

Govt urged not to take action against Islamic scholars

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of Islamic scholars and religious leaders at a meeting yesterday called upon the government not to take action against Islamic scholars on random basis in the name of involvement with the recent bomb attacks.

Agrasson Protirodh Jatiya Committee organised the meeting.

They said Islam never supported militancy and those, who spread fanaticism in the name of religion, are against the spirit of Islam. They said one of the main objectives of the bomb attack was to divert the support of Islamic groups from four-party alliance government.

They vowed to continue their support to the BNP-led four-party government and protect Islam from any conspiracy.

They said the foreign intelligence agencies such as Mosad, RAW and CIA are working together for eradicating Islamic spirit from Bangladesh. The agents of those agencies are spreading every corner of the country.

A section of the ruling party activists also joined hand with those agencies and working against the independence and sovereignty of the nation, they said.

Monthly Medina Editor and Islami Okay Jote leader Moulana Mohiuddin Khan presided. Moulana Ahmad Ullah Ashraf of Kelafat Andolon, Moulana Mufti Mohammad Wakkas MP of Jamiat-e Walmame Islam, Whip Fazlul Haque Aspia, Moulana Ahmad Abdul Kader of Khelafat Majlish, Moulana Abdul Latif Nezami of Nejame Islam Party, also spoke at the discussion at a city hotel.

The IOJ leaders said the conspirators belonging to a faction of an Islamic organisation were working as part of their blue print. They urged the religious minded people not to be misled by the anti-Islamic propaganda in the media.

Moulana Mohiuddin criticised the Islamic scholars those who held series of meetings with the opposition Awami League President Sheikh Hasina recently.

Govt has lost credibility, BDB says

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh (BDB) President AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury yesterday said the government has lost its credibility after August 17 bomb blasts and has no moral right to stay in power any more as it is unable to provide security to citizens.

He was exchanging views with women organisations in the city about reforms to election process and caretaker government.

Sabera Begum, executive committee member of BDB, presided over the meeting. Leaders of BDB Abdul Mannan, M. A. Halim, Firoz M Hasan and leaders of Jago Nari Foundation Nurunnahar Meri, Nilu Rahman and Hosne Ara were also present.

Bangladeshi shot dead by BSF

UNB, Mymensingh

A Bangladeshi national was shot dead by Indian Border Security Force (BSF) at frontier Ailaitoli village in Haluaghat upazila on Monday afternoon.

The Indian border guards opened fire on Abdul Motalab, 27, while he was returning home from the field with his cattle at about 3:45pm. The fatally injured Motalab died on way to hospital.

The villagers strongly protested the brutal action of the BSF.

Janmashtami celebration Aug 26

BSS, Dhaka

Bangladesh Puja Udjapan Parishad yesterday urged the Hindu community to hold countrywide prayers for peace and stability during the coming Janmashtami, a major Hindu religious festival to be celebrated on August 26.

In a statement, the parishad leaders said this year's Janmashtami programmes were designed keeping in mind the country's existing situation and urged the Hindu community members to offer special prayers side by side with discussion and street marches for peace and stability in Bangladesh.

At a meeting held here on Monday with the parishad's adviser Maj Gen (ret'd) CR Dutta in the chair, they also urged the district and upazila units of the organisation to chalk out their celebration programmes in line with the local situation. They expressed their deep concern at the recent situation in the country.

Leaders of the organisation Dr Lalith Mohon Nath, Anil Chandra Nath, Professor Nim Chandra Bhounik, journalist Swapan Kumar Saha, Kajol Debnath and Joyanta Sen Dipu attended the meeting.

AUG 17 BLASTS

PM calls for unity to foil 'conspiracy'

UNB, Dhaka

Indicating recent serial bombings, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday said conspiracy against Bangladesh started when the country is making progress and the world community is saying that the nation is attaining advances in many sectors.

"Their conspiracies will not be successful if we remain united," she asserted talking to the members of Bangladesh Hindu Bouddha Christian Kalyan Front who called on the prime minister to exchange greetings on the occasion of Janmastami (birthday of Lord Sri Krishna) to be celebrated on August 26.

Reiterating that Bangladesh is a non-communal state, Khaleda said all Bangladeshis, irrespective of faith, have to work together for consolidating the hard-earned democracy and further advancing the country.

"Our main identity is that we all are Bangladeshis," she told the front leaders and asked them to stand against an organisation which is trying to spread 'propaganda and attempting to paint Bangladesh as a "failed state"."

She urged the members of the Hindu Bouddha Christian Front to remain alert against the "conspirators".

The front leaders in their deliberations said conspiracy is being hatched against the country to hold back its advancement.

Those who want to "paint Bangladesh as a 'failed state' may be involved in the recent bomb explosions", the leaders stated. They observed these incidents are political and should be tackled politically.

State Minister for Religious Affairs Mosharruf Hossain Shahjahan, State Minister for Water Resources Advocate Gautam Chakraborty and former state minister and advisor to the front Naitai Roy Chowdhury addressed the function. It was attended, among others, by Prime Minister's Political Secretary Harris Chowdhury, Dharendra Nath Saha MP and front leaders from all over the country.

Hindu Bouddha Christian Kalyan Front's central committee members, including Dr Parsh Chandra Mandal, Babu Dharendra Nath and Gautam Kumar Mitra, also spoke on

the occasion.

The prime minister greeted the members of the Hindu Community on the occasion of Janmastami and assured them of all-out support of her government for their welfare.

She recalled that people from all faiths fought together for the independence and said every individual has equal right in the country.

"BNP has restored multiparty democracy, democratic rights of the people and is progressing with the same conviction," she told leaders of the three religious communities.

Referring to some demands of the Hindu Bouddha Christian Front leaders, the prime minister said her government has always provided jobs for people of all faiths and religions on the basis of merit and talent and assured that the process would continue.

The prime minister held another meeting with Janmastami Udjapan Parishad (Lord Sri Krishna's Birthday Observance Council) of Chittagong at her office. The parishad leaders invited the prime minister to their festival.



Ivy Rahman's anniversary of death today

UNB, Dhaka

The first death anniversary of Ivy Rahman, former Women Affairs Secretary of the Awami League, will be observed today.

Family members of the slain AL leader chalked out various programmes to mark the day.

The programmes include placing wreaths at her grave in the morning, qukhwani and milad mahfil at the deceased's residence after Asar prayers.

Ivy died on August 24 after she was seriously injured in the grenade attacks on an Awami League rally at Bangabandhu Avenue on August 21 last year.

Death of official sparks protest at Secretariat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The death of an official apparently due to the negligence of physicians sparked protests at the Secretariat in the city yesterday.

Around 200 officials and employees stormed the Secretariat Clinic after Syed Emdadul Haq, senior assistant chief of the commerce ministry, died of a cardiac arrest.

The protests prompted the authorities to take action against the physicians accused of negligence of duty.

Sources said Emdadul Haq, 45, suddenly fell sick while boarding a lift at the Secretariat at around 10:00am. He was immediately rushed to the clinic, but the cardiologist was not there at the time.

The officials and employees then asked the Civil Surgeon to provide an ambulance to take Emdadul Haq to a hospital, but the clinic chief said that the vehicle is out of order.

Although the civil surgeon finally provided an ambulance, it was too late for Haq, who died on the way to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Hearing the news of his death, the officials and employees of different ministries staged a rowdy protest at the clinic and demanded punishment to the civil surgeon and the physician, who was not present during his duty.

The authorities instantly issued an order making Civil Surgeon Dr Mohammad Ali Belal an OSD and suspended cardiologist Dr Omar Fariq Sarwar, who did not turn up at the clinic even after the office time started. Both of them were charged with negligence of duty.

A five-member committee headed by the joint secretary (hospital) of the health ministry was also formed to investigate the incident. It has been asked to submit its report within next three days.

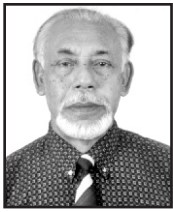
BDR-BSF meet today

BSS, Patgram

A sector commander level flag meeting between Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and Border Security Force (BSF) of India will be held today.

Official sources said, the meeting will be held near boundary pillar no-812 in the Indian side opposite to the Tinbigha corridor under Patgram upazila in Lalmonirhat district. The BSF will host the meeting.

Death anniversary

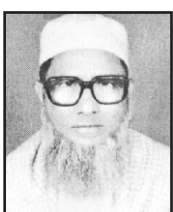


Chandpur, says a press release.

On the occasion, a doamahfil will be held at his house at Sakalta in Commilla tomorrow after Juma prayers.

Friends and relatives have been requested to attend the mahfil.

Md Mojibur Rahman



Today is the 4th death anniversary of Md Mojibur Rahman, former customs official and a freedom fighter, says a press release.

On the occasion, doa mahfils will be at different places in Dhaka and Rajshahi.

The offspring of late Mojib seek blessings of all.

Anti-terrorism convention from August 30

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A two-day convention titled 'Unity against terrorism' begins in the city on August 30, aiming to forge a national consensus to combat terrorism and save the country.

"The incident of near-simultaneous bomb blasts across the country on August 17 is an eye-opener to the countrymen. It prompted us to build a strong unity against terrorism," said Barrister Rakanuddin Mahmud, convener of the convention, at a press briefing.

Democratic and non-communal political parties, members of the civil society and representatives of different professional groups will take part in the convention to be held at the Engineers' Institute auditorium and the Diploma Engineers' Institute auditorium.

On behalf of the families of victims of terrorism, Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina will deliver a speech at the convention.

The terrorists have become more desperate with the support from the government and have been carrying out frequent bomb attacks, said Rakanuddin Mahmud.

"The countrymen will have to realise that their existence is now at stake because of frequent terrorist activities in the country," he said and called on the people, irrespective of political affiliation, to forge a strong unity to resist terrorism.

He also said the convention will remain open for any political party upholding the spirit of the Liberation War.



PHOTO: STAR

Barrister Rakanuddin Mahmud speaks at a press briefing at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his right is Awami League leader Abul Mal Abdul Muhit and on his left is theatre personality Ramendu Majumder.

A total of six seminars will be held during the convention where the participants will present papers on terrorist activities in the country, said the convener.

A committee with 401 members from different professional groups has also been formed to make the event a success, he added.

Supreme Court Bar Association President advocate Mahbubey Alam, AL leader Abul Mal Abdul Muhit and theatre personality Ramendu Majumder were present at the press briefing held at the National Press Club.

Public varsities' contribution to society declines sharply

Speakers tell seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

While contribution of the public universities to the society has sharply declined, the private univer-



Appeal for help

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rafid Shadman An-Noor, aged seven and a half years, has been suffering from muscle disease since last two years.

He is now totally unable to walk, says a press release.

Doctors in Kolkata have suggested that the treatment of this disease is available only in the United States.

On inquiry, Rafid's parents came to know that the treatment is very expensive and needs a long time.

So they have appealed for generous financial support which can be sent to Husne Ara, Savings Account No: 11005087, The City Bank Ltd, Mouchak Branch, Malibagh, Dhaka, or can contact them over cell phone 0177-097360.

sities are being run to serve commercial end, said World Literature Centre Chairman Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed at a seminar yesterday.

Producing parasites in the name of imparting education at private universities must stop, said University Grants Commission Chairman Prof M Asaduzzaman.

"Academic atmosphere at the private universities barring around 20 is not only pitiable but also condemnable," he added.

The seminar titled 'Quality of education at public universities in recent times' was organised by the Centre for Development Research (CDR), a research group of young university teachers at Dhaka University.

Prof Asaduzzaman said if properly utilised, a lot of government money could be spent for research work at the public universities.

He said teacher-student relationship must be amicable and cooperative for imparting quality education.

Teachers must enjoy financial solvency and get rid of direct political affiliation to enhance quality of education and research work at the public universities, said other speakers adding, biting divide among the teachers on political hue must stop for creating a congenial atmosphere.

"I don't find any government sincere to promotion of education," said Prof Sadrul Amin, Dean of DU Arts Faculty, adding, "A teacher should be identified just as a teacher and not as a political affiliate."

Arrangements for minimum facilities and financial incentives will contribute significantly to the betterment of present unfortunate degeneration at public universities, he said, adding, "There are many young teachers at the Faculty of Arts who do not have even a room to sit in."

"Public universities have long been afflicted with various problems because of University Ordinance 1973," said acting vice-chancellor of Dhaka University Prof AFM Yusuf Haider.

"It is time to amend it," he added.

For the sake of restoring lost glories of public universities, teachers must be given adequate financial incentives so that they do not hanker after money at private universities, said Prof Haider, adding that research works by teachers of Dhaka University could not assume an institutional shape.

Prof Sayeed also said there is no transparency in scrutinising how the government allocation is spent adding that the 1973 ordinance is responsible for many disasters at public universities.

It makes appointment of the vice-chancellors political and a politically appointed person cannot run an academic institution properly, he added.

Khondker Mirazur Rahman, a CDR member, in his keynote paper identified financial insolvency, teacher and student politics, appointment of teachers on political consideration and lack of quality research as some of the causes for educational degradation at public universities.

CDR Convenor Dr Md Saiful Islam chaired the seminar.

Rab recovers 'missing pistol'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) yesterday recovered a pistol that went missing from one of its members during an operation in Uttara Monday night.

Sources said the pistol had been snatched from Lance Corporal Nirudha Rahman of Rab-1 at Moirartek when Rahman along with another colleague went to the area in plainclothes to nab criminals.

Rab-1 Commanding Officer (CO) Mahbubul Alam, however, told The Daily Star that the pistol had fallen in the mud during a Rab operation.

A local news agency quoting intelligence sources reported the missing firearm was a sub-machinegun which the CO denied. He confirmed that the pistol was recovered yesterday noon.

Rab nabbed one Rashedul Haq Rana, 18, in this connection.

FM greets Lankan counterpart

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan has congratulated his Sri Lankan counterpart Anura Bandaranaike on his assumption of office as Sri Lankan Foreign Minister.

In a message to Anura Bandaranaike, Morshed Khan expressed his confidence that Bangladesh-Sri Lanka relations would continue to be strengthened during his tenure.



Light to moderate rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at many places over the country with moderately heavy falls till 6:00pm today.

Day temperature may rise slightly over the country. Met Office said. Highest temperature 34.5 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Chuadanga and lowest 24.0 degree Celsius at Hatiya.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:24pm today and rises at 5:37am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	32.6	26.8	84	81
Chittagong	30.0	25.2	97	86
Rajshahi	33.4	26.5	87	81
Khulna	32.8	27.6	90	90
Barisal	32.6	25.5	95	97
Sylhet	29.3	25.4	95	95
Cox's Bazar	30.0	26.5	89	86