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Sunni extremist group claims Quetta bombing

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Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, a Sunni Muslim extremist group, has claimed responsibility for an attack targeting Shia Muslims in the southwestern Pakistani city of Quetta.

More than 100 people were killed and scores of others wounded in a series of multiple attacks across Pakistan, including at least 81 in the bombing in Quetta.

Bomb explosions and violent deaths rocked Quetta, the Swat Valley in the northwest, and the port city of Karachi on Thursday.

At least 92 people were killed and scores of others wounded in four separate explosions in Quetta, the capital of Balochistan province.

Al Jazeera's Kamal Hyder, reporting from Islamabad, spoke of the main attack on Alamdar Road, a predominantly Hazara Shia Muslim neighbourhood of Quetta.



"In that particular attack, the suicide bomber seemed to have penetrated into a snooker club situated close to a police station and a Shia mosque," he said.

"After the blast the entire building came down. As the rescue teams and journalists rushed to the scene, a second explosion took place."

In addition to the 81 dead, more than 120 people were wounded in the double bombing, said police officer Zubair Mehmood.

Hospitals and a local mortuary were overwhelmed as the dead and wounded arrived throughout the evening. Weeping relatives gathered outside the emergency room at Quetta's Civil Hospital. Inside the morgue, bodies were laid out on the floor.

It was the worst bombing in Balochistan since December, when a car bomb killed at least 19 Shia Muslim pilgrims en route to Iran in Mastung district, about 30km south of Quetta.

Earlier on Thursday, a separate explosion targeted a vehicle belonging to the regional paramilitary Frontier Corps (FC) force, killing at least 11 people. Two officers were among the dead.

Pools of blood, smashed windowpanes and charred pieces of metal littered the street after the blast.

"Eleven people were killed and 30 injured in the blast. [...] it was a crowded place," Mir Zubair Mehmood, Quetta police chief, was quoted as saying by AFP news agency.

Abdul Razzaq, a bomb disposal official, said the device was packed with between 20 and 25kg of explosives, and was detonated by remote control.

Balochistan is the site of a nearly decade-old armed campaign against the Pakistani state.

Rebels in the province want political autonomy and a greater share of profits from the region's wealth of oil and gas deposits. The United Baloch Army, one such rebel group, claimed responsibility for the attack against the paramilitary forces.

Deaths in Swat

In Swat, at least 25 people were killed and 70 wounded after an explosion at a religious gathering on Thursday, according to police officials.

Akhtar Hayat, the regional police chief, said the explosion occurred at a weekly meeting of the local Tableeghi Jamaat at its primary centre in the outskirts of Mingora, the main town in the northwestern district.

There were around 1,500 people listening to the speech of a Muslim leader at the centre when the explosion occurred, he said.

"The explosion occurred due to a bomb. Around five kilograms of explosives were used in the blast," Shafqat Malik, a senior bomb disposal official in Peshawar, told AFP.

The Pakistani Taliban seized much of Swat during a 2007-2009 armed campaign but the army declared the region back under control after an offensive in July 2009.

Karachi shootings

In addition to the deaths in Quetta and Swat, nine people were shot dead in separate incidents in Karachi, Pakistan's largest city and its commercial hub.

Seven people were killed near Dr Nadir Homeopathic Hospital on the Karachi-Hyderabad Superhighway.

Retailers in the area closed their shops in fear of the incident.

A man was also shot in the Gulbahar vicinity while another was killed near Singer Roundabout in Korangi.

Two people were also killed in another shooting near Sir Syed University in Karachi's Gulshan-i-Iqbal neighbourhood.

According to local publication *Dawn News*, the dead were robbers and were shot by police in a fire exchange.