

20 killed in bomb blast at Pak Shia shrine

AP, Islamabad

A suicide bomber set off explosives yesterday in a Shia shrine, killing at least 20 and wounding dozens gathered for a religious festival near the capital.

The motive was not immediately clear, but there are frequent sectarian attacks in Pakistan by extremist elements of the Sunni and minority Shia sects.

An AP photographer at the scene counted at least 20 bodies, many in pieces. An intelligence official said at least 20 people were killed and 150 were wounded.

The bomb ripped through hun-

dreds of worshippers as they were reciting the Quran beneath tents at the Bari Imam shrine at Nurpur outside Islamabad.

"It was like hell," said Syed Muktar Hussain Shah, 40, who had been waiting for a prominent Shia leader, Hamid Moasvi, to address the gathering when the bomb went off. "I fell down ... when I woke up I saw dead bodies around me."

"None of the bodies was intact," said Dr. Wahid Abbas, who helped treat the wounded. "Some had legs blown off, some had their hands blown off."

He and other witnesses said police collected the head of a sus-

pected suicide bomber. Authorities did not immediately confirm that information.

The Shia leader, Moasvi, was not hurt, witnesses said.

Mukhtar Kazmi, who was running a free clinic at the shrine, said it had treated about 200 people.

Police cordoned off the shrine and blocked access roads after the blast. The shrine is about half a mile from the official residence of Pakistan's Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz.

Shia worshippers, weeping and moaning, beat their chests in grief. Some clashed with police after

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Flood situation in Moulvibazar improving

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Moulvibazar

Flood situation in Moulvibazar district has slightly improved, as all the rivers of the district are flowing below the danger level.

Some low-lying areas in the district have been inundated due to rise of water level of Hakaluki haor.

The flash flood hit the district on

Tuesday due to heavy rain and onrush of waters from across the border, inundating 33 unions of

Kamalganj, Rajnagar, Kularia and Borolekha upazilas and marooning about 2,50 lakh people.

Flood waters are still entering the villages of the affected upazilas through the breaches of the Manu river flood protection embankment

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Ctg city BNP meets today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A workers' meeting of Chittagong City BNP will be held at the party office at Nasiman Bhaban this afternoon.

The meeting, the first after the dissolution of the city committee, will chalk out elaborate programmes to observe the death anniversary of BNP's founding chairman and late president Ziaur Rahman.

Convenor of the newly formed convening committee Syed Wahidul Alam MP and member of the committee Fisheries and Livestock Minister Abdurahman Al Noman will attend the meeting to be held at 5:00pm.

Sources said the meeting will also discuss some important issues relating to the formation of a full-fledged committee of Chittagong City BNP and strengthening the

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Ex-AL lawmaker Shamsul Huq passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former lawmaker, language movement veteran and Liberation War

organiser Shamsul Huq passed away yesterday at city's Bir Dem hospital. He was 75.

Shamsul Huq, a senior Awami League (AL) leader from Mymensingh, was suffering from kidney and cardiac problems for a long time and undergoing treatment at Bir Dem hospital.

He said the locals caught and beat up Anis who was hit by two bullets. He died at around 4:30am.

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