



Police prevent a procession of writers, teachers, artistes and cultural activists near the Public Library yesterday from marching towards the Central Shaheed Minar. PHOTO: STAR

Local govt bodies in for major shakeup

REZAUL KARIM

Changes to the union council, the municipal corporation and the upazila and zila parishad are on the cards to bring dynamism to local government bodies.

According to sources, politicians, officials and experts have reached a consensus that amendments should be made to laws related to local government bodies towards their structural reorganisation as well as jurisdictional expansion.

The government formed a cabinet committee on the upazila parishad on November 19 last year and instructed the LGRD and co-operatives ministry to examine the structures of the local bodies.

At its seventh meeting on September 14, the committee approved revival of the upazila parishad and recommendations designed to remove possible conflicts between MPs and upazila chairmen. The recommendations are awaiting final approval.

Also, the cabinet committee has approved an LGRD ministry proposal on the structure for the gram sarkar.

Meanwhile, the ministry has recommended introduction of a law for automatic dissolution of elected local government bodies upon completion of their terms to pave the way for regular and smooth elections every five years.

After the dissolution, an interim administrator will be appointed for a tenure of not more than 90 days. If the election is not held before the deadline, the tenure may be extended to 120 days.

The recommendation came after an observation that local bodies under existing laws lose effectiveness for long deferral of polls, said officials.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7



Garment workers shout slogans demanding payment of all arrears during demonstrations in the city yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

US forces in the Gulf 'ready' for Iraq strike

AFP, Kuwait City

US troops in the Gulf are 'prepared' for a possible military offensive against Iraq but President George W. Bush has still not made a decision to go to war, the forces' commander said yesterday.

"We are prepared to do whatever we are asked to do," General Tommy Franks told reporters when asked if US forces in the region were ready for military action now.

"We're prepared to undertake whatever activities and whatever actions we may be directed to take by our nation," he said.

Speaking at the end of a two-day visit to Kuwait during which he chaired a meeting of the US Central Command, Franks said US forces had recently raised their level of activity in the emirate but stressed that Bush had not yet decided to take military action against Baghdad.

"Our president has not made a decision to go to war, so it will be pretty hard for me to say this is my last visit before such an occurrence," Franks said.

"The decision he has made was to go before the UN and the US Congress," he said of Bush.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

Sylhet medical college hospital doctors start token strike

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, SYLHET

Doctors at the Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital yesterday began a two-hour strike daily for three days.

It is part of the agitation programme announced earlier by the Sylhet district unit of Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) to protest the killing of Dr Aftab Hossain, assistant director of the hospital.

Doctors in the district who stopped private practice on

SEE PAGE 11 COL 8

Saudi Arabia to take 4000 medics: PM

UNB, Dhaka

More than 4,000 doctors, medical teachers, technicians and paramedics will go to Saudi Arabia with jobs very soon, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia said yesterday announcing various steps for the medical sector.

She expressed the hope that the doctors would create positive examples so that the recruiting countries appoint more Bangladeshis in other professions also.

Addressing newly-elected BMA leaders and other physicians, the PM said her government would also create employment for doctors at home through Bangladesh Civil Service and ensure higher training in and outside the country.

The prime minister told the doctors that her government was contemplating involving the Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) in updating the National Health Policy suiting the needs of the time.

Referring to an annual expenditure of nearly TK 360 crore for treatment of

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

JCD 'excesses' at Pabna polytech

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Activists of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), ruling BNP's student wing, have forced the authorities of Pabna Government Polytechnic Institute to stop admission of students for not admitting some JCD activists who failed in admission test.

The JCD activists demanded of the authorities to admit some of their fellow activists who failed in

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

AL to talk law and order with donors tomorrow

REAZ AHMAD

Opposition Awami League will meet donors' representatives here tomorrow to apprise them its concern over 'deterioration in law and order and fall in quality of governance' in the country.

The party leaders will also discuss different development issues, party sources said.

The meeting is considered very important as it is taking place within a week of the September 16 mid-term review meeting between the government and the donors.

At the mid-term review meeting, the donors expressed deep concern over the deteriorating law and order and cautioned the government that it would be the biggest hurdle to the country's development.

The September 16 meeting,

SEE PAGE 11 COL 8



'Ziko' Babul arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday arrested notorious criminal Ziko Babul alias Babul from Islampur area in the city.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of Kotwali police led by OC ABM Sultan arrested him from Islampur road at about 6am.

Police said Babul, 29, is accused

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

| | Sun Rises | Sun Sets |
|---------|-----------|----------|
| Sept 22 | | 5-55 pm |
| Sept 23 | 5-47 am | |

| Prayer Timings | | |
|----------------|-------|--------|
| Sept 22 | | |
| | Azan | Jamaat |
| Fajr | 4-40 | 5-15 |
| Zohr | 12-45 | 1-15 |
| Asr | 4-30 | 4-45 |
| Maghrib | 6-05 | 6-09 |
| Esha | 7-45 | 8-15 |

Source: Islamic Foundation