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## MPs need code of conduct

TIB seeks empowerment of JS bodies; says Tk 5.42cr wasted for quorum crisis already

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) yesterday came up with a set of recommendations including the ones for formulating a code of conduct for lawmakers and measures to strengthen committee system to make parliament effective.

A number of lawmakers and legal experts agreed with the TIB recommendations, saying there is no alternative to empowering the committees to ensure parliamentary supervision on the executive and make the Jatiya Sangsad functional.

In the report titled 'Parliament Watch 2009,' the TIB made recommendations for introducing mid-term polls and re-call system, appointment of ombudsman and amendment of article 70 of the constitution for allowing lawmakers to play their

### TIB RECOMMENDS

- Absence of 30 consecutive days to lose membership
- No remuneration for absentees
- Opposition must join the House
- Appointment of Ombudsman
- Office for all MPs
- More women MPs in committees

due role.

The TIB has been working as a catalyst for social movement against corruption for over a decade in Bangladesh.

It also pressed for amending the constitution to re-fix the maximum duration of absence from 90 consecutive days to 30 days for cancellation of membership in parliament, saying the opposition parties must join the House shunning the culture of boycotting parliament.

Participating in a discussion on the report at Brac Centre Inn, Awami League lawmaker Saber Hossain Chowdhury, however, suggested abolishing the provision of vacating the seat for being absent in the House.

The TIB said regular presence of the leader of the

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## MP made prisoner of his party

SC verdict critical of Article 70; TIB recommends amendment; dy speaker sees no problem

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The amended article 70 of the constitution has kept MPs "prisoners" of their own party since restoration of parliamentary democracy in 1991, preventing them from playing due role in parliament freely.

According to the amended provisions, parliament membership will be vacated if a lawmaker present in the House abstains from voting for their party that nominated them in the election, or does not attend any particular sitting of parliament ignoring party direction.

Demands for abolishing the provisions have never got momentum, which has allowed

Awami League and BNP--the parties that have ruled the country since 1991--to successfully rein in their MPs. The lawmakers have also always remained silent about it, failing to give any independent view for fear of losing their parliament membership.

The original article 70 of the 1972 constitution imposed restrictions on MPs, saying parliament membership will be vacated if a lawmaker resigns from the party that nominated them in the election and votes against the party in parliament.

"Article 70 puts a reasonable restriction on the function of a member of parliament but the

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### Commentary

## PM, please rein in your babbling colleagues

Govt stands seriously damaged by unthinking comments

MAHFUZ ANAM

While the world struggles against swine flu our ruling party, the Awami League, is being debilitated by the 'mouth flu'. What is seen as the strongest mandate to any political party to govern since independence is being corroded by a daily dose of unthinking, unnecessary and self-contradictory comments which are making the government look confused, ill-coordinated and desperate with no evidence of

team work.

What the opposition is failing to do, some ruling party leaders, ministers and advisers are achieving for them, namely making the government controversial. Such controversies are distracting the public from appreciating some major initiatives the government has taken and the bold budget it has just adopted.

It all started with our garrulous commerce minister who, after being made the coordinator

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## Poison talk binned

Matin, Mainul seek probe into 'slow-poisoning' of Hasina in jail

SHARIFUL ISLAM and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

The allegations of attempt to poison Sheikh Hasina while in detention during the last caretaker government rule do not add up, say sources close to the then prison authorities.

Meanwhile, two former caretaker government advisers yesterday dismissed the claims they had been involved in the attempt. They however demanded a probe into the matter.

Earlier on Friday, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's Health and Family Welfare Adviser Prof Sayed Modasser Ali alleged that Barrister Mainul Hossain and Major Gen (retd) MA Matin--two ex-advisers to Fakhruddin Ahmed-led interim administration--had been involved in a scheme to kill Hasina by poisoning.

The then inspector general (prisons) Brig Gen Zakir Hasan and deputy inspector general Major Shamsul Haider Siddiqui too had been part of the plot, he added.

In a statement yesterday, Mainul said a probe should be ordered if they have any evidence to support the claim.

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## Nasty slander

Matin sees a bid to gain political ground

ABDULLAH AL MAHMUD, Ctg

Maj Gen (retd) MA Matin termed the allegation of slow poisoning Sheikh Hasina a nasty slander and a deliberate attempt of some political leaders and their associates to gain political ground.

"It is very shocking to be accused of attempting on someone's life," said Matin on allegations of slow poisoning Sheikh Hasina when she was detained.

Matin, former adviser to the last caretaker government, said, "Those spreading the nasty slander are showing their meanness and lowliness. It would have been better to be thrown



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## No substance

Mainul sees it as cover-up bid of a personal physician

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former law adviser to the caretaker government Mainul Hossain yesterday rejected the allegation brought against him by prime minister's health adviser of his involvement in serving poisoned food to Sheikh Hasina during her detention in sub-jail.

Protesting the allegation, he said, "I hope the prime minister would investigate the matter and ensure justice."

"It will also have to be looked into whether the health adviser is trying to cover up his failure as personal physician of prime minister during her detention period through bringing

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PHOTO: ZAHEDUL KHAN

Barely legal teenagers of well off families modify their cars with huge rear wings, after-market exhaust systems, loud horns (bottom right), and speakers and amplifiers (inset) that can only be placed in the boot. Spending huge amount of money in the interior of their vehicle (right) they go on terrorising motorists and pedestrians in the capital.

## Dangerous joyrides

Teenagers of rich parents introduce new terror on roads with reckless driving of their modified cars



MORSHED ALI KHAN

Dangerous joyrides and reckless as well as happy-go-lucky driving have become the most common features of the city traffic, exposing innocent pedestrians and commuters to serious accidents every day.

The tragic death of Anima Rani Saha on Dhaka University campus under the wheels of a private car illegally driven by a learner driver on Monday raises serious questions about city traffic and the role of police.

In posh residential areas like Dhanmondi, Lalmatia, Gulshan, Banani, Baridhara, DOHS, Uttara and other places, joyrides in expensive vehicles by rich kids are so common that residents, schoolchildren and law-abiding road users are in constant fear of being crushed.

Several incidents of hit-and-run take place every week in residential areas, according to police and residents. But the victims as well as the low-ranked on-duty policemen, who patrol the streets on foot, are 'too scared' to

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## 6 killed in mudslide

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Six members of a family were killed as their mud-house collapsed during torrential rain in Nabiganj upazila of Habiganj early yesterday.

The deceased were Mubarak Miah, 42, a vendor, his wife Asma Begum, 35, and their four children Sumon Miah, 10, Amina Begum, 7, Ripon Miah, 5, and Nayan Miah, 2.

Police and locals said the mud-house of the poor family collapsed during heavy rainfall when they were sleeping in their house at the foot of Pathan Tila hill at Paniumda village.

They said a woman from a neighbouring hilllock first saw the collapsed house around 10:00am yesterday when she went to the hill for grazing her cows.

The hilly village is about 50 kilometres off the district headquarters. It took more

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## 30 carried out operation

Karwan Bazar killers got only Tk 1.45 lakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A gang of thirty criminals launched the gun attack in broad daylight at Karwan Bazar on June 26 that left three persons killed for taking a revenge for the killing of their cohort Mamun and establishing supremacy over toll collection in the kitchen market.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Commissioner AKM Shahidul Haque said this based on the primary investigation at a press briefing at DB Office yesterday.

The arrestees confessed at the DB office that extortion and establishing supremacy over Karwan Bazar were the main reasons behind the shooting.

The DMP commissioner said a gang of 30 criminals was involved in the shootings. Nine of them carried arms, eight kept a close watch on the victims and law enforcers' movement and communication among them while six played a role as mastermind of the killings.

He said on the day of killings, the criminals received Tk 1.45 lakh from the plotters who also assured them of giving Tk 500 per day after taking control over the bazar.

He, however, denied disclosing the names of the plotters behind the killings.

Four persons whose names were mentioned in the killing

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## Temporary labour court mulled for RMG disputes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government would form a temporary labour court for Ashulia, Tongi and a part of Gazipur industrial area to settle disputes between garment industry owners and workers, said Commerce Minister Faruk Khan yesterday.

The minister also said both the owners and workers should have a good place for settling disputes to avert untoward incidents like setting fire to factories.

The government won't tolerate vandalism in the garment sector, as this is the highest export-earning sector of the country, he said.

Khan was speaking as the chief guest at a book publication ceremony on the closing day of the "First NRB Manpower Development and Opportunities Conference

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## HA-MEEM ARSON Owners see nexus of cops, attackers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A section of the local administration and police were involved with the rioters who made arson attacks and vandalised Ha-Meem Group factories at Ashulia last week, the group's Managing Director AK Azad suspects.

He called for a probe to dig out the truth. "There are still some wicked people in the police, and they are active to destabilise the government of Sheikh Hasina. They were involved in the incidents," said Azad while addressing a gathering of workers of Ha-Meem factories yesterday.

And some people in the local administration might also have links to the rioters, he said.

The allegations were made when Commerce Minister Faruk Khan, Industries Minister Dilip Barua and Prime Minister's Adviser Prof Sayed Mdasser Ali visited the burnt-down factories of the group. BGMEA President Abdus Salam Murshed was also with them.

They later visited Suhi Industrial Park, which also was badly affected by the labour unrest in the area for three days till Monday last.

Six factories, two warehouses and several vehicles of Ha-Meem Group were burnt, and two garment workers were killed during this period.

Speaking at the workers' gathering, Dilip Barua said a certain quarter is out to topple this government, and had involvement in the burning down of garment factories.

Faruk Khan said, "Problems are there in any factories in the

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