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Haneef focus switches to photos

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Paula Doneman

July 22, 2007 12:00am

POLICE are investigating whether detained doctor Mohamed Haneef was part of a planned terrorist attack on a landmark building at the Gold Coast.

Australian Federal Police are examining images of the building and its foundations found among documents and photographs seized in a police raid on the doctor's Southport unit three weeks ago.

The AFP inquiry is looking at documents referring to destroying structures discovered in the raid, law enforcement sources said.

The investigation also is examining information seized in the raid which indicated the Gold Coast doctor planned to leave Australia the day before or after September 11 – the anniversary of the terrorist attacks on New York.

It is understood in his second interview with the AFP last Saturday, Haneef was questioned about photographs of him and his family taken in Queensland and overseas.

Haneef, a registrar at the Gold Coast Hospital since September last year, explained that the images were only tourist shots. Investigators consider some of the photos seized are not ordinary holiday photos.

The AFP investigation is also looking at information that Haneef was one of a group of doctors who had been familiarising themselves with the operation of planes at a Queensland premises.

Haneef, 27, was last week charged with recklessly supporting terrorist activity by providing a mobile phone SIM card to his second cousins, Sabeel and Kafeel Ahmed, both of whom are being held in Britain over the failed terrorist attacks.

Haneef's solicitor Peter Russo said he knew nothing about the investigations into the documents and photographs relating to the Gold Coast building or destroying structures.

"He wasn't questioned about the majority of these matters," Mr Russo said.

"A couple of other questions were asked . . . but not in such a fashion that we could tell what they were talking about.

"Obviously if you're Muslim and you come from India, don't dare take any photos of any structures . . . or that will be interpreted by the Queensland police force of having a sinister intent."

The AFP has been criticised for its handling of the investigation after it was revealed that Haneef's SIM card was not found in the burnt-out Jeep at Glasgow airport after the botched terror attack on June 30, as a Brisbane court was told a week ago.

Instead, the SIM card was discovered eight hours later in Liverpool with Sabeel Ahmed, who is facing the minor charge of withholding information.

Law enforcement sources said AFP agents have downloaded information from four computers in the library of the Gold Coast Coast Hospital where Dr Haneef has worked as a junior registrar since September last year.

The investigators are trolling through 31,000 electronic pages, most of it in Hindi.

A senior source confirmed yesterday that emails between Haneef and the Ahmed brothers in Britain are now seen as possible evidence.

An AFP spokeswoman said Commissioner Mick Keelty would not confirm or deny the allegations as the matter is before the court.

Hours after being granted conditional bail by a Brisbane magistrate on Monday, the Federal Government cancelled Haneef's visa on character grounds.

A hearing will be held in the Federal Court next month to determine whether he will remain in custody while he awaits trial.

Haneef is currently being held at Brisbane's Wolston Correctional Centre.

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