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Two Suicide Bombings Outside Pakistan Weapons Plant Kill 59

By Robin Mcdowell The Associated Press

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan — Suicide bombers killed 59 people at an arms factory Thursday in one of Pakistan's deadliest terrorism attacks, adding to turmoil from political squabbling that is threatening to tear apart the ruling coalition now that Pervez Musharraf has quit as president.

Hours before the blasts, a key party in the coalition threatened to quit in a power struggle that has dismayed many Pakistanis and the country's Western backers.

The twin bombings, which also wounded 70 people, hit one of Pakistan's most sensitive military installations and underlined the threat posed by Islamic militants to the Muslim world's only nuclear-armed nation, as well as its war-ravaged neighbor, Afghanistan.

Workers were streaming through two gates of the tightly guarded factory in Wah, 20 miles west of Islamabad, during a shift change when the bombers attacked. The force of the explosions knocked many people to the ground and sprayed others with shrapnel.

"I looked back and saw the limbs of my colleagues flying through the air," said Shahid Bhatti, 29, his clothes soaked in blood.

"It was like a doomsday," said Ghaffar Hussain, whose nephew was killed. "We are finished; we are ruined," he said, tears rolling down his face.

Emergency workers with plastic bags on their hands lifted mangled and blackened corpses onto stretchers, while forensic teams picked through scraps of flesh and scattered shoes.

Tanvir Lodhi of the Pakistan Ordnance Factories said 59 people died. Seventy others were wounded, said Mohammed Azhar, a hospital official. About 25,000 people work at the complex, making rifles, machine guns, ammunition, grenades, and tank and artillery shells.

Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani appealed to lawmakers to urgently draw up a national strategy against terrorism "even if you have to sit together for a week."

President Bush called Gilani to express sympathy for those killed in recent terrorist attacks in Pakistan.





THE ASSOCIATED PRESS A Pakistani woman looks over shoes of victims of two suicide bombings at a hospital in Wah, a garrison city about 20 miles west of the capital of Islamabad. Two suicide bombers blew themselves up Thursday at the gates of Pakistan's main weapons complex, killing 59 people and wounding 70, officials said.

