

State Minister for Religious Affairs says Khatib masterminded disruption of Miladunnabi function

State Minister for Religious Affairs Nurul Islam on Sunday refuted a statement of Khatib of Baitul Mokarram Mosque, published in several newspapers, in which he denied his involvement in disrupting the Eid-e-Miladunnabi function at the mosque on July 17, reports BSS.

In a rejoinder, the state minister termed the statement by Khatib Ubaidul Haq as "unrealistic" saying that there cannot be any rivalry or enmity between Khatib Ubaidul Haq and himself but there are several reasons to believe that the Khatib masterminded the disruption of the holy function, at-

tended by President Shahabuddin Ahmed.

First of all, the state minister said, moments before the function a propaganda was spread by a section of Muslims at the mosque that the Khatib was not invited to the function.

"Nobody else other than the person concerned is supposed to know if he had got the invitation. Then who should be blamed for the propaganda?" Islam said.

The state minister recalled that after the Maghreb prayers the Khatib urged the Muslims not to be agitated and disturb the function and assured them showing his invitation card that he was invited to the function, which indicates that he was aware of the possible trouble.

The state minister noted that after the chaos started, the Khatib remained indifferent and took no initiatives to stop it.

Islam said when the function was already foiled, only then did the Khatib try to tame the agitated people by taking the milk from his hand.

When asked why he had not intervened earlier, the Khatib made no comment and instead left the venue along with the troublemakers.

"What does that prove?" the state minister asked.

Moreover, many of those who attended the function noticed Khatib Ubaidul Haq giving signals to the miscreants to start the chaos soon after the Religious Affairs Secretary named Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as the founder of the Islamic Foundation, which organised the function," he said adding, "Does it not indicate who was the mastermind behind the heinous act."

The State Minister said there is more evidence on the involvement of the Khatib in last Thursday's incident and, if needed, these would be produced later.

National Ulama Council yesterday strongly condemned the attack on the Eid-e-Miladunnabi function and dishonour to President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed by the anti-liberation fundamentalist forces at an Islamic Foundation function recently.

President and general secretary of the council Maulana Abdul Awal and Maulana Wahiduzzaman in a joint statement urged the government to take stern measures against the persons responsible for the attack.



Visiting Deputy Procurator General of the Chinese Supreme People's Procuratorate Wang Wenyuan called on President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban yesterday. — PID photo

40,000 flood-hit families to be brought under VGF programme

CHITTAGONG, July 21: The district administration will bring some 40,000 worst affected families of eight thanas of the district under Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) programme as part of its post-flood relief operation, reports BSS.

According to a press release of the District Relief and Rehabilitation Office, each distressed family will be provided with 32 kgs of rice for two months under the VGF programme.

Meanwhile, the district administration has so far distributed Taka 1.50 lakh in cash, 20 metric tons of rice, 400 pieces of sarees, 180 tins of life-saving biscuits, two and a half metric tons of chira and 500 kgs molasses for the flood-affected people.

Anwara, Satkania, Chandanais, Patiya, Banskhali, Lohagara, Hathajari and Rangunia are the worst hit thanas of the district, the sources said.

The overall flood situation in the district is now under control the sources said, adding that under the influence of monsoon depression, formed in the north-east Bay, the Chittagong region has been experiencing light to moderate rainfall for the last two consecutive days.

According to control room of the Civil Surgeon, a total of 196 medical teams with buffer-stocks of medicines are working round-the-clock in the flood-hit areas.

The medical teams are also imparting health education messages to the affected people to prevent diarrhoea, the sources added.

Deputy Speaker back home

Deputy Speaker M Abdul Hamid advocate returned home yesterday after a three-week visit to the United States, reports UNB.

Hamid paid the visit at the invitation of the US-based Council for Materialising the Dreams of Bangabandhu.

Pronk meets Razzaq, Alamgir Dutch aid for reexcavation of Gorai river sought

The visiting Dutch Minister for Development Cooperation Jan P Pronk, called on State Minister for Planning, Civil Aviation and Tourism Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir at his Secretariat office yesterday.

During the meeting they discussed matters of mutual interest and bilateral relations, including those relating to the 5th five-year plan, education, flood protection, planning and construction of Ganga barrage.

The minister informed that the re-excavation of the Gorai river is vital for checking saline intrusion and to maintain environmental and ecological balance. He said, due to the salinity and environmental hazard, nearly 40 million people of south-west region of the country including the largest mangrove forest, the Sundarbans, are now under threat.

In this connection, Razzaq sought technical and financial assistance of the Dutch government.

In response, Pronk said his government will extend all possible assistance and co-operation in this regard.

They also discussed other bilateral issues.

Dr ATM Shamsul Huda, Secretary, Ministry of Water Resources was also present.

Meanwhile, the Dutch Min-

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The Ambassador of the Kingdom of Netherlands to Bangladesh, RA Vernis, was also present.

UNB adds: An environmental group has appealed to the Dutch Development Cooperation Minister Jan Pronk for an immediate moratorium of all activities related to the Flood Action Plan (FAP-20) project in Tangail.

Environmental Activists Group, Bangladesh, in a letter to the Dutch minister demanded independent evaluation of the project activities and compensation for all affected people.

It said there must be a financial audit and complete evaluation of expenses in the project to-date, and people's participation must be ensured in all stages of water resources management.



Shipping Minister and Secretary General of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) A S M Abdur Rab speaking at a discussion marking the death anniversary of Col Taher in the city yesterday. — Star photo

Chinese team of law officers meets Shahabuddin

The visiting Chinese delegation of law officers made a courtesy call on President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban yesterday, reports UNB.

The Deputy Procurator-General of the Supreme People's Procuratorate of China, Wang Wenyuan, led the 5-member delegation.

Welcoming the delegation, President Shahabuddin said the close cooperation between the law officers of Bangladesh and China is essential.

He observed that exchange of such visit would strengthen the existing Bangladesh-China friendship and cooperation.

The Chinese Deputy Procurator-General said that China and Bangladesh share common views on many regional and international issues. He also said that they were enlightened to see the existing legal system of Bangladesh.

The Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh, Wang Chunguy and Attorney General Barrister K S Nabi were present there on the occasion.

Meets Samad, Abul Hasan

Another report says, the visiting six-member Chinese delegation led by Wang Wenyuan, deputy procurator general of Supreme People's Procuratorate of China, called on Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad at his office yesterday.

Wenyuan explained about Chinese legal system and recalled the ancient friendship between the two countries. Samad Azad informed the delegation about the activities of Law Commission formed by the present government.

Meanwhile, the delegation also called on State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury at his office.

Wenyuan and Hasan exchanged views on mutual interest of the two countries with special reference to legal system of both the countries.

BFUJ meeting in Bogra August 1

An executive committee meeting of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) will be held on August 1 at 10 am at the Notramas Bhawan in Bogra, a BFUJ press release said, reports BSS.

All officials and members of the committee from Dhaka, Chittagong and Mymensingh will leave city for Bogra on July 31 at 1 pm from the Jatiya Press Club. Others will go to Bogra directly.

Rab calls for immediate trial of Col Taher's 'killers'

Secretary General of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) and Shipping Minister ASM Abdur Rab yesterday said that the trial of the 'killers' of Col Taher should be started immediately, reports BSS.

The Shipping Minister was addressing a discussion organised by JSD to mark Col Taher's death anniversary, according to a JSD press release.

Rab said, "Col Taher, one of the sector commanders of the Liberation War, was killed in a mock trial in the name of justice. During the last 21 years, all section of people have been demanding the trial of the killing from different governments. But nobody took any initiative, though, there was no legal barrier."

He added that as a government of national consensus and pro-liberation is now in power, the trial of Taher's 'killing' should be started without delay.

The discussion was presided over by JSD President Noor Alam Jiku and leaders including Syed Zafar Sajjad, Abdul Malek Ratan and Ataul Karim Faruque.

Bangladesh team visits refinery in Iran

The four-member Bangladesh delegation now visiting Iran led by Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Lt General (ret) Muhammad Noor Uddin Khan visited the Isfahan Refinery and Petrochemical Complex Sunday, reports BSS.

Governor of Isfahan received the delegation.

Tofael leaves for Bangkok today

Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed leaves today for Bangkok on a six-day official visit to Thailand, reports UNB.

Foreign office sources said the visit is taking place at the invitation of Thai Deputy Prime Minister Korn Dabbaransi who is also in charge of industries.

During the visit, Tofael will call on the Prime Minister and meet with other ministers of

Thailand.

He will hold official talks with his host, covering the entire gamut of bilateral relations, particularly matters of expansion of trade and economic cooperation between the two countries.

In the Thai capital, Tofael, accompanied by a 40-member business delegation, will address a seminar on the investment facilities in Bangladesh.

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The Tender must be dropped in the sealed Tender Box kept at 2nd floor at Head Office on 27th July '97 from 9.00 a.m. to 2.00 p.m. and shall be opened at 3.00 p.m. on the same day in presence of the departmental tender committee and the tenderers or their representatives, if any.

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Weather

Heavy rain likely

Under the influence of monsoon depression over northwest Bay, moderate to moderately heavy rain or thundershowers with temporary gusty or squally wind may occur at most places over the country during the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Met Office also forecast heavy to very heavy rainfall at places over the country during period.

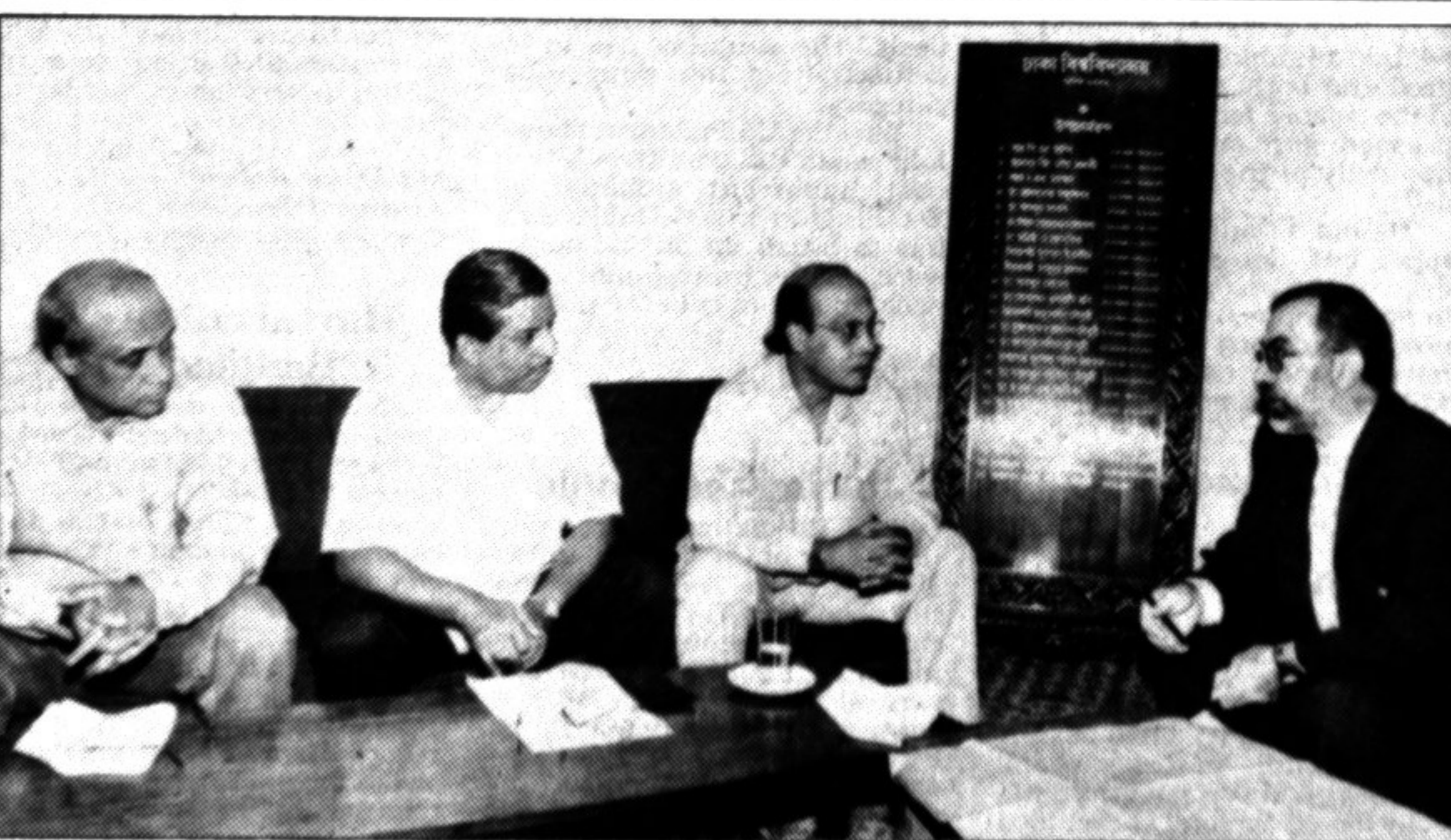
Day temperature is likely to fall by 1-2 degree Celsius across the country.

The country's highest temperature was recorded 31 degree Celsius at Dinajpur, Rangpur and Satkhira and the lowest 27.7 degrees at Kutubdia.

The sun sets today at 6:47 pm and rises on Wednesday at 5:24 am.

Maximum and minimum temperatures and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	27.5	25.0	95	92
Chittagong	27.2	25.0	97	95
Rajshahi	27.6	25.3	98	94
Khulna	29.6	25.2	92	87
Barisal	26.5	24.3	98	92
Sylhet	29.2	25.0	88	89
Cox's Bazar	28.4	24.0	95	--



Ambassador of Iran to Bangladesh Mahmoud Bayat (R) called on Prof A K Azad Chowdhury (2nd R), Vice-Chancellor, Dhaka University, at his office yesterday. Pro-Vice-Chancellor of DU Prof Shahiduddin Ahmad and Treasurer Prof M Shamsul Huq were also present.