

Pope remarks: Muslims livid, burn effigy

HTC

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MUSLIM CLERICS in the State capital are up in arms against Pope Benedict XVI's allegedly anti-Islam statement made a couple of days back. Before the special Friday prayers, the Shia and Sunni clerics unanimously condemned the statement and demanded either a clarification or an apology from the Vatican. The Pope's effigy was burnt near in the Old City and slogans raised after Friday prayers.

Addressing a massive gathering at the Asafi Mosque, Shia cleric Maulana Kalbe Jawad said it would have been better if

the Pope had cross-checked the facts about Jihad before making the comment.

"There are three categories of Jihad in Islam. The first is doing noble things, the second is writing good things while the third is picking up the sword for a just cause," the cleric explained.

Maulana Jawad said that Jihad and terrorism were different.

"Terrorism, though condemnable, is the result of the evil policies of the power countries. It is important to study the causes that have led to rise in terrorist activities and then find a cure to the malaise.

He asked, "But why did Pope single out Muslims? There is bloodshed in Bosnia, yet the Pope is silent. We would like to know why this selective discrimination?" Maulana Khalid Rasheed Firangi Mahali, Naib Iman, Aishbagh Eidgah said that the Pope's statement was being criticised throughout the world. Muslims had started sending letters to the Vatican City, demanding an apology.

"If we do not get a proper response, agitations will intensify," said Gufran at Asafi Mosque. Irfan Ahmad Rizvi, a contractor, said that he was upset with a section of the English media for playing up the issue. "A section of the media did not even bother to write the Prophet's name respectfully and let it go just like that. We never say Mohammed. It's always Prophet Mohammed," Irfan said.

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