#### Local MPs

FROM PAGE 1 while talking to reporters.

During the disposal of a callattention notice in parliament yesterday, he said lawmakers' authority over local upazila parishads will be restored. MPs welcomed the move thumping their desks.

The minister said MPs always play a role in the development activities all over the world. "The relation between the people and lawmakers cannot be undermined." A fresh bill will be placed before the parliament to amend Upazila Act, 1998, to make the lawmakers advisers of their local upazila councils.

Ashraf strongly criticised the provisions of the ordinances, promulgated by the last caretaker government, on local government institutions that require elected representatives to resign from party posts before taking oath.

Experts said it would be a violation of the constitution if the lawmakers get to influence the upazila council. "The upazila will run under the directions of MPs if the Upazila Act, 1998, is reintroduced," Badiul Alam Majumder, secretary of Shushashoner Janney Nagorik (Shujan), told The Daily Star.

He also said it will be a clear violation of the constitution if MPs are made advisers to their local upazila council.

Salauddin Aminuzzaman, professor of Public Administration Department of Dhaka University, said the constitution does not allow MPs to play a role in upazila council.

Many elected local government representatives think MPs should resign from their party post before joining the upazila council as the government had asked chairmen, vice-chairmen and female vice-chairmen of upazila councils to resign from their respective party post.

"We have been asked to resign from the party post and that is why MPs also should resign from their party if they want to be involved in upazila council," Noor Alam Sheikh, chairman of Mongla Upazila Parishad said while attending a roundtable discussion at The Daily Star office.

Shamima Shahrier, vicechairman of Zamalganj Upazila Parishad, feared that conflict will develop between MPs and chairmen over development work.

Gazi Abdul Hadi, chairman of Dumuria Upazila Parishad in Khulna, said the LGRD minister's comment on MPs in upazila councils has inflicted fear among them.

Suraiya Begum, vicechairman of Betagi Upazila Parishad in Barguna, said interference of MPs in upazila council would be unconstitutional. "The move [MPs involvement] has been made only to misappropriate the funds of upazila councils."

Sunamganj Sadar Upazila Chairman Dewan Zainul Zakerin said stronger upazila council would not be possible due to narrow points of view of

Khairul Kabir Khokan, chairman of Netrakona Upazila Parishad, said it will be tough for upazila councils to run their activities if the role of MPs in them is ensured by law.

# Economic crisis, terrorism threaten to blow India off course

AFP, New Delhi

The global economic crisis and the threat of terrorism have combined to deliver a rude awakening to India's dream of continued peace and prosperity after successive years of sustained growth.

politicians, CEOs, economists and academics painted a gloomy picture for the world's largest democracy, which this time last year seemed to be riding an unstoppable wave of optimism.

"We are not insulated nor immune" from the dangers posed by the financial meltdown and terrorism, Commerce and Industry Minister Kamal Nath told the meeting.

"As far as the world economy is concerned, it will sink even further. Of course there is going to be an impact on (Indian) exports because of the contraction of the demand in the US and in Europe," Nath said.

The government expects growth to slacken ments.

this year to 7.1 percent -- the weakest in six years -- and economists say it could slow further, to 5.5 percent the following year.

"India is already suffering from the slowdown of the global economy," said Richard Heald, vice-chairman of Rothschild India.

India had planned on realising an export A meeting last week in New Delhi of senior target of 200 billion dollars this year, but the final figure is expected to be closer to 175 billion

While India's economy is less export-driven than those of China and Southeast Asia, Omkar Goswami, founder and chairman of the Corporate and Economic Research Group, said relying on the domestic market to see it through the crisis was unrealistic.

"Do not underestimate the depth of this recession in the US, euro zone, UK or Japan, Goswami said.

"Do not say it is hardly going to hit India. It's already hurting employment and invest-



US State Secretary Hillary Clinton (L) is welcomed by Japanese Prime Minister Taro Aso (R) prior to their talks at Aso's official residence in Tokyo yesterday. Hillary arrived here on Monday for a three-day visit to Tokyo before heading to Indonesia, South Korea and China.

### Hillary warns North Korea against missile test

US Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said yesterday a possible missile launch hinted at

carried out. Hillary Clinton, in Japan on by North Korea in the 1970s and her first trip abroad as President Barack Obama's chief diplomat, told a news conference: "The possible missile launch that North Korea is talking about would be very unhelpful in moving our relationship for-

On Monday, the 67th birththe right to "space development" a term it has used previously to disguise a missile test as a satellite launch. When North Korea test-fired a long-range missile in 1998, it claimed to have put a satellite into orbit.

launch soon.

"We must advance our efforts here in Japan."

to secure the complete and verifiable denuclearization of North

Korea," Hillary Clinton said. To show solidarity with Japan, Hillary Clinton said she would by North Korea should not be also meet Tuesday with families of Japanese citizens kidnapped

1980s, a subject of much angst in

To start the day, Clinton participated in a purification rite and welcoming ceremony at a Shinto shrine to the father of modern Japan, Emperor Meiji. She said its message of "balance and harmony" would set the day of North Korean leader Kim tone for the Obama administra-Jong II, Pyongyang claimed it has tion's foreign policy, especially in tough economic times.

"It's not only a good concept for religious shrines, it's a good concept for America's role in the world," she told about 200 embassy employees afterward. "We need to be looking to create Intelligence indicates the more balance, more harmony. North may be planning another We're going to reaching out to friends and allies like our hosts



Former Khmer Rouge prison commander, 66-year-old Duch, whose real name is Kaing Guek Eav, gestures in the Extraordinary Chamber in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) yesterday in Phnom Penh for the opening of the Khmer rouge trial.

## MPs shout, bang desk at JS for role

FROM PAGE 1

He said the issue of MPs' involvement in development work has been open to debate. There have been demands that their role be confined to making laws, and the local government bodies be in charge of the development activities. His mention of debate had

the legislators from the Awami League-led ruling alliance riled up and yelling at the top of their voice. Taking the floor, some of

them demanded that the government restore their influence over development projects.

They also asked to be involved in distribution of Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) and Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) cards among their constituents. The others welcomed the demands by thumping desks.

At one stage, Speaker Abdul Hamid urged the members to keep calm. "First, let him answer and then give your reactions."

The food minister sought to skirt around a direct answer. He said the lawmakers cannot be kept from supervising the local development activities. The MPs all over the world play role in local development WOIK.

The lawmakers still expressed displeasure with the minister's statement. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was present at that time. AL's Atiur Rahman Atiq

and upazila executive officers authority over local governdo not consult them on food ment bodies. grains and other development allocations for their constituencies. He asked if the government will reverse the policy.

Another lawmaker, Moazzem Hossain Ratan, said the local government representatives distribute the food in the dark. He enquired if the practice would be stopped immediately.

Treasury bench greeted the questions by huge deskthumping.

The minister said the present policy does not allow any room to engage lawmakers in development allocations.

"However, the MPs are informed through letters about the amount of allocations," he added.

In a scripted answer to a query from Jatiya Party lawmaker Hafiz Uddin Ahmed, he said the government is reviewing the policy on development activities.

As the lawmakers have been elected on pledges of development in their areas, the government is trying to work out ways to ensure they have a say in the local development projects, observed Razzak

Earlier, on February 15, the ruling alliance members sought block allocations for development work in their localities. They also called on off from the air force to deal the government to scrap the upazila parishad ordinance

said deputy commissioners that stripped them of the

As Sarah Begum Kabari spoke of alleged irregularities in the 'employment for 100 days' project under the caretaker government, Speaker Abdul Hamid said the allegations should be probed.

He said the unemployed grains, keeping the lawmakers were given work for only seven to eight days and they remained jobless for the remaining days.

The food minister assured the speaker that his ministry will look into the matter.

#### Iran moves to boost air defence capabilities

AP, Tehran

Iran restructured its military in an effort to improve its air defence capabilities, military commanders have said.

The move is seen as part of a broader military build up by Tehran, which is concerned about the US military's presence in neighbouring Iraq and Afghanistan and Israeli threats to target its nuclear facilities. Gen. Ahmad Mighani

announced over the weekend that Iran's supreme leader ordered a new branch be split specifically with any threats to the country's air space.



# শুভ উদ্বোধন "কলমিলতা" বিজয় সরণী মোড়, ১১০ পুরাতন বিমান বন্দর সড়ক (দোতলা) প্রোডাকশন হাউজ এর এ ছাড়াও....

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