

Taliban suicide attack near Nawaz Sharif's residence kills 9, injures 25

15/03/2018 02:55 by admin

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Taliban suicide bomber attacked a police check-post near the residence of Pakistan's ousted prime minister Nawaz Sharif in Lahore.

Lahore: A teenaged Taliban suicide bomber attacked a police check-post near the residence of Pakistan's ousted prime minister Nawaz Sharif in Lahore, killing nine people, including five policemen, police said.

According to rescue officials, the blast took place last night close to a police check post, a few kilometers from the palatial residence of the Sharif family, and next to the congregation of the Tableeghi Jamaat centre.

"Five policemen - two inspectors and three constables - are among nine persons killed in the blast," Rescue 1122 spokesman Jam Sajjad told PTI.

Around 14 policemen are among 25 injured. The condition of four policemen is stated to be critical, Sajjad said.

The rescue ambulances have shifted the injured to the Sharif medical complex and other nearby hospitals.

Inspector General Police Punjab Arif Nawaz confirmed that the blast was a suicide attack carried out by a teenaged boy who blew himself up near the checkpost.

Deputy Inspector General Police Lahore Dr Haider Ashraf said: "A teenaged boy blew himself up at the check post set up close to the Tableeghi centre where at least 14 or so cops were present".

However, he did not give the exact age of the boy.

He said the "police personnel" were the target of the blast. "The condition of some policemen is critical," he said.

"The body parts of the bomber have also been recovered," the officer said.

It was such a powerful blast that its sound was heard several kilometers from the site. A fire ball was seen after the blast at the Nisar Police Check Post.

Abid Hussain, an injured constable, told journalists that he had been deputed at the entry point of the check-post to frisk those passing through the area.

"I saw a young boy who was trying to enter (the venue) and as soon as my colleague stopped him, I heard a powerful blast," Hussain said, adding that he had lost consciousness after that and came to later at a hospital.

Some reports said the Tahreek-i-Taliban Pakistan has claimed the responsibility of the blast and the banned outfit has threatened more attacks on police.

The suicide attack took place a week before the semi-finals of the Pakistan Super League in Lahore.

"The PSL semi-finals will be held in Lahore as per schedule as we have made all security arrangements in this regard," Ashraf said.

Pakistan Rangers quick response force has reached the spot and cordoned off the area along with the police.

President Mamnoon Hussain condemned the attack, saying such cowardly acts could not deter the government's resolve to fight terrorism.

Punjab Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif sought a report from the IGP and vowed to take the terrorists and their facilitators to task.

This is the first explosion targeting the provincial capital in 2018. Lahore experienced multiple terror attacks in 2017 that killed more than 60 people.

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