

Lahore blast: Mostly women, children among 72 killed during Easter celebration; Modi calls up Sha

28/03/2016 12:45 by admin

Lahore: The death toll in the horrific Taliban suicide bombing at a popular public park where Christians were celebrating Easter in this eastern Pakistani city rose to 72 today.

A large number of people including Christians were present in the Gulshan-e-Iqbal Park in Iqbal Town area here when the blast occurred yesterday, leaving many in a pool of blood.

"The toll has risen to 72. The rescue operation is continuing," a rescue official of the Punjab Province government told Express News.

The park is located in a posh-locality in Lahore, the hometown of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. The city is comparatively peaceful in an otherwise violence-wracked Pakistan.

Those killed included women and children. Over 300 people were also injured in the attack and many of them were in a critical condition.

The brutal attack by a suicide bomber -- believed to be in his 20s -- was claimed by the Jamaatul Ahrar, a splinter group of the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).

Several leaders, including Prime Minister Sharif and Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf chief Imran Khan, have condemned the blast. Christians leaders also strongly condemned the attack.

Meanwhile, all schools under the All Pakistan Private Schools Federation were closed today. Punjab Chief Minister Shehbaz Sharif has announced three-day mourning after the suicide attack.

Army has joined rescue efforts. An emergency has been declared in city hospitals and appeals have been made to people to donate blood.

Eyewitnesses said body parts were scattered all around the park. They said there was no security around the park. The crowd was "unusually large" because of Easter. Following the blast, Chief of Army Staff General Raheel Sharif chaired a high-level meeting in Rawalpindi.

According to the ISPR, the army chief directed the authorities concerned to find the perpetrators of the Lahore blast at the earliest.

Narendra Modi calls Nawaz Sharif, condoles deaths

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has called up his Pakistani counterpart Nawaz Sharif and offered his "deep condolences" to the victims of the terror attack in Lahore park blast.

"PM Narendra Modi called Pakistan PM Nawaz Sharif to express his deep condolences at the terrorist attack in #Lahore," Ministry of External Affairs Spokesperson Vikas Swarup tweeted.

Terming the attack as cowardly for targeting women and children, Modi underlined the need for 'uncompromising

effortsâ€™ to fight terror. "During the conversation, PM Narendra Modi underlined the need for uncompromising efforts to fight against terrorism."

"Heard about the blast in Lahore. I strongly condemn it. My condolences to families of the deceased & prayers with the injured," PM Modi tweeted earlier in the day.