Sunday Hindustan Times
HT

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Jehadis, to prove a point

- **MOTIVE:** Possibly to coincide with scheduled sentencing of accused in Red Fort attack trial
- **STILL POTENT:** Terror groups want to prove post-quake strike capability
- **POLICE SWOOP:** Late night raids of guesthouses in walled city; plastic explosives seized, 10 held

5:38 pm | Paharganj
First blast outside jewellers shop at Nehru market

5:52 pm | Okhla Phase I
Bag spotted on DTC bus, explodes when thrown out

5:56 pm | Sarojini Nagar
Blast in mini-market triggers off cylinder blast, fire

DELHI, 29/10

City's worst terror attacks kill 57, injure 153 just before Diwali

HT Metro Bureau
New Delhi, October 29

BY 7 p.m. on Saturday, two days before Diwali, most marketplaces in Delhi wore a deserted look. Paharganj and Sarojini Nagar, two of the big shopping hubs, were still noisy — but with wails and the blaring siren of the ambulance.

Delhi was hit thrice between 5.30 p.m. and 6 p.m., in what seems to be a coordinated terrorist strike which left at least 57 dead and 153 injured. It was the biggest terrorist strike ever in Delhi.

It came within five months of the bomb blasts at two cinema halls and unlike the last time, the Delhi Police had been on high alert following intelligence inputs of a possible strike.

Intelligence agencies say the Saturday blasts were carried out by terrorist outfits based in PoK. "They were desperate to make their presence felt after the earthquake," an officer said. The blasts are also being linked to the court judgment in the Red Fort attack case, the sentence of which was to be made on Saturday but was deferred to Monday.

PM Manmohan Singh convened a meeting of the crisis management group late on Saturday night

MORE ON Pages 2, 3 and 4

The targets had been chosen carefully for maximum impact — a jam-packed DTC bus and the markets in Paharganj and Sarojini Nagar.

The first blast took place at 5.38 p.m. in front of the Chhah Tooti Chowk in Paharganj's Nehru Market. Police suspect the bomb was planted on a chaat stall or a rickshaw outside a jewellery shop.

But it was at Sarojini Nagar's mini market where the casualty was maximum — 37. Forensic experts were investigating whether it was a cylinder blast, but the police said the timing and location suggested the involvement of terrorists.

By evening, the administration was fighting on several fronts — including blood shortage in hospitals. Raids were on to nab suspects and security was beefed up at DTC and Metro. Plastic explosives were seized from a house in Chandni Chowk and 10 persons were detained.

The case has been handed over to the Special Cell of Delhi Police. After a series of meetings, it was decided that additional reinforcements would be deployed for the rest of the festive season extending till Christmas.

ARVIND YADAV/HT

A man injured in the Paharganj blast being rushed to the Ram Manohar Lohia hospital in Delhi on Saturday evening. Some of the injured were stated to be in critical condition.

Black bags make markets war zones

NEHRU MARKET, PAHARGANJ

THE MARKET was chock-a-block with shoppers when the bomb went off, just outside a jeweller's. People as far as 200 metres away were shaken; the blast was heard in offices on K.G. Marg.

Those in the immediate vicinity were blown to pieces. Windows were shattered, doors and pillars collapsed. The place resembled a war-zone.

People ran frantically looking for loved ones. Gurpreet Singh was looking for her uncle who had come shopping. The blast gave Raghunath Sikka, whose cosmetic shop was across the road from the bomb, a massive heart attack.

V.K. Chawla left his Israeli customer and rushed out. "A woman's sari was on fire, and we doused it with a sheet. Another lady's hand and leg caught fire. She went to the hospital in a bad state."

ANANDMAYEE MARG, OKHLA PH I

AROUND 5:52 PM, Abdul Gafar, a security guard at Anandmayee Marg, Okhla Industrial Area, Phase I, heard a loud blast. He rushed out to see smoke outside a DTC bus and people running helter-skelter. "Someone said that there was a blast in the bus. We saw two men with blood on their face and clothes. There was complete chaos. Shards of glass were all around," he says.

Eyewitnesses said there were about 40 passengers in the Outer Ring Road bus which was coming from Uttam Nagar terminus. Ten people were injured in the blast.

DTC's Yashpal Singh said, "The last panel of the bus bore the maximum damage. Window panes on the left side of the bus were completely shattered."

MINI-MARKET, SAROJINI NAGAR

AT 5.56 PM, an unattended black bag in front of a juice-cum-chaat stall in the mini market, teeming with women and children, went off. "I was close by when I noticed one of the chaat-stall boys pointing towards a black bag and asking if it belonged to anyone. I asked him to move away as it could contain an explosive… The next thing I saw was the bag blew up and the boy was hurled several metres in the air," recalls Satinder Pal Sharma.

At least 37 people were killed, 23 injured and a few buildings developed cracks. The blast triggered a fire, leading to an LPG cylinder going off which further aggravated the fire.

Police called it a cylinder blast, but eye-witnesses spoke of an unattended black bag.

THE CHAOS

'People walked around in flames'

ARVIND YADAV/HT

The scene at RML hospital.

HT Metro Bureau
New Delhi, October 29

HAD IT not been for Buddh Prakash, the alert conductor of the DTC bus near Okhla Phase I, at least 40 more lives could have been lost. Prakash noticed a bag lying under a seat and immediately asked the driver to halt the bus. He then told the passengers to get down immediately. Unfortunately, Kuldeep, the driver, panicked; he picked up the bag and hurled it outside. That's when the bomb exploded, injuring at least 10 people.

IN THE melee that followed the Paharganj bomb blast, many of the injured found themselves separated from their friends and family who were also hurt in the blast.

While patients were first taken to Lady Hardinge Medical College, closest to the blast site, the more critically injured were moved to Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital. "My friend Titu is admitted in LHMC, his wife, we just discovered, was taken to RML," said Amit Kumar, a Karol Bagh resident.

At RML, an official tried to reunite a two-year-old with his mother. The child, severely injured in the blast, was separated from her after the rescue team took her to LHMC.

AT SAROJINI Nagar, shopkeeper Satinder Pal Sharma recalls the scene after the blast. "It was like people in flames walking all around us — their clothes were torn off. Women and men were walking in a daze in a semi-nude condition with burn injuries all over their bodies. All that we shopkeepers did was to wrap bed sheets around the victims and help them on to PCR vans and ambulances," he said.

Welcome the Goddess of wealth with purity
TANISHQ
Turn to HT City page 13

Engineer held

THE FBI arrested an Indian-born engineer who helped design the US's B-2 stealth bomber for "selling the secret tech to foreign nations". **P16**

Natwar foxed

FOREIGN MINISTER Natwar Singh termed reports, naming him a beneficiary of kickbacks for the UN's Oil-for-Food programme in Iraq, as "baseless and untrue". **P8**

Train derails

AT LEAST 100 people were killed when a passenger train derailed and plunged into a swollen rivulet in Nalgonda district of Andhra Pradesh early on Saturday. **P6**

TODAY: 90 pages, including 28 pages of *Brunch*, 14 pages of *HT City* and 24 pages of *HT Matrimonials* and *HT Commercial*. Vol. IV No. 43. **HT netpoll and Weather Report:** p4

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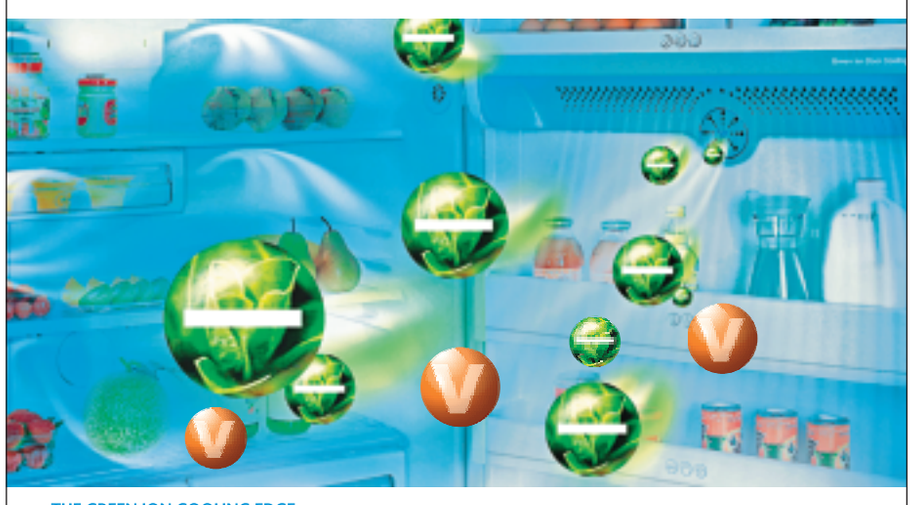

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