

# Thousands protest Pope's Turkey visit

AFP, Istanbul

Chanting Islamist slogans and brandishing banners against Western intervention in the Middle East, thousands of people have rallied here in protest against Pope Benedict XVI's visit to Turkey, which starts on Tuesday.

The demonstration, organized by the Islamist Felicity Party (SP) and entitled "The pope is not welcome", attracted about 15,000 people, almost all of them party sympathizers, far below the one million the party predicted and even the 300,000 other sources estimated.

Hundreds of security forces, including riot police, were on guard at the venue, Caglayan square in central Istanbul.

The mix of religious and political slogans reflected widespread suspicion among nationalists and Islamists here that the four-day papal visit is part of Western designs to subdue the Muslim world rather than an effort to reconcile religions.

The leader of the Roman Catholic Church triggered uproar across Muslim countries in September when he linked Islam and violence in quoting a Byzantine emperor who said the Prophet Mohammed brought "things only evil and inhuman."

"You must first apologize to the Muslims and then come to these sacred lands," SP leader Recai Kutan told the rally, calling Benedict XVI "a representative of grudge and hatred" and "an envoy of global imperialism."

"Show respect to the prophet, pope!" one banner read. Others said: "Ignorant pope, read your own history!" and "Pope, go home!"

"Allahu Akbar," the protestors chanted, followed by others who shouted "Down with Israel" and "Down with America." Some waved Palestinian and Chechen flags.

Under photographs of Iraq war victims, one banner asked: "Who did this?"

Another read: "Who is responsible for terrorism: the USA, Israel and the EU or Iraq and the Palestinians?"

Many brandished banners that said: "No to the crusaders' alliance" -- a slogan endorsed by the SP for the demonstration.

Opponents of the visit say the pontiff's scheduled talks with Patriarch Bartholomew I, the Istanbul-based spiritual head of the world's Orthodox Christians, is aimed not only at healing the centuries-old schism between the two churches, but at sealing a Christian alliance against Islam.

The rally highlighted another sensitive point the pope's program here has touched -- his planned visit to Hagia Sophia, a sixth century Byzantine church converted to a mosque in 1453, when the Ottomans conquered Istanbul, then called Constantinople. It was transformed into a museum in 1935.

"Break the chains, open Hagia Sophia," the protestors chanted, echoing Islamist desire for the edifice to be re-opened as a mosque.

Opponents say the pope's planned visit Thursday to the building, one of Istanbul's architec-

tural landmarks and a major tourist attraction, is an indication of Christian ambitions to reclaim it as a church.

On Wednesday, police detained 39 nationalist Islamist militants at a wildcard demonstration at Hagia Sophia after they held evening prayers inside the building in defiance of its status as a museum.

"I have Christian clients and I respect them," Munir Ozel, a butcher in the upscale Nisantasi district, told AFP at the rally. "We have churches and priests here and we respect them. But they too should respect us."

The SP, a small movement not represented in parliament, changed the title of the rally from "The sly and ignorant pope is not welcome," reportedly after the authorities warned them to avoid offensive slogans.

Women participants, the overwhelming majority of them wearing the Islamic headscarf and black chadors, stood in a separate section from the men.

The rally ended without incident.

The SP is an offshoot of the Welfare Party, ousted from power in 1997 and outlawed the following year for threatening Turkey's secular system.

The authorities have prepared extraordinary security measures for the pope's visit, which will take him to Ankara on Tuesday, to Ephesus and the home of the Virgin Mary in the western province of Izmir on Wednesday and to Istanbul the same evening, where he will conclude his visit Friday.

The planned security measures are tighter than those taken for US President George W. Bush during a NATO summit in Istanbul in 2004, Turkish Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul told the Italian daily Corriere della Sera.

**Under linking impractical**

**Says Chidambaram**

**INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE, New Delhi**

Finance Minister P Chidambaram said here yesterday that interlinking of rivers to resolve the country's water woes would affect India's ecology.

"Somehow we tend to see interlinking of rivers as the only solution for the water problem that India faces today. It has got nothing to do with the political problems between the states," the minister said while addressing the India Economic Summit Sunday here.

"It is not possible to link all the rivers due to geographical and technological obstacles. The study itself will cost almost \$50 million and it will take 3 years," Chidambaram said.

"We need to find more local solutions like desalination of coastal waters and deployment of better technology."

An ambitious proposal to interlink the country's rivers was mooted during the previous government of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, but could not be taken up as it faced opposition from several quarters. Bangladesh too objected, as it feared depletion of its own water resources as a result.

# Parties challenge

**FROM PAGE 1**

including the chief adviser, to explain under what authority he "holds or purports to hold the office of the Chief Adviser".

The cabinet secretary has been made the other respondent in the petition while Justice Mahmudul Amin Chowdhury has been made the pro-forma respondent.

The petitioners alleged that the assumption of the office of chief adviser by Iajuddin Ahmed is a violation of article 58C of the constitution.

They argued that the attempt of the president's military secretary to scout for a letter of refusal/embarrassment from Justice Chowdhury suggests that the president was in "no doubt" that Chowdhury was the constitutionally legitimate claimant to the post of chief adviser.

They concluded that the constitution designates Chowdhury, and not the president, as the chief adviser since he is the last eligible chief justice to have retired before the last retired chief justice--KM Hasan, who refused to take the office.

The petitioners are AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil, Workers' Party President Rashed Khan Menon, Gonoforum Presidium Member Pankaj Bhattacharya, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal President Hasanul Haq Inu, LDP Secretary General MA Mannan, Gonotantree Party President Nurul Islam, Bangladesh Samyabadi Dal General Secretary Dilip Barua, IOJ Chairman Misbahur Rahman Chowdhury, Zacar Party General Secretary Munshi Abdul Latif, JP Presidium Member GM Quader, and Islamic Front Chairman Syed Bahadur Shah.

Earlier on November 20, Adnan Anwar, a businessman and a nephew of late president Ziaur Rahman, filed a writ petition to issue a rule to the president to show cause under what authority he is holding the office of the chief adviser.

In another petition, the eleven political leaders asked the court to issue a show cause notice to the chief adviser asking why he should not be directed to refrain from exercising any executive authority if he does not act on the advice of all the advisers to the caretaker government as stated in the constitution.

The petitioners also asked the court to direct the chief adviser to place before the council of advisers the chief election commissioner's letter of leave that was sent to him on November 22. The petition added

that further decisions regarding the appointment of election commissioners are to be taken in due consultation with the council of advisers.

The respondents of this petition are the cabinet secretary and the chief adviser, while the ten other advisers to the caretaker government are the pro-forma respondents.

The petition alleged that media reports suggested that the chief adviser has repeatedly acted on his own without consulting the other advisers, which violates article 58B(3) of the constitution and undermines the collective responsibility of the caretaker government to the president.

In another petition, the same petitioners asked the court to issue a rule on the EC to explain why it shall not be directed to take necessary steps to prepare and publish the draft electoral rolls and thereafter publish the final electoral rolls before declaring the election schedule for the forthcoming general elections.

They also asked the court for an order of injunction against declaring the election schedule without first finalising the voter list in accordance with the law and the constitution.

The respondents of the petition are the EC represented by its secretary, the CEC, election commissioners Mustafizur Rahman and Mahmud Hassan Mansur, and the EC secretary.

Barrister Amir Ul Islam and Barrister Tania Amir filed the three petitions as the petitioners' counsel.

The political leaders went to the High Court yesterday to complete the procedure for filing the petitions.

AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil and Barrister Amir Ul Islam briefed reporters regarding the petition.

## 4-party

**FROM PAGE 1**

The rally venue was shifted from Muktangan due to the Bangabhaban siege programme by the 14-party.

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday called upon all the leaders, workers and supporters to make the programme a success.

In a statement issued yesterday, Bhuiyan urged all to thwart a "conspiracy" to foil the next election and put an end to public sufferings, anarchy and chaos caused by the AL-led alliance.

He also reiterated demand for announcement of election schedule immediately.

## Yemeni editor

**FROM PAGE 16**

The defense team appealed the verdict, while Olfi said the court had ignored the defense's argument that his newspaper had reproduced the drawings with a view to "defending the Prophet, not mocking him."

But attorney general Abdullah al-Olfi ordered the release of the journalist two hours after the court passed the sentence, effectively reducing the penalty to closure of the newspaper and a six-month writing ban.

The move came after a meeting with the journalist's defense team.

Both Al-Rai Al-Aam and the English-language weekly Yemen Observer were suspended for about six months by the Yemeni information ministry earlier this year for reprinting the cartoons.

The editor of Yemen Observer is still being tried in connection with the case.

## Hu

**FROM PAGE 16**

because the East Asian giant offered it a counterweight in dealings with India, and continued to supply arms in the 1990s, when the United States shunned Pakistan because of its nuclear weapons programme.

China has its own territorial disputes with India, and two nations are still trying to overcome decades of mistrust going back to a border war in 1962.

These days, China is keenly focussed on forging economic ties with its neighbours, but analysts said Hu was keen to demonstrate that China's growing links with India would not come at Pakistan's expense.

During Hu's visit to Islamabad, China and Pakistan signed a free trade pact that could boost annual trade from \$4.26 billion last year to \$15 billion within five years. They also inked a five-year plan to enhance economic cooperation.

China also said it would continue to support Pakistan's nuclear energy programme, though there was no commitment to build six new power plants that Pakistan wants.

While Hu was in New Delhi, China and India agreed to try and double bilateral trade to \$40 billion by 2010.

## Security men

**FROM PAGE 1**

security guard Mizanur Rahman was entering the mall premises at around 1:11am. Abdul Khaleq, the security-in-charge, carrying a package of food, entered the building a little later and handed over the package to Mizanur. Mizanur opened up the package containing Tehari. He was seen walking away with the package of food.

Two other security guards, Tajul Islam and Aslam, joined Khaleq at this point. Khaleq was seen describing the break-in procedure to the men. Then he went out of the building for a while and returned with three other unidentified men with tools seemingly to be used in the burglary. Soon after this, the burglars disconnected the CCTV cameras.

Morning shift security guards of the mall arrived at 8:00am only to find an unconscious Mizanur with the package of Tehari. Mizanur was later admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Police later seized the CCTV footage from the market authorities. Police also detained the manager of the security service provider Jahan Cleaning and Security Service and two other security guards employed by an electronics showroom and a bank located in the shopping centre.

General Secretary of the market Imdadul Haq Babul filed a case with Badda Police Station accusing seven people.

Babul said the robbers stole 420 tolas of gold ornaments worth Tk 67.5 lakh from Maayer Doa Jewellers, Roop Jewellers and Sharmin Jewellers located on the first floor.

The burglars also looted 320 cellular phone sets worth Tk 15.50 lakh from 3G Communication and 60 cell phone sets and other accessories worth Tk 3 lakh from Sim Fara located on the second floor of the market. Babul added.

Police raided the houses of the identified robbers without any success as of last evening.

## Khaleda

**FROM PAGE 1**

"They (AL) know it's not possible as per constitution and everybody knows that the only duty of the caretaker government is to do day-to-day work and help the Election Commission hold an election in a free and fair manner," she said.

Criticising the AL-led 14-party alliance, she said, "They do not want to see development in the country, they don't even want elections and democracy. They only want chaos, as they know they would never win the elections but the elections must be held within the stipulated time."

Describing the development works in education sector in the last five years Khaleda said the AL created a chaotic situation in the education sector, as they did not think of the nation and its future. BNP has done a lot of work in this sector and the BNP stopped the copying culture in public examinations.

Selim Bhuiyan presided over the meeting where former minister Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, Osman Farruk, MK Anwar, Abdus Salam Pintu and teachers' leaders Jashim Uddin Ahmed, Mohammad Mostafa and Fatema Akhter Hena also spoke.

# EC leaves mistakes

**FROM PAGE 1**

of information collected by the field level staff, the updated voter list ended up with a staggering number of 9.30 crore voters, a number which is 17 lakh higher than what was on the nullified draft of the fresh voter list.

At that time, about three lakh staff of the EC, who made door to door visits for over a month, received some 45 lakh applications for deletion of names from the existing voter list. But the updated voter list that came up with the staggering number of voters allegedly has a large number of fake voters on it.

This updated voter list shows at least 1.28 crore unaccounted voters if one goes by the 2001 census report of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), which shows 8.02 crore people as eligible to be registered as voters.

On the allegation of having a large number of fake voters on the updated voter list, EC Secretary Abdur Rashid Sarkar said they will take actions if they receive any specific allegation. "We are willing to correct any mistake on the voter list. So, we are urging people to inform us about the mistakes," he said at a news briefing.

Amid a growing demand for making the updated voter list credible, the EC came up with its decision which is nothing more than an explanation of the existing laws regarding preparation of a voter list.

According to the directives of the EC Secretariat, one will have to visit the local election office either to apply for registering his or her name or to delete a name from the list.

"Updating the voter list is an ongoing process. His or her name will have to be registered on the list if he or she applies using the prescribed forms -- 7 and 2," the EC Secretariat's directive said.

For inclusion of one's name on the voter list, one will have to apply first to a registration officer or assistant registration officer with the required documents and then one will get Form No-2 to have his or her name listed as a voter. But had the EC sent its staff to door to door visits, people would not have to follow such an elaborate process.

The EC Secretariat however yesterday directed the field level election officials to launch a massive campaign urging people to come to their offices to register

or delete names on the list.

Regarding announcement of the election schedule, the EC Secretariat's directive said, "If the election schedule is announced during the process of inclusion, deletion and amendment on the voter list, all the applications for those who will have to be sent to the Election Commission. On receiving approval from the Election Commission, the next step will have to be finalised."

"Only the applications which will be resolved through examination before the announcement of the election schedule will not require approval of the Election Commission," it asserted.

The task of printing the updated voter list has yet to be completed. The secretary however claimed that the task will be completed by November 30.

Replying to a query, the secretary said, "We are prepared to announce the election schedule by November 30."

## CG should take

**FROM PAGE 1**

president's post is perpetual and it should remain above all controversy.

Akbar admitted that a strained situation is prevailing between the chief adviser and the advisers but the condition is improving. The situation was almost similar during the past caretaker governments' tenures, he added.

"We are moving ahead even in this situation and took many collective decisions on formation of a committee on law and order and also cancelled a home ministry circular regarding army deployment," Akbar said.

He said the chief adviser is accountable to the advisers in the caretaker government system. Similarly, the advisers are accountable to the chief adviser and both the chief adviser and the advisers are accountable to the president.

Akbar delightfully said both BNP and Awami League claimed victory after MA Aziz decided to go on a leave. "It is a rare incident in Bangladesh that both the two major parties expressed similar reaction on an event."

This is a sign of gradual improvement of atmosphere for holding a fair election, the adviser observed.

# Ctg container terminal

**FROM PAGE 16**

Association (BGMEA) SM Fazlul Hoque, President of Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA) Fazlul Hoque and President of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) M A Momen were in the delegation.

The Shipping Secretary Sheikh Enayetullah, Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) Chairman Mohammad Moslehuddin and high officials of the ministry were also present at the meeting.

On behalf of the garments owners, BGMEA president SM Fazlul Haque placed a number of demands at the meeting. These include -- declaring port services as essential services, keeping the port open for 24 hours along with related offices including banks and customs and waiver of panel charge on imported cargos during political agitation programmes.

Fazlul Haque claimed that 80 percent of the imported cargos stranded in the ships are raw materials for the garments factories.

The government installed the gantry cranes in January this year and tried to operate those by the port operators first. As the performance of the port operators was not satisfactory, the government later appointed Saif Powertec for accelerating the handling of cargo, sources said.

The dockworkers, who were removed from the gantry crane operations, had been opposing the appointment of the private company. Chittagong City Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury supported them and demanded cancellation of the agreement.

With the backing of the mayor, the aggrieved dockworkers kept the vital container terminal besieged since November 12 and obstructed Saif Powertec from operating the cranes. They also threatened to close down other activities at the port if their demands are not met.

On the other hand, the private company also threatened to sue and demand Tk 25 crore as compensation if the agreement is cancelled abruptly.

The non-functioning of the CCT increased the number of waiting ships at the outer anchorage.

Two large gearless vessels have been anchoring at the CCT for over two weeks while another seven such vessels, which cannot operate without gantry cranes, have also been waiting at the outer anchorage.

Another dozen container ships are also waiting at the outer

anchorage for unloading goods. The shipping agents fear that the congestion at the port will cause price hike of the essentials in the market.

## 124 police

**FROM PAGE 16**

On November 15, Advisory Council for Administrative Affairs, headed by president and chief adviser Iajuddin Ahmed, took a few decisions regarding transfer of police officials who are working in the field level and related with election offices.

The council decided that all police deputy commissioners (DC) and OCs working in metropolitan areas would be transferred. The OCs working in the districts would be transferred to other districts within their range.

The council also decided that police officers of the rank of inspectors or OCs and the police officials who are not working presently as OCs cannot be transferred to places where they had worked before.

According to a UNB report, the caretaker government yesterday transferred and appointed nine more officials as part of its ongoing reshuffle in the administration ahead of the national elections.

Additional Secretary of Industries Ministry Dr Mohammad Ayub Mia has been appointed Transport Commissioner of Government Transportation Department, DG of Environment Department Dr Khandaker Rashidul Haque made chairman of National Housing Authority, Transport Commissioner of Government Transportation Department Syed Hasinur Rahman made Additional Secretary to Industries Ministry.

Chairman of National Housing Authority Abu Taher Khandakar Mohammad Ismail made Additional Secretary to Communications Ministry, Additional District Magistrate of Habiganj ABM Fazlur Rahman posted to Establishment Ministry for next promotion, ADC of Magura Tandra Sikder posted to Establishment Ministry for next promotion, Islampur UNO of Jamalpur district Mohammad Zakir Hossain made ADC of Habiganj.

Senior Assistant Secretary of Religious Affairs Ministry Mohammad Kazi Nazir Hossain made ADC of Magura and Dupchachia UNO of Bogra district Mohammad Delwar Haider appointed ADC of Thakurgaon.

## Rejoinder

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ehsan Ul Fattah, secretary, food and disaster management ministry, in a rejoinder to the report "Secret meet of admin bigwigs at ex-energy adviser's office" ran on November 25, 2006 in The Daily Star claimed that he did not attend the meeting and was not even aware of it. At that time, he was at a Dhanmondi mosque to take part in a qulkhwan of one of his relatives.

## Judicial probe

**FROM PAGE 16**

inquiry into all the three cases without taking the matter into direct cognisance.

CMM Jalal Ahmed yesterday transferred the case against Hasina to the court of Metropolitan Magistrate ABM Abdul Fattah while the case against Jalil to Towfikul Alam and the case against Quader to Mizanur Rahman for judicial inquiry.

In the complaint against Sheikh Hasina, Tarique mentioned that she (Hasina) told a public meeting at Paltan Maidan on November 3, "The son of 4-party alliance chief drives Tk 2 crore car, wears suit worth one lakh taka and squanders thousands of crore taka in gambling abroad," and "a syndicate of 2 lakh and 86 thousand crore taka is being run at Hawa Bhaban."

In the charge against Obaidul Quader, the complainant said he (Quader) at a press briefing on November 4 said "The New York Stock Exchange has awarded Tarique Rahman with a medal. How much takai is needed to get it, what is the source of this money, people want to know."

Quader also said "People want to know what Tarique Rahman carried in 435 suitcases and bags on his trip to Saudi Arabia for performing the Umrah? Why and how the Malaysian government has confiscated the money of Tarique?"

Tarique quoted AL general secretary as telling the newsmen on November 16, "Apu, APS of Tarique Rahman, met the inspector general of police (IGP) and pressurised him for the posting of 15 BNP party men as officers-in-charge (OCs) to the police stations of Gopalganj, Faridpur, Shariatpur and Madaripur districts."

The petitioner said all these widely published and telecast statements of the AL leaders are false and baseless aiming to undermine his political image.

## Police raid

**FROM PAGE 16**

He said the raid would continue in future.

The halls, which were raided, are Jagannath Hall, Bangabandhu Hall, Zia Hall, Jasimuddin Hall, Suryasen Hall, Muhsin Hall, F Rahman Hall, Amar Ekushey Hall, Shahidullah Hall, Fazlul Haq Hall, Zohurul Haq Hall and SM Hall.

Students said police only harassed common students and did not enter any political leaders' rooms during the raid.

Police picked up 11 outsiders from four dormitories. Among them, seven from Jagannath Hall, two from Muhsin Hall, one from Fazlul Haq Hall and Amar Ekushey Hall each.

Students of these halls said the detainees were guests and even they did not have any political leanings.

However, no charge sheet was filed against the detainees until filing of this report late in the evening.

Police did not raid any of the four female dormitories though teachers said that female halls should also be raided.

## EU mission

**FROM PAGE 16**

an influence for peace and stability in South Asia, observed Dr Stefan.

The election observation mission aims at undertaking a comprehensive assessment of the election process to uphold and promote the principles of liberal democracy.

The European Union is dispatching the EOM at the invitation of Bangladesh foreign ministry and Election Commission to observe the January 2007 elections and it will be a much bigger team than the one sent in 2001, said the EC delegation head.

The EU EOM will comprise a chief observer, a ten-member Mission Core Team, 40 long-term observers to be deployed from mid-December for at least six weeks and 100 short-term observers to arrive shortly before the election day, he said.

The Mission Core Team headed by a member of the European Parliament will comprise legal, political, media and logistics experts, said Dr Stefan.

The EU and others take a great interest in the democratic process in Bangladesh considering the country as a responsible one a fact demonstrated by her election to the new UN Human Rights Council, UN Peace-building Commission and role in UN peace-keeping, he said.

Dr Stefan further said that the EU team would be reinforced by several observers from Norway and Switzerland and resident diplomats in Dhaka.

"With the US, Commonwealth and others sending international observers to the elections -- and a huge array of domestic observers, we can be confident of a comprehensive and reliable assessment of the parliamentary elections," he said.

# Bangabhaban sit-in

**FROM PAGE 1**

The 14-party had enforced indefinite countrywide blockade in three separate phases to press home their demands for the reconstitution of the EC, depoliticisation of the administration and corrections for the voter list.

The 14-party activists will take their position at the city's Ittefaq intersection, Joy Kali Temple Road, Nawabpur Road, Bangabandhu Square, Golapshah Mazar, GPO, South Gate of Baitul Mukarram National Mosque, Paltan intersection, Danik Bangla intersection, and Shapla Square.

The 10 spots were finalised yesterday at an AL preparatory meeting, chaired by its city General Secretary Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, at the AL Central Office on Bangabandhu Avenue.

The meeting asked the alliance activists to stage the sit-in peacefully.

AL presidium members Abdur Razzak, Suranjit Sengupta and Tofail Ahmed, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) General Secretary Syed Zafar Sazzad and Ganatanree Party leader Nurul Islam also addressed the meeting.

Meanwhile, the roadmap for laying siege to the EC Secretariat tomorrow was also finalised in the meeting. The 14-party alliance will stage the sit-in around the EC from three points -- Russell Square, Agargaon and Mohakhali.

**LDP, OTHERS**

Jatiya Oikya Front, a political platform comprising of Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), Jatiya Oikya Mancha and Bangladesh Tarikat Federation, yesterday gave a 12-hour ultimatum to CA Iajuddin Ahmed to resign from the post.

"We will go for an indefinite sit-in around the Bangabhaban from 9:00am if the chief adviser does not resign in the next 12 hours," said LDP Secretary General Major (ret'd) Abdul Mannan at a press conference at its presidium office yesterday.

Meanwhile, LDP President AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury yesterday demanded punishment for the bureaucrats who attended the "secret" meeting at Uttara in the city on November 24.

Badruddoza also demanded resignation of Iajuddin Ahmed from the post of CA for his "failure to prove his neutrality."

**DMP BAN**

The DMP also placed a ban on sit-ins and laying siege to the EC Secretariat from midnight Monday.

"I am imposing the ban as several political parties have taken up programmes to lay siege to Bangabhaban and the EC office and stage sit-ins around them that may disturb the security of these offices," said DMP Commissioner ABM Bazlur Rahman.

The DMP also said staging rallies, processions, sit-ins, besieging and carrying all kinds of firearms, explosives, sticks and other harmful substances around the Bangabhaban and the EC Secretariat office have been banned from Sunday and Monday midnight until further notice.

The areas that will be under restrictions on Monday are: From Ittefaq intersection to Ahad Police Box via Muktijuddha Super Market and Joykali temple (South), Ahad Police Box to Baitul Mukarram National Mosque via Gulistan Canon point and roads adjacent to Bhashani Hockey and Dhaka Stadium (West), Baitul Mukarram National Mosque to Alico building via Shilpa Bank Bhawan, Biman Office and headquarters of Agrani Bank (North) and Alico building to Ittefaq intersection via Dhaka Stock Exchange building (East).

On Tuesday, the prohibition will be from Agargaon intersection to Shishu Mela, Biam at Dhanmondi-27 and Mirpur Road intersection to eastern part of Dhanmondi Government Boys' School, Dhanmondi Government Boys' School to Manik Mia Avenue Via T&T field, Indira Road intersection to eastern part of Agargaon intersection via Eye Hospital and Urojahaz intersection and Shishu Mela intersection to Old Mohammadpur Police Station intersection via Asad Avenue and eastern end of Dhanmondi Road-27.

In another order, the DMP urged 14-party alliance to limit its political programmes to Russell Squire and its nearby areas and at 23, Bangabandhu Avenue and the four-party alliance to the north gate of Baitul Mukarram National Mosque, Naya Paltan and its nearby areas for the sake of security of the members of the political parties.

The DMP also imposed a ban on rallies and processions on VIP roads from Bangabhaban to Shaheed Jahangir Gate and Mohakhali to Zia International Airport and its intersections until further notice.

## Border guards

**FROM PAGE 16**

thana of Uttar 24 Parganas district fired one round bullet towards Bangladesh border at about 1:45am.

At the same time, BDR members of Madra camp fired several rounds of bullet towards the Indian smugglers.

None was injured during the exchange of fire.

# Restaurant bomb

**FROM PAGE 16**

and civilians were among the dead.

It was the worst such incident since a suicide bombing in Kabul killed 16 people, including two US soldiers, in September.

Afghan and Isaf officials meanwhile reported a string of Taliban attacks in the south of the country, which killed nearly 55 rebels and a Nato soldier.

The heaviest death toll was in the province of Uruzgan, where Isaf said its soldiers were attacked by a "large number of insurgents" Saturday.

Isaf soldiers returned fire and called in war planes. "Initial battle damage assessment indicates that approximately 50 insurgents were killed in the attack. Regrettably, an Isaf soldier was also killed," it said.

The force of 31,000 soldiers drawn from 37 nations does not release the nationalities of its casualties, leaving that to the home country.

Most of the troops in Uruzgan are with a 2,100-strong Dutch deployment to Afghanistan or from a 200-soldier Australian force. Nearly 120 foreign soldiers have died in combat in Afghanistan this year, up from just over 70 last year.

There were also several clashes in the Panjwayi district of Kandahar

Friday and Saturday, with Afghan and Isaf soldiers coming under attack, the force said.

"Close air support was requested and engaged the insurgents, killing approximately five of them. Three Isaf soldiers were also injured during the engagement."

Panjwayi was the scene in September of what Isaf termed the Taliban's biggest defeat since they were driven from government in 2001. About 1,000 rebels were killed. They have however since been reinfiltrating.

Afghan officials meanwhile reported insurgent attacks in Kandahar and Zabul provinces overnight and said a Taliban had been killed in each.

There was also a bomb blast in the capital on Saturday, the first in about a month, and a suicide bombing in an adjoining province but neither claimed any lives.

The latest spurt of violence follows a dip in insurgency-linked bloodshed over recent weeks.

The violence peaked over the summer with daily attacks and full-scale battles claiming scores of lives and taking many of the Isaf nations by surprise, with some saying the fighting was the most intense they had seen in decades.

# UAE labour minister

**FROM PAGE 16**

report said adding that the migrant workers do not benefit from the country's minimum wage, earning between \$106-250 a month compared with a national average of \$2,106, HRW said.

The MoU likely to be signed would enable the expatriate workers to get better service conditions such as regular salary, health insurance, accommodation, opportunity to move from one sponsor to another in case of non-payment of salary and dispute settlement mechanism, the letter of the ambassador said.

"It would develop a new system for bringing workforce into the country based on coordination between the UAE and the labour sending country concerned," the letter said adding that the labour contract between the worker and the employer will be authenticated by the UAE Labour Ministry to minimise the sufferings of the work-

ers and to eradicate the abuses.

This will also help to end the shady practice of fake contracts that exploit the workers, the ambassador further noted in the letter.

"Besides regulating the overseas manpower employment, the proposed MoU will help open up a new era of cooperation between our two governments and strengthen bilateral relations of the two countries," Ambassador Nazimullah Chowdhury said in his letter.

According to official statistics, there are nearly 5 lakh Bangladeshis working in the UAE, which is the second largest job market for the Bangladeshi workers overseas.

In the last fiscal year, the expatriate workers remitted over \$553 million to Bangladesh.