

Gunmen kidnap 17 in Baghdad after new security plan

REUTERS, Baghdad

Gunmen in police uniforms kidnaped 17 people from a central Baghdad apartment building in broad daylight yesterday, Interior Ministry sources said, highlighting lawlessness afflicting the country.

The latest abductions came a day after President Bush and Iraq's prime minister agreed in Washington that more U.S. and Iraqi troops will move into the city to try to curb sectarian violence that has raised fears of all-out civil war.

The kidnapers abducted 10 men, five women and two children from different families living in the building, hours after Bush conceded at a White House news conference that violence in the Iraqi capital was a pressing problem.

Militants and criminal gangs all carry out kidnappings in Iraq, but most of the abductions that can run into dozens of people have sectarian motivations.

Many victims are found dead with bullet wounds and signs of torture in a country where 100 people are killed every day according to the latest estimates from the United Nations.

The new security plan agreed by Bush and Nuri al-Maliki was an acknowledgement that the Shiite Islamist prime minister's recent security crackdown in the capital had failed.

Two months after being sworn in, Maliki is struggling to find a formula to ease sectarian tensions and keep Iraq together.

Jamaat MP Saidee

accused Saidee's detractors of being politically biased and said that his exclusion could jeopardise support from mainstream Muslims for the Government's anti-terrorism agenda," Times Online said.

"In leaked emails seen by The Times, the Home Office sought advice from research analysts in the Foreign Office while considering the case for excluding Saidee," it said.

"Internal messages between advisers discussed the threat that he allegedly posed," Times Online said, quoting Saidee as saying in a report of a Bangladeshi human rights organisation that Britain and the US "deserve all that is coming to them" for overturning the Taliban in Afghanistan.

"The email from one adviser, Eric Taylor, continues: 'He [Mr Saidee] has made a particularly offensive comment about Bangladeshi Hindus...He also appears to defend attacks against the Ahmadiyya (Islamist) community,'" the online media said.

It also cited several incidents of violence caused by his visits in the UK earlier and mentioned that a Bangladeshi group "wrote to the Prince of Wales in June 2004 appealing for Saidee to be banned from the UK".

MockbulAli, however, in an email defended Saidee from being excluded, terming him a "mainstream Muslim figure" and saying, "Any steps taken on his exclusion from the UK must take that into account, especially at a time when we require increasing support on the Prevent/Counter Terrorism agenda from British Muslims," Times Online read.

"Taylor responded that the file against Saidee was 'thoroughly referenced' and disputed whether the exclusion of an extremist cleric would endanger support from mainstream Muslims. He added: 'In the Prime Minister's words, the rules of the game have changed. What may have been tolerated pre-7/7 is no longer the case.'"

"However, despite his strongly worded response, no further action appears to have been taken by the Government," said Times Online.

Murad Qureshi, a member of the London Assembly and the Metropolitan Police Authority, criticised the government's inaction. "I've been saying since the late 1990s that it doesn't help to have characters like him passing through Britain," he said.

"The anguish he causes in the Bangladeshi community is not productive and his visa should be revoked. There are some very serious allegations over his head about war crimes," he added.

The Observer on July 9 published a commentary headlined "The Foreign Office ought to be serving Britain, not radical Islam" criticising the government for allowing Saidee to enter the UK.

Refuting Mockbul who called Saidee a "mainstream" figure, it said, "He [Saidee] isn't, he's a fantastically controversial figure among British Bengalis. [Martin] Bright interviews Bengali leaders who regard him as a malign extremist and cannot understand why the Foreign Office wants him to preach Islamist radicalism to their children."

Daily Mail in its story titled "Extremist-linked cleric given green light to enter Britain" on July 13 said, "MPs expressed outrage today after it emerged that Saidee has been given a visa despite boasting that England 'has it coming' for its role in Afghanistan."

It said, "...his visit could be disrupted by protests after a previous appearance was dogged by violence."

It criticised the government saying, "Saidee's presence flies in the face of Tony Blair's assurance in the wake of the July 7 bombings that the 'rules have changed' and that the presence of extremist preachers would no longer be tolerated."

About Saidee's preaching, Daily Mail said, "Saidee has called for American soldiers in Iraq to convert to Islam or die, declaring: 'And if it is

There are now 127,000 American troops in Iraq. B A G H D A D REINFORCEMENTS

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said the increase in forces in the Baghdad area will be "more than hundreds," but was no more precise.

The range of violence in Iraq on Wednesday showed how difficult it might be to ease bloodshed, which has forced 162,000 people to claim aid as refugees in their own country and seen many thousands of others flee the country.

Aside from the kidnappings, violence included gunman shooting at a police convoy in Nahrawan, south of Baghdad. Gunmen on a motorcycle sprayed three men with bullets at a wedding ceremony in the central city of Kerbala, medical sources said.

In Baghdad, gunmen abducted police Brigadier Abdullah Hmood, the director of the residency office, police sources said.

It was a very quiet day by Iraq's standards.

They reiterated the demand for immediate resignation of the chief election commissioner (CEC) and two other 'politically appointed' election commissioners, and implementation of electoral reforms. The road march would be turned into 'victory march' to compel the alliance government to accept the demands, they said.

The also reiterated that they would not accept a voter list prepared under the present CEC. A new CEC has to be appointed on the basis of a consensus reached through discussions.

A brief rally followed the march, which was addressed by, among others, Mohammad Nasim, Motia Chowdhury and Mofazzel Hossain Chowdhury Maya. Motia formally declared end of the march.

They reiterated the demand for immediate resignation of the chief election commissioner (CEC) and two other 'politically appointed' election commissioners, and implementation of electoral reforms. The road march would be turned into 'victory march' to compel the alliance government to accept the demands, they said.

The also reiterated that they would not accept a voter list prepared under the present CEC. A new CEC has to be appointed on the basis of a consensus reached through discussions.

A brief rally followed the march, which was addressed by, among others, Mohammad Nasim, Motia Chowdhury and Mofazzel Hossain Chowdhury Maya. Motia formally declared end of the march.

They reiterated the demand for immediate resignation of the chief election commissioner (CEC) and two other 'politically appointed' election commissioners, and implementation of electoral reforms. The road march would be turned into 'victory march' to compel the alliance government to accept the demands, they said.

The also reiterated that they would not accept a voter list prepared under the present CEC. A new CEC has to be appointed on the basis of a consensus reached through discussions.

A brief rally followed the march, which was addressed by, among others, Mohammad Nasim, Motia Chowdhury and Mofazzel Hossain Chowdhury Maya. Motia formally declared end of the march.

They reiterated the demand for immediate resignation of the chief election commissioner (CEC) and two other 'politically appointed' election commissioners, and implementation of electoral reforms. The road march would be turned into 'victory march' to compel the alliance government to accept the demands, they said.

The also reiterated that they would not accept a voter list prepared under the present CEC. A new CEC has to be appointed on the basis of a consensus reached through discussions.

A brief rally followed the march, which was addressed by, among others, Mohammad Nasim, Motia Chowdhury and Mofazzel Hossain Chowdhury Maya. Motia formally declared end of the march.

They reiterated the demand for immediate resignation of the chief election commissioner (CEC) and two other 'politically appointed' election commissioners, and implementation of electoral reforms. The road march would be turned into 'victory march' to compel the alliance government to accept the demands, they said.

The also reiterated that they would not accept a voter list prepared under the present CEC. A new CEC has to be appointed on the basis of a consensus reached through discussions.

A brief rally followed the march, which was addressed by, among others, Mohammad Nasim, Motia Chowdhury and Mofazzel Hossain Chowdhury Maya. Motia formally declared end of the march.

They reiterated the demand for immediate resignation of the chief election commissioner (CEC) and two other 'politically appointed' election commissioners, and implementation of electoral reforms. The road march would be turned into 'victory march' to compel the alliance government to accept the demands, they said.

The also reiterated that they would not accept a voter list prepared under the present CEC. A new CEC has to be appointed on the basis of a consensus reached through discussions.

A brief rally followed the march, which was addressed by, among others, Mohammad Nasim, Motia Chowdhury and Mofazzel Hossain Chowdhury Maya. Motia formally declared end of the march.

They reiterated the demand for immediate resignation of the chief election commissioner (CEC) and two other 'politically appointed' election commissioners, and implementation of electoral reforms. The road march would be turned into 'victory march' to compel the alliance government to accept the demands, they said.

The also reiterated that they would not accept a voter list prepared under the present CEC. A new CEC has to be appointed on the basis of a consensus reached through discussions.

A brief rally followed the march, which was addressed by, among others, Mohammad Nasim, Motia Chowdhury and Mofazzel Hossain Chowdhury Maya. Motia formally declared end of the march.

They reiterated the demand for immediate resignation of the chief election commissioner (CEC) and two other 'politically appointed' election commissioners, and implementation of electoral reforms. The road march would be turned into 'victory march' to compel the alliance government to accept the demands, they said.

The also reiterated that they would not accept a voter list prepared under the present CEC. A new CEC has to be appointed on the basis of a consensus reached through discussions.

A brief rally followed the march, which was addressed by, among others, Mohammad Nasim, Motia Chowdhury and Mofazzel Hossain Chowdhury Maya. Motia formally declared end of the march.

They reiterated the demand for immediate resignation of the chief election commissioner (CEC) and two other 'politically appointed' election commissioners, and implementation of electoral reforms. The road march would be turned into 'victory march' to compel the alliance government to accept the demands, they said.

The also reiterated that they would not accept a voter list prepared under the present CEC. A new CEC has to be appointed on the basis of a consensus reached through discussions.

A brief rally followed the march, which was addressed by, among others, Mohammad Nasim, Motia Chowdhury and Mofazzel Hossain Chowdhury Maya. Motia formally declared end of the march.

They reiterated the demand for immediate resignation of the chief election commissioner (CEC) and two other 'politically appointed' election commissioners, and implementation of electoral reforms. The road march would be turned into 'victory march' to compel the alliance government to accept the demands, they said.

The also reiterated that they would not accept a voter list prepared under the present CEC. A new CEC has to be appointed on the basis of a consensus reached through discussions.

Road march

FROM PAGE 1

Jatrabari areas as sensitive from security point of view, the law enforcers took additional security measures. A senior police official said they did so in view of the earlier agitation for power and water.

Police, Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), paramilitary BDR and intelligence agencies were deployed along the march route.

Rab personnel stood guard on the roofs of high-rise buildings while a Rab helicopter hovered above, closely observing the march.

The law enforcers set up a number of barricades on the busy Dhaka-Chittagong Highway causing immense sufferings to commuters.

No public and private vehicles, except ambulance and vehicles carrying journalists and law enforcers, were allowed to ply the march route from 4:00pm to 6:00pm. Rickshaws however plied as usual.

As the starting point of the march virtually turned into a human sea, the opposition combine held a brief rally there. A number of senior opposition leaders including Amir Hossain Amu, Abdur Razzak, Suranjit Sengupta, Motia Chowdhury, Obaidul Quader, Rashed Khan Menon and Hasanul Haque Inu addressed the rally.

They reiterated the demand for immediate resignation of the chief election commissioner (CEC) and two other 'politically appointed' election commissioners, and implementation of electoral reforms. The road march would be turned into 'victory march' to compel the alliance government to accept the demands, they said.

The also reiterated that they would not accept a voter list prepared under the present CEC. A new CEC has to be appointed on the basis of a consensus reached through discussions.

A brief rally followed the march, which was addressed by, among others, Mohammad Nasim, Motia Chowdhury and Mofazzel Hossain Chowdhury Maya. Motia formally declared end of the march.

They reiterated the demand for immediate resignation of the chief election commissioner (CEC) and two other 'politically appointed' election commissioners, and implementation of electoral reforms. The road march would be turned into 'victory march' to compel the alliance government to accept the demands, they said.

The also reiterated that they would not accept a voter list prepared under the present CEC. A new CEC has to be appointed on the basis of a consensus reached through discussions.

A brief rally followed the march, which was addressed by, among others, Mohammad Nasim, Motia Chowdhury and Mofazzel Hossain Chowdhury Maya. Motia formally declared end of the march.

They reiterated the demand for immediate resignation of the chief election commissioner (CEC) and two other 'politically appointed' election commissioners, and implementation of electoral reforms. The road march would be turned into 'victory march' to compel the alliance government to accept the demands, they said.

The also reiterated that they would not accept a voter list prepared under the present CEC. A new CEC has to be appointed on the basis of a consensus reached through discussions.

A brief rally followed the march, which was addressed by, among others, Mohammad Nasim, Motia Chowdhury and Mofazzel Hossain Chowdhury Maya. Motia formally declared end of the march.

They reiterated the demand for immediate resignation of the chief election commissioner (CEC) and two other 'politically appointed' election commissioners, and implementation of electoral reforms. The road march would be turned into 'victory march' to compel the alliance government to accept the demands, they said.

The also reiterated that they would not accept a voter list prepared under the present CEC. A new CEC has to be appointed on the basis of a consensus reached through discussions.

A brief rally followed the march, which was addressed by, among others, Mohammad Nasim, Motia Chowdhury and Mofazzel Hossain Chowdhury Maya. Motia formally declared end of the march.

They reiterated the demand for immediate resignation of the chief election commissioner (CEC) and two other 'politically appointed' election commissioners, and implementation of electoral reforms. The road march would be turned into 'victory march' to compel the alliance government to accept the demands, they said.

The also reiterated that they would not accept a voter list prepared under the present CEC. A new CEC has to be appointed on the basis of a consensus reached through discussions.

A brief rally followed the march, which was addressed by, among others, Mohammad Nasim, Motia Chowdhury and Mofazzel Hossain Chowdhury Maya. Motia formally declared end of the march.

They reiterated the demand for immediate resignation of the chief election commissioner (CEC) and two other 'politically appointed' election commissioners, and implementation of electoral reforms. The road march would be turned into 'victory march' to compel the alliance government to accept the demands, they said.

The also reiterated that they would not accept a voter list prepared under the present CEC. A new CEC has to be appointed on the basis of a consensus reached through discussions.

A brief rally followed the march, which was addressed by, among others, Mohammad Nasim, Motia Chowdhury and Mofazzel Hossain Chowdhury Maya. Motia formally declared end of the march.

They reiterated the demand for immediate resignation of the chief election commissioner (CEC) and two other 'politically appointed' election commissioners, and implementation of electoral reforms. The road march would be turned into 'victory march' to compel the alliance government to accept the demands, they said.

The also reiterated that they would not accept a voter list prepared under the present CEC. A new CEC has to be appointed on the basis of a consensus reached through discussions.

A brief rally followed the march, which was addressed by, among others, Mohammad Nasim, Motia Chowdhury and Mofazzel Hossain Chowdhury Maya. Motia formally declared end of the march.

They reiterated the demand for immediate resignation of the chief election commissioner (CEC) and two other 'politically appointed' election commissioners, and implementation of electoral reforms. The road march would be turned into 'victory march' to compel the alliance government to accept the demands, they said.

The also reiterated that they would not accept a voter list prepared under the present CEC. A new CEC has to be appointed on the basis of a consensus reached through discussions.

A brief rally followed the march, which was addressed by, among others, Mohammad Nasim, Motia Chowdhury and Mofazzel Hossain Chowdhury Maya. Motia formally declared end of the march.

They reiterated the demand for immediate resignation of the chief election commissioner (CEC) and two other 'politically appointed' election commissioners, and implementation of electoral reforms. The road march would be turned into 'victory march' to compel the alliance government to accept the demands, they said.

The also reiterated that they would not accept a voter list prepared under the present CEC. A new CEC has to be appointed on the basis of a consensus reached through discussions.

A brief rally followed the march, which was addressed by, among others, Mohammad Nasim, Motia Chowdhury and Mofazzel Hossain Chowdhury Maya. Motia formally declared end of the march.

They reiterated the demand for immediate resignation of the chief election commissioner (CEC) and two other 'politically appointed' election commissioners, and implementation of electoral reforms. The road march would be turned into 'victory march' to compel the alliance government to accept the demands, they said.

The also reiterated that they would not accept a voter list prepared under the present CEC. A new CEC has to be appointed on the basis of a consensus reached through discussions.

A brief rally followed the march, which was addressed by, among others, Mohammad Nasim, Motia Chowdhury and Mofazzel Hossain Chowdhury Maya. Motia formally declared end of the march.

They reiterated the demand for immediate resignation of the chief election commissioner (CEC) and two other 'politically appointed' election commissioners, and implementation of electoral reforms. The road march would be turned into 'victory march' to compel the alliance government to accept the demands, they said.

The also reiterated that they would not accept a voter list prepared under the present CEC. A new CEC has to be appointed on the basis of a consensus reached through discussions.

BNP satisfied

FROM PAGE 1

completed in time." "The BNP wants a flawless voter list and the Election Commission assured us that the voter list will be prepared in time," the minister said.

The demand for the CEC's resignation was not discussed at the meeting, he said.

"Why will he [CEC] resign? It is a constitutional post and he is moving as per the constitution," Anwar said, adding, "Who are demanding his resignation? Only one such political party has people's support while the others do not enjoy remarkable support from people."

As Secretary of the EC Secretariat Abdur Rashid Sarkar raised the issue of allocation of funds for updating the voter list, the agriculture minister said the fund will be allocated soon, meeting sources said.

Amid uncertainty of fund allocation from the finance ministry, the task of updating the voter list got off a slow start on last Friday.

Election commissioners Jutta Mahfuzur Rahman and SM Zakaira also attended the meeting.

"They [the BNP delegation] inquired about the progress of updating the voter list," the EC secretary told reporters after the meeting.

Meanwhile, the EC yesterday held a meeting with the deputy commissioner of Dhaka district,

'Un'intended fallout

FROM PAGE 1

names of who enjoy certain level of respectability in our society. That is why all this attempt to hide them from public scrutiny.

But what happened then is more pathetic -- the 'un'intended fallout of whitening of black money. Suddenly hints are being dropped about people who allegedly had whitened money. Interestingly, many of the names that are being suggested have been ardent critics of this whole process of money whitening.

Some of these persons are now involved in various initiatives of the civil society. Against such a systematic rumour campaign against these persons, they remain helpless in the face of the government's resistance to disclose the names of the persons who whitened money.

This rumour mongering has all the more strengthened the case for making public the list of persons who whitened black money. This is more important in case of politicians intending to contest the upcoming general elections because the people, majority of whom are villagers and cut off from the city events, have the right to know who they are voting for. The hordes of television channels that are mushrooming overnight by the touch of a magic wand also needs to be scrutinized to detect how the owners of these channels amassed their wealth overnight to get into such costly ventures. This is important because television channels, although privately owned, are public property by the nature of their operation and licensing and will play an important role in forming opinion during the elections.

And there is also another side to the coin. In the past years, there have been a lot of strong protestations against NGOs getting into business on the ground that these NGOs have access to easy money at soft terms. Some of them are also 'exempted' from tax. As such, when the NGOs get into business, they skew the market as the normal commercial ventures have to borrow costly money from banks and

PM

FROM PAGE 1

Khaleda suggested enhancing trade and investment between the two countries. She said Turkey can import RMG, pharmaceuticals and ceramic products from Bangladesh. Referring to her recent visit to Turkey, the prime minister said the decisions, which were taken during talks with the Turkish leaders should be followed up for mutual benefits.

About her government's stance against terrorism, the prime minister said some misguided people unleashed terrorism in the name of Islam. But the government has crushed them.

Delegation members Harun Tufekci, Semestini Murat, Faruk Ambarcioğlu and Yilmaz Kaya were present.

IMF defers

FROM PAGE 16

may be submitted to the IMF by August, the source added.

The IMF also did not consider the recent increases in fuel prices sufficient. In the first week of June, the government increased the prices of kerosene and diesel by 10 per cent and petrol and octane by 30 per cent.

The IMF estimated that the government incurred a loss of about \$800 million in June despite the fuel price hike. It said the loss has further increased in recent days due to the ongoing hike of fuel prices in international market.

The IMF suggested the government to adjust the huge loss caused by subsidy to fuel prices either by increasing the fuel prices or providing budgetary allocation. It asked the government to notify it of the measures.

A finance ministry official said considering the upcoming elections, the government hinted the IMF that it will not go for further increase of fuel prices and the loss could be adjusted with funds kept in the budget as "block allocation".

Earlier in May, the IMF mission said its executive board will consider approval of the loan in July if the government implements the policies aimed at macroeconomic stability and improves the financial position. It also prescribed to carry out some key reforms in state-owned enterprises, nationalised commercialised banks and the NBR.

In 2003, the IMF executive board approved the PRGF loans in seven tranches subject to some conditions.

district and thana election officers of Dhaka, and zonal officers of Dhaka City Corporation to gear up the task of updating the voter list in the capital.

The task of updating the voter list is going on smoothly and it will be hopefully completed by August 10, the EC secretary told reporters after the meeting.

BSF

FROM PAGE 1

without provocation at BDR of Hijaldi outpost in Kalaroa upazila yesterday after noon. No casualties have been reported following the BSF fire.

BDR has been put on alert and additional troops have been mobilised along the 138 km-long border of the district.

Two energy

FROM PAGE 1

Petroleum Mahbub Un Noor and Ashfaqul Haq are accused of having illegally supplied fuel oils worth crores of taka to dealers.

The authorities have transferred Baghabari depot chief Farukuzzaman Biswas to Chittagong as his expenses were found higher than his income. Farukuzzaman owns two palatial houses in Dhaka and Jessore and has other assets that do not match with his income.

'Un'intended fallout

'pay' all taxes. A well argued approach.

But is not the whitening of money giving rise to a similar kind of distorting phenomenon in the industrial development? Those who have got their money whitened at a much cheaper rate than the honest taxpayers, will have a higher competitive edge in their investment. Someone who paid only 7.5 percent tax will have a much better product pricing capacity than someone who paid 25 percent tax. Shouldn't the nation know who these people are and where they invested their money in? Now the 7.5 percent tax payment system was discontinued this year, the whitening process through investments in houses, land and car continues. It is no wonder that apartments in the range of Tk 1 crore to Tk 5 crore are suddenly in great demand, as reported by some newspapers. The buyers of such costly properties can any time sell their assets and use the capital gains in other ventures, thus leaving the scope for skewing the investment scenario.

In the past, both the military and political governments have used various 'neutralising and carrot' tools to satisfy the people of consequence. They have either taken them into the government fold or given them special 'facilities' in business. Now the money whitening offer is only one of them. What might come in future is the selective use of the list to treat the people of 'nuisance' value. And that process, as it seems, has already started. To safeguard this class, the NBR, even if it cannot disclose the names of the black money holders, can give certificates to vouch that somebody did not whiten any money at all.

In the past years, there have been a lot of strong protestations against NGOs getting into business on the ground that these NGOs have access to easy money at soft terms. Some of them are also 'exempted' from tax. As such, when the NGOs get into business, they skew the market as the normal commercial ventures have to borrow costly money from banks and

In the past years, there have been a lot of strong protestations against NGOs getting into business on the ground that these NGOs have access to easy money at soft terms. Some of them are also 'exempted' from tax. As such, when the NGOs get into business, they skew the market as the normal commercial ventures have to borrow costly money from banks and

PM

FROM PAGE 1

Khaleda suggested enhancing trade and investment between the two countries. She said Turkey can import RMG, pharmaceuticals and ceramic products from Bangladesh. Referring to her recent visit to Turkey, the prime minister said the decisions, which were taken during talks with the Turkish leaders should be followed up for mutual benefits.

About her government's stance against terrorism, the prime minister said some misguided people unleashed terrorism in the name of Islam. But the government has crushed them.

Delegation members Harun Tufekci, Semestini Murat, Faruk Ambarcioğlu and Yilmaz Kaya were present.

Rice warns

FROM PAGE 16

Referring to the Syrian president, Chirac said: "There was a time when I spoke to Bashar al-Assad. I spoke to his father. To hide nothing from you, this dialogue came to an end. It was he who wanted it."

"And then, I realised that it was coming to nothing. That the regime embodied by Bashar al-Assad seemed to me to be at odds with security and peace."

In a reference to the abduction of Israeli soldiers by Hamas and Hezbollah, which sparked the Israel-Lebanon conflict, Chirac spoke of his "feeling" that "Hamas as well as Hezbollah did not take these irresponsible initiatives simply of their own accord."

Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Assefi said before the Rome conference ended he was "not optimistic" about the meeting, because of the "role played by the United States and the (UN) Security Council in favour of the Zionist regime."

He hoped the conference would take decisions "to put an end to the crimes of the Zionist regime."

He also criticised the failure to invite Iran and Syria to the talks, saying "the absence of certain countries could not help the chances" of success in Rome.