

# Living hell of trapped bodies after Pak blast

AFP, Peshawar

As the wounded tried to flee, they were engulfed in flames and buried alive by falling masonry.

With one deafening boom, a congested Pakistan street full of women and children was transformed into hell.

"It was like a massive earthquake. Everything in my shop fell on me. There was so much smoke. When everything fell on me I passed out," clothes shop owner Ali Akbar told AFP from his hospital bed in the city Peshawar.

Rescue workers fished out charred bodies from the debris where a woman was buried in the rubble near a mosque, three buildings and five cars that were destroyed in scenes of armageddon, an AFP reporter said.

Bodies were trapped under huge slabs of concrete and crumbling bricks, the slow rescue heavily constrained by the collapsed buildings, pushing the

death toll ever higher as cranes were mobilised to pluck survivors to safety.

The smouldering wreckage was devastating testament to a routine shopping trip or a pleasurable day out turned into bloody carnage for scores of ordinary families in the historic city of Peshawar and the largest north-west.

"I saw a flash of blue and white light and I was thrown to the other side of the street. I'm surprised I'm alive," said Shahid Khan, 15, who was standing with a popcorn cart on the side of the road when the bomb went off.

"My entire shop fell on me. Smoke filled my face," said Raza Ali, 30, a grocery store owner whose face was badly burnt.

Crowds ran screaming down alleys in the market place, desperate to get away from the congested Meena market, fearing that a second bomb could explode. Others lifted out the casual-

ties, their clothes splattered with blood.

"I was inside my shop. All of a sudden, there was a huge blast. It was dark everywhere. The roof of my shop fell on me, trapping me in the debris. Then I don't know what happened," said another survivor in hospital.

Television footage showed harrowing images. A young man was seen biting his fingers in disgust watching his shop and livelihood go up in flames.

Another person in the crowd repeatedly shouted out name of a loved one, his panic rising with the passing silence. Some were seen rushing out with bundles of their belongings loaded on their backs.

The agony of loss was overwhelming at the hospital, where survivors wept over dead loved ones, crying into mobile phones, with staff struggling to cope with each new consignment of casualties as a state of emergency was declared.



PHOTO: AFP

Pakistani journalists and onlookers record footage of burning shops following a deadly car bomb blast in Peshawar yesterday. The bomb destroyed a packed market Wednesday, slaughtering 86 people and underscoring the blood-drenched scale of the extremist threat as US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visits Islamabad.



PHOTO: AFP

Afghan National Army (ANA) keeps watch as the smouldering Bekhtar guesthouse is seen in the background in Kabul yesterday, where six UN staff were among 12 people killed following the attack.

## Taliban deliver on pre-polls threats in Afghanistan

AFP, Kabul

A deadly attack on central Kabul yesterday has demonstrated once again that no one and nowhere in Afghanistan is safe from a determined Taliban onslaught.

Militant threats to disrupt the upcoming election run-off turned to reality as the death toll in the attack on the Bekhtar Guesthouse used by the United Nations included six of the organisation's international staff.

Afghan officials said three militants wearing explosives-packed vests shot their way into the guesthouse in central Kabul around dawn.

The time of day and the nature of the killings suggest the gunmen went room to room killing foreigners before being assailed by guards and detonating their suicide vests.

In the sixth attack on the heavily-fortified capital in just over two months, the Taliban are demonstrating their ability to breach the tight-

est security and hit their victims hard.

President Hamid Karzai immediately ordered security around international organisations in Kabul boosted as a matter of urgency -- an implication from the top that the violence is not about to stop any time soon, and foreigners are in the Taliban's sights. "They can target anywhere they like, particularly central Kabul, the most secure part of the country," said Haroun Mir, president of Afghanistan's Centre for Research and Policy Studies.

"We are witnessing what we saw before the first round (of the elections)," he told Al Jazeera television. "It is another signal that they will keep their promise to target the elections and certainly there will be more attacks before the elections."

As the siege at the guesthouse was drawing to an end, the luxury Serena Hotel, owned by the Aga Khan and hostelry of choice for foreign dignitaries, came under rocket fire, police said. No one was injured.

## Fibre may keep asthma, diabetes at bay

AFP, Sydney

An apple a day may keep the doctor away but a fibre-filled diet could also hold the key to keeping asthma, diabetes and arthritis at bay, according to Australian research released today.

Scientists at Sydney's Garvan Institute of Medical Research say that fibre not only helps keep people regular, it boosts the immune system so it can better combat inflammatory diseases.

When foods high in fibre, such as dried fruit and beans, reach the gut, bacteria convert them to compounds known as short chain fatty acids. These acids are known to alleviate some inflammatory disease in the bowel.

Researcher Charles Mackay said that the team, which worked with scientists in Australia, the US and Brazil, was able to draw a clearer picture of this relationship, work which has implications for other diseases.

They demonstrated that a molecule used by immune cells and previously shown to bind short chain fatty acids also functioned as an anti-inflammatory.

## Pakistan asked to curb terror against India

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE, Anantnag

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh yesterday said his government was ready to discuss all issues with Pakistan, but asked Islamabad to "curb the activities of those elements that are engaging in terrorism in India."

After underlining that his government was ready to discuss all subjects with Pakistan, he said: "For a productive dialogue it is essential that terrorism must be brought under control."

The prime minister was addressing a public gathering in Urdu before flagging off a new train service linking south Kashmir with Srinagar in the north of the valley.

"I strongly believe that the majority of the people in Pakistan seek good neighbourly and cooperative relations between India and Pakistan. They seek a permanent peace. This is our view as well," he said.

Manmohan Wednesday sought to reach out to the Pakistan government by saying that it was the desire of India and the people of Pakistan to live in peace.

Addressing a mammoth gathering in Anantnag before flagging off a train service between south and north of Jammu and Kashmir, the prime minister, however, underlined that Pakistan needed to curb terrorism directed at India.

"For a productive dialogue it is essential that terrorism must be brought under control," the Pakistan-born prime minister said in Urdu, reading out from a prepared statement.

## BJP needs surgery, says RSS chief

ANI, Jaipur

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) Mohan Bhagwat Tuesday said that the Bharatiya Janata Party needs a complete overhaul to improve its image and performance at the national level.

Bhagwat said this while addressing a gathering of the RSS at Jaipur on Tuesday. The latest remarks, have come from the RSS, the parent ideology of the BJP, after the latter has been routed in all three state assembly elections.

"As far as the BJP is concerned, I don't know what medicine, surgery or chemotherapy they need. They themselves have to diagnose it. If they being a volunteer of RSS need any help in their organisation, we are happy to do it," Bhagwat said.

## US 'turning the page' with Pakistan Says Hillary

AP, Islamabad

On her first visit to Pakistan as secretary of state, Hillary Rodham Clinton yesterday sought to chip away at anti-Americanism in this predominantly Muslim nation, while applauding the government for taking on violent extremist forces.

She also said the Obama administration intends to do more to support Pakistan on a wide range of issues, including economic development, energy generation, education and the environment. She suggested that the administration of former President George W Bush had focused too narrowly on Pakistan's value as an ally in the war on terrorism, neglecting other aspects of the relationship.

"We are turning the page on what has been for the past several years primarily a security, anti-terrorism agenda," she told reporters on the flight from Washington. Anti-terrorism "remains a very high priority, but we also recognise that it's imperative that we broaden our engagement with Pakistan."

In an interview with Pakistan's Dawn TV, she was more pointed in describing what she sees as an obstacle to improving the US image here.



PHOTO: AFP

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton (R) is greeted by Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi (L) at the Foreign Ministry in Islamabad yesterday. Hillary kicked off a visit to Pakistan, fending off criticism of US policies from within a key ally in the war on Islamists and promising new investments.

## Karzai's brother on CIA payroll for last 8 yrs

AFP, Washington

Ahmed Wali Karzai, the brother of the embattled Afghan president and a suspected drug trafficker, has been on the CIA payroll for most of the past eight years, The New York Times reported Tuesday.

The US spy agency pays Karzai for a variety of services, the newspaper said, such as fielding recruits for an Afghan paramilitary force operating at the CIA's direction in and around his home city of Kandahar, a Taliban stronghold.

He also helps the CIA contact and sometimes meet Taliban followers.

Karzai, who is said to have ties to Afghanistan's lucrative illegal opium trade, has a "wide-ranging" relationship with the CIA, the Times said, citing US officials.

## Mohiuddin not present at spot

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The court made the comment after it found a few of Mamun's arguments irrelevant.

Mamun quoted from a witness statement that said AKM Mohiuddin was bringing Bangabandhu down to the ground floor of his house on the day of the killing, and Maj (ret'd) Bazlul Huda and Maj (ret'd) Noor Chowdhury shot and killed Bangabandhu on the stairs with their sten guns.

The statement also said Bazlul Huda asked Mohiuddin to step aside on the stairs as he was bringing Bangabandhu downstairs, and then Huda and Noor shot Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Mamun argued if the statement was true, Mohiuddin would have been killed by the bullets along with Bangabandhu, as the stairwell was not very wide, and the fact that Mohiuddin was not hit by bullets proves that the witness statement is not true. He went on to argue that his client AKM Mohiuddin was actually not even present at the place of occurrence on August 15, 1975.

Five condemned convicts in the case -- dismissed army personnel Syed Farooqur Rahman, Sultan Shahriar Rashid Khan, Mohiuddin Ahmed, AKM Mohiuddin, and Bazlul Huda are now behind bars.

Four of them, except AKM Mohiuddin, were caught during the last Awami League regime. AKM Mohiuddin was brought back to Bangladesh from the US in June 2007 by the im-

mediate past caretaker government.

Mamun yesterday made the arguments while placing submissions on behalf of AKM Mohiuddin before a five-member full bench of the Appellate Division of Supreme Court headed by Justice Md Tafazzul Islam during the 18th day's hearing of the convicts' appeals.

At the start of his arguments, Mamun told the court that his client's yesterday's submissions were the first for him, as he had been tried in the lower court in absentia.

The court questioned Mamun how could his client possibly make submissions while he was absconding abroad, and added that Mamun would also not be in the court if his client was not extradited back to the country.

Mamun said his client's name was not mentioned in the first information report of the case, but later his name was added. He argued that AKM Mohiuddin is a victim of misidentification since there are three Mohiuddins accused in the case. One is Lt Col (ret'd) Mohiuddin Ahmed of the army artillery corps, another is Maj (ret'd) AKM Mohiuddin of the lancer corps, and there is a third Mohiuddin who took the body of Bangabandhu to Tungipara for burial.

The court asked Mamun whether his client was implicated in the case by force, and asked him to place submissions on which points his client might get relief.

Mamun said Habibdar

(ret'd) Qudus Sikdar, a prosecution witness, claimed that Bazlul Huda shot Sheikh Kamal, and then AKM Mohiuddin along with his force went upstairs. Qudus also claimed, when Bangabandhu saw people downstairs as Mohiuddin was bringing him down through the stairs, Bangabandhu asked them, "What do you want?" Then Bazlul Huda said something in English, and Mohiuddin stepped aside on the stairs, and Huda and Noor shot Bangabandhu to death.

Mamun said the complainant in this case Muhitul Islam, and security officer of Bangabandhu's house Nurul Islam were wounded by 'chharra guli' (shotgun pellets) of the sten guns (sic), but those did not hit his client AKM Mohiuddin.

The court retorted by asking Mamun why he was talking about 'chharra guli' of sten guns, and admonished him again by telling him to speak with evidence.

The court added that AKM Mohiuddin was a trained member of the army, not a novice, and he knew very well about how sten guns and bullets work.

The court asked Mamun whether he saw the stairwell of Bangabandhu's house and whether he measured the width and length of the stairwell where Bangabandhu was killed, and then said his arguments were hypothetical and the country's apex court is not a place for such arguments.

Mamun replied saying he

was pointing out the contradictions in the witness statement, on the basis of which his client was convicted.

The court ordered Mamun to conclude his submissions by today.

Earlier in the day, Advocate Abdur Razzaque Khan concluded placing his arguments on behalf of convict Sultan Shahriar Rashid Khan.

He said his client was not a beneficiary of the killing of Bangabandhu and his family, and he was not involved in the incidents.

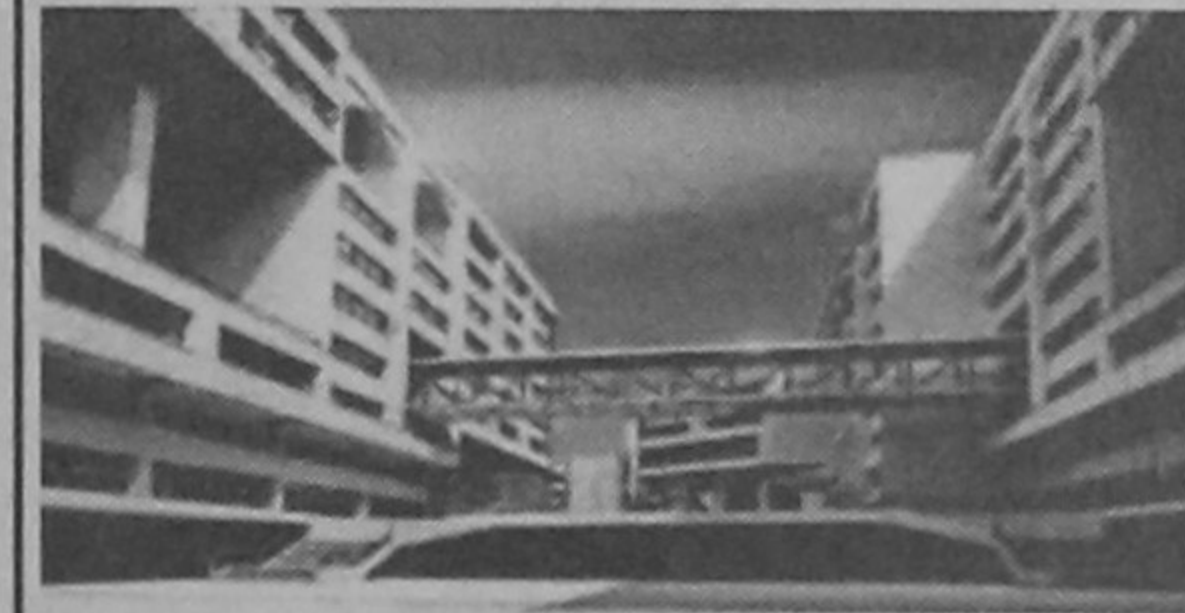
The hearing is scheduled to resume at 9:30am today.

## UN investigator warns US on use of drones

AP, United Nations

A UN human rights investigator warned the United States Tuesday that its use of unmanned warplanes to carry out targeted executions may violate international law.

Philip Alston said that unless the Obama administration explains the legal basis for targeting particular individuals and the measures it is taking to comply with international humanitarian law, which prohibits arbitrary executions, "it will increasingly be perceived as carrying out indiscriminate killings in violation of international law."



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