

Four children among five killed in Srinagar terror attack

At least five people, including four children, were killed and 22 people wounded in a grenade attack by terrorists in a busy bus yard here Thursday, police said. Most of the victims were migrant workers from other north Indian states.

The police said separatist guerrillas hurled a grenade which fell near one of the ticket counters in the main bus depot at Batamaloo, barely half a kilometre from the civil secretariat in this summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir.

A large number of migrant workers and their family members were milling around.

'Three children died on the spot,' said a police officer. He said a critically injured woman and a child succumbed to their injuries in SMHS Hospital where all the injured were taken.

Two of the four children killed in the blast have been identified as 12-year-old Khusboo and nine-year-old Adil, daughter and son of Muhammad Afroze from Bihar, said the police officer.

Twenty labourers were among the 22 wounded in the explosion, he added.

Unconfirmed reports said seven of the injured were Hindu pilgrims who had returned from the Amarnath cave shrine in south Kashmir. However, the police denied the reports.

'All the injured were migrant workers and none of them was an Amarnath pilgrim,' a police press statement said.

The intercity bus depot from where buses ply to various towns and villages in the Kashmir valley was thronged by hundreds of commuters when the explosion occurred.

The blast triggered panic and confusion as the police and paramilitary Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) surrounded the depot.

The area was surrounded immediately by the police and CRPF for searches. However, no one was detained.

Ambulances with wailing sirens and police vehicles were seen ferrying the injured to hospital.

'I saw the injured, including children, crying for help. There was panic all around and everyone fled for safety,' said Abdul Rashid, a shopkeeper.

No group has claimed responsibility for the grenade attack which came just five days after seven soldiers were killed and 20 wounded in a massive explosion on the Srinagar-Uri highway.

Terrorist activities have picked up in Jammu and Kashmir since last week and 18 people have been killed and about 60 injured in a series of attacks.

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