

## MP made prisoner

**FROM PAGE 1**  
amended article 70 makes him a prisoner of his party. The party may still voluntarily allow him such freedom," the Supreme Court said in a verdict on April 27, 2006.

A High Court division bench comprising justices ABM Khairul Haque and ATM Fazle Kabir delivered the judgement in the Anwar Hossain Manju versus Government of Bangladesh case. The verdict has become conclusive as the government did not file a regular appeal against it.

The restrictions were imposed in the 1972 constitution to prevent floor crossing of MPs for the sake of a stable government and parliament, legal experts observe.

But the 12th amendment to the constitution in 1991 imposed the more stringent restrictions, which denied a legislator the right to remain absent from any sitting of the House, ignoring the direction of their party.

Talking to The Daily Star informally on numerous occasions, many lawmakers of both Awami League and BNP criticised their party stances over parliamentary affairs, particularly on boycotting the House when the party was in the opposition. But they do not dare to speak freely for fear of severe consequences.

In the seventh parliament, BNP lawmaker Maj (ret'd) Akhtaruzzaman protested at the then opposition BNP's decision to boycott parliament proceedings and joined the House. His membership was ultimately vacated following a complaint from the BNP.

Parliament is unable to ensure accountability and transparency of the cabinet because of these restrictions although as per the constitution the cabinet is collectively responsible to the House. Lawmakers, particularly belonging to the treasury bench, also cannot cast vote against any government decision—no matter whether it is right or wrong.

In the monograph titled "The Changing Forms of Government in Bangladesh: The Transition to Parliamentary System in 1991," published by Bangladesh Institute of Parliamentary Studies, noted political scientist Prof Abdul Hakim portrays the image of an unchallenged prime minister.

Referring to article 70, Hakim says there are few chances for a situation to arise in which, as per constitutional provision, the prime minister has to either resign office or advise the president to dissolve parliament for failing to retain the support of majority MPs.

The Chittagong University professor of political science says article 70, as it existed before and after passing of the 12th amendment on August 6, 1991, makes it an extremely risky task to break party rank. It is virtually unimaginable that a prime minister, who has majority of the MPs from his party, will cease to retain their support. Even the most disenchanted ruling party backbencher will have to think twice before taking such a stand that will put their parliamentary membership in jeopardy.

Against this backdrop, Transparency International Bangladesh yesterday recommended amending article 70 to allow lawmakers to play their role freely, thus ensuring transparency and accountability of the government by making the parliament more effective.

"It is the moral and social responsibility of a lawmaker to express independent view if a government takes any decisions against the interests of the country or the people," the TIB said in defence of amending article 70.

Participating in a discussion on the TIB's report titled "Parliament Watch 2009", ruling Awami League lawmakers Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir and Saber Hossain Chowdhury supported the view.

Saber proposed imposing three "reasonable" restrictions on an MP to follow party direction: when a no-confidence motion against the

**6 killed**  
**FROM PAGE 1**  
than two and a half hours for the officials of district administration, police and journalists to reach the remote village from the district headquarters.

Police with the help of local people recovered the bodies from under mud at about 12:30pm.

Mubarak hailed from Nabinagar upazila of Brahmanbaria and had been staying at the khas land on the hill for the last three years.

cabinet is placed in parliament, regarding passing of the finance bill, and for formation of the government.

However, Deputy Speaker Shaukat Ali disagreed and said article 70 does not bar lawmakers from discussing, making statements and criticising their own parties. He said article 70 applies when the issue of casting vote arises.

"I personally think the consequence will be the same if article 70 is repealed as a whole since none of the ruling party lawmakers will cast vote against the government," he said.

The Election Commission also recommended amending article 70 in its report on the outcomes of talks between the commission and political parties last year and even formed a constitutional committee to review the constitution during the tenure of the parliament to come.

But nothing has happened. The EC recommendations had come at a time when people were eagerly waiting for the ninth parliamentary election only and no other issue could influence their thoughts.

The Awami League, which was the main opposition in the fifth parliament, was against any amendment to article 70. Veteran AL leader Abdus Samad Azad moved a bill in 1991 on behalf of the party, seeking the 12th amendment to the constitution for restoration of parliamentary form of governance, but he did not propose any amendment to article 70.

The AL vehemently opposed the BNP government's move to include the additional stringent clauses.

But the AL had to agree with the inclusions of some clauses "for the sake of switching to parliamentary system of government from the presidential one".

During the passage of the 12th amendment bill, Salauddin Quader Chowdhury, who was then a lawmaker of the NDP, termed article 70 a "barbaric provision" and said a constitutional arrangement based on suspicion could never guarantee political stability. Salauddin is now a BNP leader.

**BNP FOR REINING IN LAWMAKERS**  
The 1991 BNP government amended article 70 of the constitution to rein in its lawmakers, many of whom joined the party before the fifth parliamentary election and were elected on BNP nominations.

The then prime minister Khaleda Zia, who moved the bill for the 12th amendment to the constitution, also proposed that membership of an MP will be vacated if they lose the membership of the party that nominated them or is expelled from it.

She also proposed a stringent clause to punish such MPs by disqualifying them from contesting the parliamentary election for the next five years from the date of his seat falling vacant.

The BNP government even denied the EC's present right to decide disputes over vacating parliament membership for the causes mentioned in article 70. It proposed that if any lawmaker violates any of the clauses of article 70, the leader of that party in parliament will communicate the fact to the EC in writing and the seat of that member shall fall vacant on the date of receipt of such communication by the EC.

All the three proposals were, however, excluded from the bill in the face of severe criticism and opposition in and outside parliament at that time.

BNP lawmaker Abdul Mannan moved to place a private members' bill in the eighth parliament, seeking to relax the stringent provisions of article 70. But the then speaker Jamiruddin Sircar did not allow Mannan to place the bill before the House despite recommendation of the parliamentary standing committee on private members' bills and resolutions.

## Ha-Meem arson

**FROM PAGE 1**  
world but vandalising those is not a solution to that. All problems should be resolved through discussions."

The commerce minister asserted that the government is investigating the incidents, and would give exemplary punishment to those involved in the destructions.

He asked the Ha-Meem Group management to sit with the workers for resolving the problems.

Earlier, at a meeting with the BGMEA leaders and garment owners at Ashulia before visiting the factories, Sayed Modasser Ali said the government would do everything to solve the problems of garment sector.

He also said proper action would be taken against any garment factory owners if identified for "wrong treatment" with the workers.

## Serena

**FROM PAGE 16**  
By taking the title for the first time in six years, Serena stopped five-time champion Venus from becoming the first woman since Steffi Graf in 1991-93 to win Wimbledon three years in a row. The Williams sisters have won eight of the 10 Wimbledon singles titles this decade.

When Venus slapped a backhand into the net on the fourth match point, Serena fell to her knees on the grass, eyes closed, arms raised, and threw back her head. As always with Williams versus Williams matches, the celebrations were relatively muted. The two sisters embraced at the net, with the 29-year-old Venus patting 27-year-old Serena on the back.

It was Serena's turn to hold up the women's trophy, the Venus Rosewater Dish.

"It feels so amazing," she said. "I'm so blessed. I feel like I shouldn't be holding the trophy. I can't believe I'm holding it. It's named for Venus and she always wins. It hasn't settled in that I won yet."

Serena beat Venus in the 2002 and '03 finals, before Venus prevailed in last year's championship match.

"Today she was too good," Venus said. "She had an answer for everything. She played the best tennis today, so congratulations."

The sisters were due back on Centre Court later for the women's doubles final, where they will face Samantha Stosur and Rennae Stubbs of Australia. They are seeking their fourth Wimbledon doubles title and 10th Grand Slam crown.

Venus had come into the final as the favourite after playing some of the best grass-court tennis of her career. She hadn't dropped a set in 17 straight matches at Wimbledon, but couldn't cope on this day with the fierce competitive drive and relentless power game of her sister.

Serena now has an 11-10 edge overall and 6-2 in Grand Slam finals against her sister.

## Killed

**FROM PAGE 16**  
She died on the way, and Anwar told everyone that Suraiya had committed suicide. Suraiya's relatives refuted this, citing the regular beatings she received at his hand for dowry.

When they confronted Anwar and accused him of murdering Suraiya, Anwar and his brother Iqbal attacked Suraiya's relatives with a daa (curved chopper), seriously injuring Arun, Al Amin, Sohrab, Saidur, Khokan and Shamim.

The injured men were admitted into different clinics. A case has been filed in this regard with Shibpur thana.

Police sent the body to Narsingdi Sadar Hospital for an autopsy.

## 30 carried out

**FROM PAGE 1**  
case are not among the 30 criminals, he said adding that police will arrest the four (four BNP leaders) for interrogation.

He said "Extortionists are collecting toll money from Karwan Bazar in the name of different business organizations."

Detained Rakib at DB office said, "On the day we took position in front of deceased Faruque's mango wholesale shop to kill him but failed due to presence of the law enforcers. But when Faruque along with two other victims went to the association office, we rushed in and sprayed bullets on them. I fired four bullets at that moment."

He said the plot was made 15 to 20 days before the killing and they made a futile attempt on June 24.

"Senior brothers engaged us saying that Faruque Mollah is collecting toll but he does not give them any share and if Faruque is killed, they will be able to collect toll money and provide us (killers) the share," Rakib said.

Rakib also said Faruque had hand in the killing of Mamun who was killed around one and half a month ago.

The DMP commissioner said "We have found the names of all killers but we will not disclose their names for the sake of investigation and arresting the rest of them."

Sources said top listed criminal Ashik who fled from India might have links with the killings.

The gunmen killed three persons—M Faruque Mollah, 55, Ashraf Miah, 53, and Nuruddin Sarkar Jewel, 35 and wounded another on June 26.

Police produced six arrestees—Emdadul Haque, Shakib, Rafiqul Islam Babu, Sialul Islam Ripon, Mamun and Rakib Ahmed Sobel—but the rest are yet to be produced before the court for the sake of investigation.

## Nasty slander

**FROM PAGE 1**  
into confinement instead of being at the receiving end of such false allegations."

He called upon Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to arrange an immediate fair and impartial probe into the matter so that the truth is revealed.

Matin said this while talking to The Daily Star yesterday during an interview at his Panchlaish residence in Chittagong regarding allegations of slow poisoning Hasina brought against him. He was home, shipping and liberation war affairs adviser to the caretaker government when Hasina was in detention.

Prime minister's health adviser Friday implicated Matin along with a number of high-profile persons of the last caretaker government of slow poisoning Hasina during her detention.

Matin said, "The allegation is completely false. It is a statement made to serve political purpose."

"Through you [the media] I register strong protest against it and request the prime minister to make arrangement for an immediate probe into the matter by a high-level enquiry court to get at the truth," said Matin.

"As the prime minister herself is the alleged victim, ministries concerned may take the probe initiatives with her approval," he said.

He emphasised the need for the probe to be fair and impartial.

Special arrangements were made to ensure the two leaders' (Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia) security and safety in the sub-jail, he said.

All the intelligence agencies like DGFI, National Security Intelligence, Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and Special Branch of Police, and Rapid Action Battalion were involved in the security measures, he added.

There were two doctors from the ministry of health to examine all their food the two leaders were served those.

"So I do not think there was any scope for any outsider [to infiltrate and mix poison in food]," he said.

"The DIG prisons along with others concerned visited the sub-jail on several occasions... and enquired about their health. If the leaders had any problems they would have told me. But

## Poison talk binned

**FROM PAGE 1**  
He asked that took Modasser so long to raise the allegation when Hasina visited the US for treatment four to five months before she became prime minister.

Matin, the other ex-adviser, said no slow poisoning was reported even from Square Hospital where the Awami League chief underwent treatment.

She herself never complained of any physical problems.

Talking to our Chittagong correspondent at his residence in the port city, Matin said law enforcement and intelligence agencies like DGFI, NSI, CID, the Rapid Action Battalion and the SB were in charge of security of the sub-jail that housed Hasina and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

It suggests there was no scope for anyone from outside as well to serve them poisoned food.

Contacted by The Daily Star, Brig Gen Zakir said there was no chance to serve any poison-laced food to Hasina in the sub-jail.

Major Haider who would frequent the special jail during Hasina's confinement however declined to comment on the matter.

Talking to this correspondent, some jail officials said Sheikh Hasina was released on parole on June 11 last year. If the allegations were true, those would have been raised soon after her release.

They too demanded an investigation to find out whether the allegation is true.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, they said Dr Suraiya Bulbul, who was attached to the Awami League chief by the health ministry, used to test the food before it was served.

Besides the doctor, the then deputy jailer Faruq Ahmed who was in charge of the sub-jail would first eat the food meant for Hasina and Khaleda.

Sources said Dr Suraiya is now a medical officer at the Prime Minister's Office, while Faruq is jailer at the Rajshahi Central Jail.

I never had complaints of any sorts from them.

"We were always concerned about the two leaders' health and security," he said.

"When madam [Sheikh Hasina] went to Square Hospital, we, on instruction of the chief adviser, called in the inspector general of police (IGP) and other high officials to personally ensure special security for her."

"No slow poisoning was reported even from Square Hospital and neither did madam complain of such problem," he said.

Asked about allegations of not allowing Prof Sayed Modasser Ali, health adviser to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, to collect blood sample from Hasina for medical tests during her detention, Matin said nobody ever came to him requesting such permissions.

"We are hearing about allegations of slow poisoning only for the last few days," Matin said.

He said he does not think that these allegations have been brought to justify a bid to abolish the caretaker government system.

He said he did not make any request to become an adviser. The armed forces called them out of their homes and asked them to take charge. "Had we refused, imposition of martial law would have been a certain thing as there was no alternative to that [help form the caretaker government and avoid imposition of martial law] then," he observed.

On making lists of political leaders and arresting them in graft charges, he said it was taken care of by the intelligence agencies, particularly the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI).

In this regard he specially mentioned the names of the then DGFI Director General Maj Gen Golam Mohammad (now serving as the GOC of Comilla Cantonment) and Maj Gen (ret'd) ATM Amin and Brig Gen Chowdhury Fazlul Bari (posted to the Bangladesh Mission in Washington DC during the caretaker government's rule and now being considered as a fugitive by military authorities). These people were holding key posts at the DGFI at that time.

made to slow poison Hasina, how come the two have such lucrative postings?" questioned an ex-jail official.

He said these two officials would have been the first to be held responsible for an attempt on the life of a former prime minister.

About Modasser's claim that Hasina was suffering from allergy and shedding hair alarmingly during her detention due to the poisoned diet, prison sources said she was checked by a medical board and her other personal physicians, but no such symptoms were detected.

There was no chance for an attempt to poison her as four female guards would be with her round the clock, added the sources.

Modasser's allegation came a week after a similar allegation made by Deputy Leader of the House Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury.

Later, BNP Standing Committee Member Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain said they suspect poison-mixed food was served to their Chairperson Khaleda Zia as well.

MA Matin termed the allegation a nasty slander and a false and motivated statement for political use.

He said as the alleged victim is now the prime minister, she can have the ministries concerned to arrange for a probe.

"Be it by a judicial committee or an inquiry court, a fair and impartial probe must be carried out," he added.

Ruling AL spokesperson Syed Ashrafu Islam yesterday said they never had any discussion at party forum about the "poison plot".

He was talking to reporters after a presidium meeting at Hasina's political office in Dhanmondi.

Asked why the issue has been raised after a year since the party president's release, he said, "I could tell you about it only if it were discussed at party forum."

He said Sajeda Chowdhury and Dr Modasser could talk about the issue.

## Dutch minister

**FROM PAGE 16**  
further strengthen ties between the two countries.

During the visit they will have discussions with high government officials, lawmakers, representatives of NGOs and business community on various aspects of the development programmes funded by the Netherlands.

According to an announcement of the Dutch Embassy in Dhaka, both the ministers will hold meetings with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Finance Minister AMA Muhith, Water Resources Minister Ramesh Chandra Sen and Foreign Minister Dipu Moni.

The ministers will get them acquainted with the new political atmosphere followed by the December 29, 2008 national election.

They will also visit the Dutch-funded development programmes in different parts of the country.

The Netherlands development programmes in Bangladesh focus on water management, health and education with governance and gender as cross cutting issues.

The total volume of the programmes is around 60 million euros per year, all of which are grant funds.

The ministers are scheduled to visit Brac education and water-sanitation projects and other projects at Rupsha, Batiaghata in Khulna.

Albert Gerard (Bert) Koenders, appointed as minister on February 22, 2007, held numerous positions including member of the Governing Council of the Society for International Development, first deputy chairman of the Netherlands Atlantic Association, member of the Supervisory Council of the Institute for Multiparty Democracy, president of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, member of the French-Dutch Cooperation Council, chairman of the Steering Committee of the East-West Parliamentary Practice Project and chair of the board of the Parliamentary Network on the World Bank.

Vice Minister for Transport, Public Works and Water Management Ms Johanna Catharina (Tineke) Huijzinga-Heringa, appointed as minister also on February 22, 2007, held various positions including leader of the Christian Union (CU) on Heerenveen Municipal Council. Since 2002 she has been a member of the House of Representatives of the States General for the CU.

## Poet Alauddin

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Friday midnight. He was 77.

Family sources said he had been suffering from various old-age ailments for the last one year. Azad left behind his wife, one grandson, one granddaughter and a host of relatives and well-wishers to mourn his death. His only son died barely one year back.

Born in 1932 in Raipura upazila of Narsingdi district, Azad was a professor of Bangla Literature.

Prof Azad wrote short stories, novels, poems, literary criticism. He also taught Bangla and served as educational counsellor at Bangladesh embassy in Moscow.

His literary works were also included in the curricula of secondary, higher secondary and graduation levels.

BSS adds: The body of Dr Azad will be kept at the Central Shaheed Minar at 10:00 today for one hour to facilitate people to pay their last respect. Later, he will be buried at Mirpur martyred intellectuals graveyard.

Azad received a good number of awards, including Unicef award, Bangla Academy award, Independence and Ekushey Puroskar, for his outstanding contribution in the field of Bangla literature.

President Zillur Rahman and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in separate messages yesterday condoled the death of Dr Alauddin AlAzad.

## Power project

**FROM PAGE 16**  
He also said, people started establishing irrigation machine, industries, poultry and cottage industry by investing millions of Taka after the wind power project started. But the investors became simply helpless when the project went out of order.

The former chairman of Kutubdia upazila Shahriar Chowdhury said, the power generation for only 600 subscribers for limited hours in the evening was established in the island in 1980 through generator. But the devastating cyclone of 1991 disrupted the system and the people remain in dark for 17 years from then on, he added.

WDB Cox's Bazar executive engineer Md Shamsul Karim said they are trying to construct permanent embankment. But the project which was scheduled to generate power for 20 years is yet to be recommissioned.

## North Korea

**FROM PAGE 16**  
South Korea's military said the fifth, sixth and seventh missiles were of the same type. The seventh was fired at 5:40 pm (08:40 GMT).

It was the first time in three years that the North had fired multiple ballistic missiles. It test-fired a long-range Taepodong-2 missile, along with six and mid-range missiles, on US Independence Day in 2006.

Seoul's Joint Chiefs of Staff said they had a range of between 400 and 500 km (250-312 miles) but declined to say what type they were. Yonhap news agency said they were either Scuds, or Rodong-1 missiles whose maximum range of 1,300 km had been shortened. The North on Thursday test-fired four short-range missiles with a range of 120 km into the Sea of Japan.

The latest launches, which started at 8am, were seen as more provocative since the missiles could potentially reach most of South Korea, and possibly parts of Japan.

The military, on the basis of a strong joint defence alliance with the United States, is fully prepared to fend off any threats or provocations by the North," the Joint Chiefs said in a statement.

The foreign ministry said the missiles were fired from a base at Kidaeryong near the eastern port of Wonsan.

It said the "provocative act... clearly violates" three UN Security Council resolutions, including the latest one on June 12 which toughened weapons-related sanctions on the North in response to its May 25 nuclear test.

In a statement the ministry expressed "deep regret over North Korea's continued acts to escalate tensions in Northeast Asia."

Professor Kim Yong-Hyun of Seoul's Dongguk University said the launches were clearly timed to coincide with US Independence Day.

"This is a thinly veiled warning to the United States and the international community that it may launch long-range missiles

next time," he told AFP.

"The North is exercising salami tactics, firing short-range missiles on Thursday and launching missiles with longer range today."

Professor Yang Moo-Jin at Seoul's University of North Korean Studies said the North was trying to show it could defend its long-range missile launch site at Musudan-ri further to the north, and "testing the waters" following the UN resolution.

Japan condemned the launches.

"It is a serious act of provocation against the security of neighbouring countries, including our country," Chief Cabinet Secretary Takeo Kawamura said.

Kawamura warned Tokyo would "promptly take appropriate measures" to implement the resolution.

Baek Seung-Joo of the Korea Institute for Defence Analyses said the North test-fires missiles three to four times each year to improve technology and maintain missile exports.

"Today's launches were part of a usual military drill but by firing 500 km-range Scuds, the North was clearly displaying its ability to strike back against any international sanctions involving military means," Baek told AFP.

He said, however, that there is no sign of the North preparing to fire another long-range missile in the near future.

The North has made a series of missile moves this year. US and South Korean officials believe ailing leader Kim Jong-Il, 67, is staging a show of strength to bolster his authority as he tries to put in place a succession plan involving his youngest son, Kim Jong-Un.

A long-range rocket launch on April 5 was followed by a nuclear test—the second since 2006—on May 25.

In the days after its atomic test, Pyongyang fired a total of six short-range missiles, renounced the truce in force on the Korean peninsula for half a century and threatened possible attacks on Seoul.

## Taliban men

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Pakistan's northwest on Saturday, officials said, in the latest violence between pro-government tribal militias and insurgents.

The fighting between tribesmen and militants took place in remote Mohmand region, part of the lawless tribal belt along Pakistan's border with Afghanistan, killing 12 tribal militiamen and four insurgents.

Saturday's clash was the first major fighting in months between tribesmen and militants in the Mohmand tribal region. Tribal elders have begun to clear the area of militants after receiving a warning from the military that it would be forced to send in troops if the tribesmen failed to either kill or evict the insurgents.

Islamabad has encouraged local tribesmen in the semi-autonomous frontier areas to establish militias known as lashkars to flush out Taliban fighters blamed for attacks in Pakistan as well as in Afghanistan.

Pakistan has been pressing a two-month battle to dislodge militants in three districts of the northwest and has launched air raids in the tribal belt to lay the groundwork for a second front against the Taliban.

The military has also launched air raids in the tribal belt to prepare for a second front against the Taliban in South Waziristan, a stronghold of feared warlord Baitullah Mehsud.

Fighter jets have been pounding suspected insurgent hideouts in South and North Waziristan, where the military says it is preparing