a-go' events. The events have proved incredibly popular, especially for those not lucky enough to bag a ticket to

London's big night.

Celebrities too are set to the cycling.

to exercise their human rights and determine their future," Hammer told a press conference. clear to the Castro government... that they need to begin to allow the political

freedoms that the Cuban

people demands," Hammer

added.

Washington has demanded a "full and transparent investigation" of a leading activist's death, which Cuban authorities say was a car accident.

Paya, an engineer and fervent Roman Catholic, was one of the first dissidents against the Castro regime to seek wholesale political and economic change. He won the European parliament's Sakharov prize for human rights in 2002.

in Cuba what happened in Libya and Syria." Libya's long-time leader "Our message is very Muammar Gaddafi was overthrown last year by rebels with Nato support, and Syria's Bashar al-Assad

is waging a bloody campaign

against rebels, with the US

Castro meanwhile also

denounced what he said

were small groups of dissi-

dents who want to "recreate

and other western nations demanding he step aside. July 26 is the anniversary of the 1953 attacks that Fidel Castro and his supporters mounted against two military barracks. Although these first attacks were unsuccessful, they are considered the beginning of the armed struggle that

January 1, 1959. His brother took over as head of state in 2006.

active lifetime.

first man to run a mile in less than four minutes, emerged as another favorite after William Hill stopped taking bets on the 83-year-old lighting the Olympic cauldron, after the betting company received a flurry of big bets.

roads.

Pakistan's de facto interior | ready for a big night out, become the first US woman

come out in force, with Mohammad Ali expected to play a role in the cerethe All England Club lookmony alongside David Beckham. Hollywood stars ing to add singles gold to Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie are also in London.

unsung competitors are also aiming for gold. Phelps, whose eight golds in Beijing took his overall medal tally to 16,

the all-time record of 18. His seven-event programme gives him plenty of scope to make more Games history and anchor a US team determined to continue its dominance against Australia and a Chinese squad spearheaded by 1500m free world

One of his biggest challengers is teammate Ryan Lochte, who has emerged as a serious threat in the 200m medley and 400m medley. Australia is bringing in

The US have a "Missile' of their own, however, in 17-year-old Missy Franklin, who is set to to swim seven events at one Games.

100m freestyle.

Pistorius, known as 'Blade Runner' for his carbon fibre prosthetic running blades, will make history as the first double amputee to compete at an Olympics.

from his historic Tour de Lalmonirhat 31 Border France triumph, and a powerful British team will fire up the home crowd in

Federer, having won a record-equalling seventh Wimbledon title, returns to

the doubles he won with Swiss compatriot Stanislas But ultimately it will be Wawrinka four years ago. the sporting superstars like Usain Bolt, Michael Phelps are clear favourites in the and Roger Federer who will men's basketball with a dazzle, while an army of Dream Team boasting LeBron James and Kobe

needs three more to surpass

record-holder Sun Yang.

the big artillery with James "The Missile" Magnussen and James "The Rocket"

Roberts, in the prestigious

Maj Ruhul Amin, second Bradley Wiggins, fresh in-command of Guard Battalion, confirmed the incident. He said they have sent a letter to the BSF protesting the homicide.

On Thursday, when a five-

Throughout the day, many

The journalists were allowed in after 9:00pm, Azim

Wednesday's incident," he Mushfigur Rahman,

The restriction on journal-

ultimately led to Fidel

Regarding this, Mushfigur

BNP eyes

BNP-led alliance, said sources.

When asked, acting

said BNP leaders had contacted them but they decided not to join the BNPled combine. "Though we have some issues in common, the party cannot go for any movement

ences with BNP and Jamaat. We even think that BNP and Awami League are the same. We are working to create an

and Krishak Sramik Janata

"So, there is no question of joining any alliance." Kader Siddiqui had

position on Jamaat. BDB leader Mahi B