

Australian Muslims under pressure as terror fears grow

AFP, Sydney

The Australian government pressured local Muslims at the weekend to denounce terrorism, learn English and accept women as equals, as fears grew of a first attack on home soil.

Prime Minister John Howard led with calls for the country's 300,000 Muslims to integrate fully into Australian society and adopt its values, sparking warnings that he was inciting racial violence.

Howard's remarks came at the end of a week, which saw 11 local Muslim men committed for trial on terrorism charges and a Muslim convert subjected to the first control order issued under controversial new anti-terror laws.

They also coincided with the arrest of 14 terror suspects in Britain, where the July 7, 2005 suicide attacks by young British Muslims that killed 56 people prompted Howard to express the fear that the same thing could happen in Australia.

"Fully integrating means accepting Australian values, it means learning as rapidly as you can the English language if you don't already speak it," Howard said in a radio interview.

"People who come from societies where women are treated in an inferior fashion have got to learn very quickly that that is not the case in Australia."

The head of the government's own moderate Muslim advisory committee, Ameer Ali, said Howard risked inflaming tensions seen in rioting between white youths and Arab-Australians in Sydney last December.

But the prime minister refused to apologise and repeated his comments in an article written for Sydney's Daily Telegraph tabloid on Saturday.

On Sunday, his heir-apparent, Treasurer Peter Costello, joined the attack, saying Islamic leaders needed "to make it clear that terrorism is never justified under the cover of religion".

A minority in the Islamic community had been radicalised and was

preying upon young people with dangerous ideologies, he said.

"It is very, very important that the leadership of Australia are very clear and very precise that this is not real Islam, that terrorism is always wrong."

The leader of the Islamic Friendship Association, Keyas Trad, told AFP the government was engaging in "gratuitous Islam bashing".

"On the radicalism issue, they have acknowledged that it is a small fraction of less than one percent," he told AFP.

But Attorney-General Philip Ruddock said Sunday the government believes Australia is vulnerable to terrorist attacks similar to those in Britain.

"What we're seeing in the United Kingdom is that there are numbers of groups, who it is believed, are intent on carrying out terrorist attacks in the United Kingdom," Ruddock said.

"This is of course the situation that we face. I think we became very complacent about these matters because we've not had on our own soil terrorist attacks."

Like Britain, Australia contributed troops to the US-led invasions of both Afghanistan and Iraq, but Ruddock denied that was a reason the country was targeted.

On Friday, a Melbourne court ruled there was sufficient evidence to put on trial 11 Australian Muslim men arrested last November in Australia's biggest-ever counterterrorism operation.

The court heard they were inspired by Osama Bin Laden, had formed a terror cell and had been preparing a terrorist attack.

Earlier in the week the government used controversial new anti-terror laws for the first time to place a "control order" on a Muslim convert freed after his conviction on terrorism charges was quashed.

The order restricts the movements of Joseph "Jihad Jack" Thomas, 33, who had been convicted and sentenced to five years in jail for receiving money and an air ticket from Bin Laden's al-Qaeda.

BNP march turns

FROM PAGE 1

by the four-party ruling alliance.

The massive procession, one of the largest political programmes by BNP in recent times, apparently was a show of strength. It started at about 4:20pm from Naya Bazar, at the southern part of the city and touched on its way at least 20 important points of five constituencies out of eight in the city before ending at Gabtoli, the northern part of the city, at 7:15pm.

Beating drums, waving multicoloured placards, banners, festoons, the party and national flags, and portraits of late president Ziaur Rahman, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and their son Tarique Rahman, enthusiastic supporters of BNP from different parts of the city joined the procession.

Thousands of cheerful people marched in the several kilometres long procession chanting slogans. Clad in multicoloured outfits a few supporters enacted the process of rice cultivation on mock paddy fields to express their support to the sheaf of paddy, the electoral symbol of BNP.

Thousands of people were standing on both sides of the 15-kilometre route and many of them were dancing and chanting slogans, while many others were seen standing on rooftops to have a glimpse of the prime minister.

Standing on an open-roof sports utility vehicle, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia with sunglasses on, led the procession to Gabtoli while other leaders including Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and Tarique Rahman sometimes walked with the marchers and sometimes stood on cars.

While inaugurating the procession at Naya Bazar, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia urged the people to vote for BNP in the next election. "The election of 2007 is very important for the country. I hope you will help to continue the development of the country by voting for BNP in the next election," she said.

"Bangladesh cannot be run by the will of any individual or any party but the constitution. The next election will be held in accordance with the constitution under a neutral caretaker government," she said firmly.

"The caretaker government will take over in line with the constitution and after conducting the election it will handover the power to elected representatives," Khaleda said adding that the BNP-led alliance government will handover power to a caretaker government on expiry of the ruling alliance's tenure in two months.

The BNP chairperson asked her party leaders and activists to remain alert against any conspiracy to split and weaken the party and said conspiracies are still being hatched against the country and BNP.

Criticising the previous government Khaleda Zia said the country

Dahagram people

FROM PAGE 16

the Deputy Commissioner today and announced greater action programme from a rally at Banerbari on Tuesday.

The protesters also staged a sit-in demonstration in front of Dahagram BDR camp.

Security was tight in Quetta where a multi-party alliance was to hold a separate rally later in the evening.

Police and paramilitary troops were deployed at government buildings and key intersections in the city, witnesses said.

The rallies were against the killing of Bugti and the refusal to hand over the body to his family, nationalist leader Akhtar Mengal said.

The protest was a sit-in demonstration in front of Dahagram BDR camp.

Abu Solaiman

FROM PAGE 16

"Solaiman Chowdhury played an important role in bringing the remains of the martyred Lt Lt Birsreshtha Matiur Rahman from Pakistan," said a Bangabhaban release.

Meanwhile, Abdul Halim made a courtesy call on President Iajuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban yesterday.

6 fishermen

FROM PAGE 1

Bakkhali river 1.5km west of Cox's Bazar beach and talked with the surviving fishermen.

Jono Majhi said the pirates in the guise of fishermen accompanied them in catching fish in the Bay.

He named the pirates as Robin, 35, Razzak, 38, Shani, 28, Kalam, 22, Habori, 30, and Nonoyea, 25.

JCD forces

FROM PAGE 1

Sources said the JCD gathered around 3,500 students from different dormitories of DU to join the procession from Naya Bazar to Gabtoli.

A number of students said the JCD men launched a room-to-room campaign on the eve of the procession and told first, second and third year students to join the procession.

They said the JCD men took them to their dormitory gressrooms and threatened that they would be driven out of the dormitory, if they failed to join the procession.

General Secretary of JCD DU unit told The Daily Star that nobody was forced to join the procession and the students joined because they were either invited, joined JCD or had friendship with JCD leaders.

Six peacekeepers

FROM PAGE 1

upazila under Jhalakathi district, lance corporal M Abdus Sattar (6 Field Regiment, Artillery) hailing from village Dariapur in Chapainawabganj upazila under the district, soldier Abdul Halim (27 Field Regiment, Artillery) hailing from village Bara Chaiti in Kuliarchar upazila under Kishoreganj district, soldier Mohammad Kamruzzaman Khan (36 Air Defence Regiment, Artillery) of village Bamutia in Chittagong upazila under Comilla district, soldier Mohammad Shahid Mia (32 Field Regiment, Artillery) of village Shatra in Kulaura upazila under Moulvibazar district and soldier M Mizanur Rahman (24 Field Regiment, Artillery) of village Bhakutia under Jhajhuri district.

On the way, the driver of one of the trucks lost control and the accident occurred, killing five on the spot, while another succumbed to his injuries at a local hospital.

A group of 80 Bangladeshi peacekeepers including the six left the country on August 25 and reached the former French colony the same day to join a UN peacekeeping mission. In four military trucks, they started from Yamoussoukro for Abidjan, 250km away.

Nearly 3,000 Bangladeshi soldiers are working with the UN peacekeeping mission in Ivory Coast, sources in Bangladesh Army said, adding that around 10,000 Bangladeshis are working in 12 UN missions worldwide.

Ctg port deadlock

FROM PAGE 1

the service providers, not the exporters or importers, he added.

The misunderstanding arose when the CFTC imposed \$130 for each twenty-equivalent-unit container as congestion surcharge from June 5 and realised around Tk 210 crore.

The BGMEA termed this "irrational" and sought refund of the money. It filed a writ against imposition of the surcharge on June 9 and a contempt petition on August 31.

Meanwhile, sources said a huge congestion will occur at the Chittagong Port as the overseas operators, who ship around 65 percent containers, will continue suspension of loading and unloading containers until Tuesday.

Sources said a total of ten container vessels were berthing at different jetties of Chittagong Port while four departed with exported goods and four others took berthing at the port yesterday. Another five vessels were in the outer anchorage waiting for berthing.

According to the BBC, 12 of the suspects were detained in the Borough area of inner south London at a halal Chinese restaurant, The Bridge to China Town, which is popular with local Muslims.

Of the two others, one was arrested in east London while the location of the last was not specified.

An unnamed security source quoted by PA said there was no evidence of any imminent attack and it was not yet clear if the men were part of a terrorist group or not.

Police have not revealed what prompted them to act.

In an interview to be broadcast Sunday, the head of the Met's Anti-Terrorist Branch said thousands of British Muslims were under surveillance for direct or indirect involvement in terrorism.

Around 35km south of the provincial capital Quetta, amid calls by opposition parties to stage demonstrations across Baluchistan over the August 26 killing of veteran Baluchi leader Nawab Akbar Bugti.

Bugti, who died in a cave-hidout during an army operation, was buried in haste on Friday, hours after his decomposed body was retrieved from the collapsed cave.

His death sparked nationwide protests and deadly violence in Baluchistan where 10 people died in bomb blasts, attacks and clashes with the police in the past week.

Rallies were held on Sunday in the towns of Turbat, Pasni and Khuzdar but no incidents were reported.

Security was tight in Quetta where a multi-party alliance was to hold a separate rally later in the evening.

Police and paramilitary troops were deployed at government buildings and key intersections in the city, witnesses said.

The rallies were against the killing of Bugti and the refusal to hand over the body to his family, nationalist leader Akhtar Mengal said.

Security was tight in Quetta where a multi-party alliance was to hold a separate rally later in the evening.

New EC commissioner

FROM PAGE 16

just a courtesy call and it is not irregular."

The newly appointed election commissioner, who left the secretariat premises after spending about two hours there, said, "It is just a casual visit. Nothing significant was discussed during the courtesy call. We only exchanged pleasantries."

Former election commissioner Justice Naimuddin Ahmed said there is nothing wrong with the visit to the EC Secretariat before taking the oath. "After being appointed as an election commissioner, he or she can make courtesy calls, but cannot assume the office before taking the oath," Naimuddin told The Daily Star.

A former adviser to a caretaker government however on condition of anonymity said Mansur should have visited the EC Secretariat after taking the oath. "After being appointed as an election commissioner, he or she can make courtesy calls, but cannot assume the office before taking the oath," Naimuddin told The Daily Star.

Former election commissioner Justice Naimuddin Ahmed said there is nothing wrong with the visit to the EC Secretariat before taking the oath. "After being appointed as an election commissioner, he or she can make courtesy calls, but cannot assume the office before taking the oath," Naimuddin told The Daily Star.

Former election commissioner Justice Naimuddin Ahmed said there is nothing wrong with the visit to the EC Secretariat before taking the oath. "After being appointed as an election commissioner, he or she can make courtesy calls, but cannot assume the office before taking the oath," Naimuddin told The Daily Star.

Former election commissioner Justice Naimuddin Ahmed said there is nothing wrong with the visit to the EC Secretariat before taking the oath. "After being appointed as an election commissioner, he or she can make courtesy calls, but cannot assume the office before taking the oath," Naimuddin told The Daily Star.

Former election commissioner Justice Naimuddin Ahmed said there is nothing wrong with the visit to the EC Secretariat before taking the oath. "After being appointed as an election commissioner, he or she can make courtesy calls, but cannot assume the office before taking the oath," Naimuddin told The Daily Star.

Former election commissioner Justice Naimuddin Ahmed said there is nothing wrong with the visit to the EC Secretariat before taking the oath. "After being appointed as an election commissioner, he or she can make courtesy calls, but cannot assume the office before taking the oath," Naimuddin told The Daily Star.

Former election commissioner Justice Naimuddin Ahmed said there is nothing wrong with the visit to the EC Secretariat before taking the oath. "After being appointed as an election commissioner, he or she can make courtesy calls, but cannot assume the office before taking the oath," Naimuddin told The Daily Star.

Former election commissioner Justice Naimuddin Ahmed said there is nothing wrong with the visit to the EC Secretariat before taking the oath. "After being appointed as an election commissioner, he or she can make courtesy calls, but cannot assume the office before taking the oath," Naimuddin told The Daily Star.

Former election commissioner Justice Naimuddin Ahmed said there is nothing wrong with the visit to the EC Secretariat before taking the oath. "After being appointed as an election commissioner, he or she can make courtesy calls, but cannot assume the office before taking the oath," Naimuddin told The Daily Star.

Former election commissioner Justice Naimuddin Ahmed said there is nothing wrong with the visit to the EC Secretariat before taking the oath. "After being appointed as an election commissioner, he or she can make courtesy calls, but cannot assume the office before taking the oath," Naimuddin told The Daily Star.

Former election commissioner Justice Naimuddin Ahmed said there is nothing wrong with the visit to the EC Secretariat before taking the oath. "After being appointed as an election commissioner, he or she can make courtesy calls, but cannot assume the office before taking the oath," Naimuddin told The Daily Star.

Former election commissioner Justice Naimuddin Ahmed said there is nothing wrong with the visit to the EC Secretariat before taking the oath. "After being appointed as an election commissioner, he or she can make courtesy calls, but cannot assume the office before taking the oath," Naimuddin told The Daily Star.

Former election commissioner Justice Naimuddin Ahmed said there is nothing wrong with the visit to the EC Secretariat before taking the oath. "After being appointed as an election commissioner, he or she can make courtesy calls, but cannot assume the office before taking the oath," Naimuddin told The Daily Star.

Former election commissioner Justice Naimuddin Ahmed said there is nothing wrong with the visit to the EC Secretariat before taking the oath. "After being appointed as an election commissioner, he or she can make courtesy calls, but cannot assume the office before taking the oath," Naimuddin told The Daily Star.

Former election commissioner Justice Naimuddin Ahmed said there is nothing wrong with the visit to the EC Secretariat before taking the oath. "After being appointed as an election commissioner, he or she can make courtesy calls, but cannot assume the office before taking the oath," Naimuddin told The Daily Star.

Former election commissioner Justice Naimuddin Ahmed said there is nothing wrong with the visit to the EC Secretariat before taking the oath. "After being appointed as an election commissioner, he or she can make courtesy calls, but cannot assume the office before taking the oath," Naimuddin told The Daily Star.

Former election commissioner Justice Naimuddin Ahmed said there is nothing wrong with the visit to the EC Secretariat before taking the oath. "After being appointed as an election commissioner, he or she can make courtesy calls, but cannot assume the office before taking the oath," Naimuddin told The Daily Star.

Former election commissioner Justice Naimuddin Ahmed said there is nothing wrong with the visit to the EC Secretariat before taking the oath. "After being appointed as an election commissioner, he or she can make courtesy calls, but cannot assume the office before taking the oath," Naimuddin told The Daily Star.

Former election commissioner Justice Naimuddin Ahmed said there is nothing wrong with the visit to the EC Secretariat before taking the oath. "After being appointed as an election commissioner, he or she can make courtesy calls, but cannot assume the office before taking the oath," Naimuddin told The Daily Star.

Former election commissioner Justice Naimuddin Ahmed said there is nothing wrong with the visit to the EC Secretariat before taking the oath. "After being appointed as an election commissioner, he or she can make courtesy calls, but cannot assume the office before taking the oath," Naimuddin