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### JS session on Sept 10 with polls reform fate uncertain

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Jatiya Sangsad that goes into session on September 10 will decide whether the much-talked issue of reforms in the caretaker government system and Election Commission will be resolved during the tenure of the alliance government or left for the caretaker government.

President Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday summoned the 23rd session of parliament, which is likely to be the last session before its tenure expires on October 27. For the first time in last 15 years, the

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## Qawami madrasa degree gets master's status

### IOJ chief hopes alliance to get big margin of vote

UNB, Dhaka

The government has decided to recognise Dawra degree of Qawami madrasa equivalent to master's degree in Islamic studies or Arabic literature.

Prime Minister Khaleda announced the decision at a function of Islamic thinkers and teachers of Qawami madrasas at the International Conference Centre (ICC) yesterday.

After the announcement, "Marhava", "marhava" sound

reverberated through the conference hall.

The prime minister told the function that she asked the authorities concerned to constitute a committee to frame necessary rules and regulations and institutional framework to implement the decision.

Within next one month, the prime minister said, the committee will submit necessary planning and strategy guidelines to the government.

She assured the Islamic thinkers

and others concerned that the government would do everything necessary for development of Qawami madrasas, particularly implementation of the government decision to recognise Dawra certificate.

Khaleda also said the process of awarding Fazil-Kamil degree equivalent to master's is now at final stages and the government's decision to this effect will be announced soon.

Ministers, MPs, academics and

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### AUG 21 ATTACK JS body slates intelligence failure

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The parliamentary standing committee on defence ministry yesterday once again slammed the country's intelligence agencies for failure to ward off the August 21 grenade attack on an Awami League (AL) rally two years ago.

The blasts left at least 23 people killed and some 300 injured.

"We said it before that the intelligence agencies had failed to carry out their duties on that day," Committee Chairman Lt Gen (retired) Mahbubur Rahman told reporters after a meeting of the standing committee at Jatiya

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## CABINET PURCHASE BODY MEET 17 projects okayed 'hurriedly' despite flaws in many bids

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Cabinet Purchase Committee yesterday rejected procurement proposals for two projects including a water treatment plant for Chittagong Wasa, and directed the authorities concerned to put out the contracts to re-tender due to irregularities in the previous bidding processes.

The purchase committee meeting chaired by Finance Minister M

Saifur Rahman, however, approved 17 other projects, despite many of those being identified as irregular, sources said.

Members of the committee rejected a LGRD ministry proposal for awarding a Tk 64 crore contract to local DCL & Associates for setting up a water treatment plant for Chittagong Wasa, according to sources.

By analysing a review panel

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### Rejoinder

President of Gonoforum and Jatiya Oikkyo Moncho Dr Kamal Hossain in a rejoinder yesterday protested a report headlined 'B Chy, Kama may launch new alliance Wednesday' that was published in The Daily Star yesterday.

The rejoinder termed baseless the statement that some political parties led by former president Badruddoza Chowdhury and Dr Kamal Hossain are going to kick off an alliance -- Juktofront -- on Wednesday.

It also termed baseless the information that the top leaders will meet formally on Tuesday upon finalisation of the declaration and the alliance will be launched through a press conference on Wednesday, saying that Gonoforum is not a party to any such decision or agreement.

"Thus, the report which names

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## Playing politics with education

STAR REPORT

The government's decision to acknowledge Qawami madrasa education system yesterday kicked up an uproar all around, with academics, politicians and civil society members terming it a rash political decision designed only to make the Islamic parties in the ruling alliance happy.

The government did not even bother to evaluate the quality of education in the Qawami madrasa and upgrade Fazil-Kamil curriculum and syllabi before settling for this controversial decision, said sources at the education ministry.

They alleged that the ruling party BNP caved in to the mounting pressure from its coalition partners-- Jamaat-e-Islami, who rallied for Fazil-Kamil degree to be

made equivalent to bachelor-master's degree-- and Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ), who were out to realise recognition for the Qawami education.

Eminent academic Prof Serajul Islam Choudhury warned of dire consequence for this controversial decision. "Students in the general education system will now be deprived socially, academically and professionally," he told The Daily Star.

Former adviser to caretaker government Hafizuddin Khan was all too surprised at the hasty government move. "I don't know about this system and what they teach," he said. "But this indeed would create more confusion in our flawed education system."

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Kajal, a victim of the August 21 grenade attack, breaks down in tears yesterday at the plaque memorial to the souls departed two years ago on Bangabandhu Avenue.

### Gruesome Aug 21 recalled with 2-min silence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) yesterday commemorated the second anniversary of the gruesome August 21 grenade attack, taking a fresh vow to bring the perpetrators to book.

The opposition leaders and workers stood in a two-minute silence, lit candles, placed wreaths and brought out mourning processions to match the solemnity of the occasion.

As the clock struck 5.22pm, exact time of the first blast, tens of thousands of people stood up and observed silence till 5:24pm in memory of the leaders and activists perished in the blasts that rattled the entire nation.

Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina narrowly escaped the attack on August 21, 2004 but 24 leaders and workers including

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## Gold hopes fade for Bangladesh

AL MUSABBIR SADI from Colombo

Bangladesh's gold medal hopes narrowed down at the 10th South Asian Games here yesterday when two reigning champions failed to live up to the billing.

After female shooter Sharmin

Akhter, gold medalist in Pakistan two years ago, had to settle for silver in the 10m air rifle individual and team events, it was Rubel Rana's turn to frustrate the Bangladesh contingent.

A surprise 100m backstroke

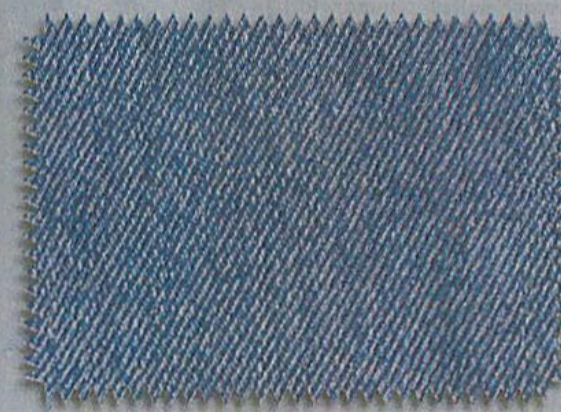
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