

# Index

## In the 64-page NEWSPAPER

### Trouble for David Laws

Chief Secretary to the Treasury apologises after claiming £40,000 to rent rooms from his partner

PAGES 4-5

### It's festival season

Know your Womad Nomads from your Glastonberries? Alice-Azania Jarvis provides a people-watcher's guide to summer's hottest events

PAGES 12-13

NEWS	2-23
WORLD	25-33
OPINION	35-43
OBITUARIES	44-45
WEATHER	46
BUSINESS	47-51
YOUR MONEY	52-61
PUZZLES & GAMES	62-63
CONCISE CROSSWORD	SPORT, 20

## In the 20-page Sport section

### World Cup countdown

Rio Ferdinand on England's last friendly before South Africa – and the men facing a summer on the sidelines

PAGES 2-3

### Premiership final

Chris Hewett meets Alex Goode, Saracens' workhorse fullback with thoroughbred skills

PAGES 12-13

FOOTBALL	2-8
TENNIS	9
CRICKET	10-11
RUGBY UNION	12-14
RACING	17-19

©Published by Independent Print Limited, 2 Derry Street, London W8 5HF, and printed at Trinity Mirror Printing, St Albans Road, Watford, Belfast Telegraph, 124-144 Royal Avenue, Belfast, Hollinwood Avenue, Oldham, and Cardonald Park, Glasgow. Back issues available from Historic Newspapers, 0844 770 7684. Saturday 29 May 2010. Registered as a newspaper with the Post Office

## Cover story

# Worshippers slaughtered in deadly 'final warning'

By Omar Waraich in Islamabad and Jerome Taylor

QAMAR SULEMAN had just left his house for Friday prayers in Lahore's Garhi Shahu neighbourhood when gunfire and explosions erupted at the end of his street. As a member of the Ahmadis, a heavily persecuted minority Islamic sect that hardliners deem to be heretics, he instantly feared the worst.

He ran towards the Darul Zikr mosque, where scores of his friends and relatives were gathered, arriving just in time to see the gunmen claim their first victims. "The first people they shot were the boys outside the mosque who were in charge of security," he told *The Independent*. "They were just young boys. They weren't armed in any way."

It was part of a brazen double-pronged assault yesterday on the Ahmadi sect. Suicide bombers and men

wielding AK-47s and grenades stormed two Lahore mosques within minutes of each other, slaughtering at least 80 people and injuring some 120.

Police said that at least seven attackers were involved, including three bombers and a gunman mounted atop a minaret who sprayed bullets into the crowds of worshippers below. "It was like a war going on around me," said Luqman Ahmed, who was at the second mosque in the Model Town neighbourhood. "I kept on praying, 'May God save me from this hell.'"

The attack on that mosque, near the centre of Pakistan's second city, ended fairly quickly, with commandos storming the building to find scores of dead bodies on different floors. Two of the four gunmen are thought to have escaped.

In Garhi Shahu, the death toll is thought to be higher. Three militants held several people hostage inside the

mosque in a siege that lasted four hours. "They fought the police for some time, but on seeing they were being defeated they exploded themselves," said Sajjad Bhutta, Lahore's top police official.

The attacks were a brutal reminder that despite Pakistan's recent offensive in the tribal areas near the Afghan border, militants still have the ability to strike deep inside the country.

The identity of the attackers remains unclear, though it is widely suspected to have been the work of Punjabi extremists linked to the Pakistani Taliban and associated with al-Qa'ida.

"This was the work of local militants," Salmaan Taseer, the governor of Punjab, told *The Independent*. However, police said at least one of the attackers was a Pashto-speaking teenager from the tribal areas.

Several media outlets also received a text message of responsibility from the Pakistani Taliban and the "Punjabi

wing" of al-Qa'ida, a hitherto-unknown group. "This is a final warning to the [Ahmadis]," said the chilling message, "Leave Pakistan or prepare for death at the hands of Muhammad's devotees."

The Ahmadi sect is perhaps the worst treated of Pakistan's long-suffering minority groups. In the 1970s, bowing to pressure from hardliners, Pakistan declared them to be non-Muslims. Ever since, they have suffered periodic attacks, with many – including the current spiritual leader – forced to flee the country. But yesterday's twin attacks caused the largest loss of life suffered by the sect in a single day.

It showed a broadening of the militants' targets. Similar coordinated attacks have scarred Lahore throughout Pakistan's three-year wave of terror but they usually focus on security installations or personnel, not minority groups. "The blurring of lines between the Taliban and Sunni sectarian militants places heterodox communities like the Ahmadis in double jeopardy," said Ali Dayan Hasan of Human Rights Watch.

A war of words broke out across Pakistan's political spectrum as opponents blamed the provincial Punjab government, led by former prime minister Nawaz Sharif's younger brother Shahbaz, for having allegedly been too soft on militant groups in Punjab.

"I believe they have a soft-peddling policy because these militants are their supporters," said Mr Taseer, who was appointed as governor by President Asif Ali Zardari and is a fierce opponent of the Sharifs.

Ahsan Iqbal, a senior leader of Mr Sharif's party, hit back. "Taseer and others are just trying to politicise the issue," he said. "We condemn this attack in the strongest words, it is sheer madness. No religion permits such attacks on any place of worship ... We have no tolerance for any terrorists."

Leaders of the Ahmadi community, many of whom have been based in Britain since they fled Pakistan in the early 1980s, called on the Pakistani authorities to do more to protect minority religions from violent extremists. "Ahmadi Muslims epitomise the peaceful practice of Islam and to target them highlights that extremists will leave no stone unturned in their quest to spread terror," said Rafiq Hayat, President of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community UK.

Back in Lahore, Mr Suleman was in shock. "We are a peaceful community. How can you kill people as they pray?"

## A brutal escalation of sectarian violence

### Comment

By Omar Waraich



Yesterday's massacre was a brutal escalation of sectarian violence in Pakistan's largest and wealthiest province: Punjab.

In the past year, attacks have spread as outlawed hard-line Sunni terror groups have re-emerged. But the latest assault, with its multiple targets and closely co-ordinated execution, is an approach that has usually been targeted at security personnel rather than religious minorities – and so marks a raising of the stakes.

Last August, masked gunmen laid siege to a colony of Christians

in the town of Gojra. Families were forced to flee as 45 homes were set ablaze, and after the assault, nine people lay dead. Last month three members of the Ahmadi community were killed and others subject to armed robberies in the city of Faisalabad.

Blame for both was cast on the Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP), a vicious sectarian group that started life attacking Pakistan's Shias and is now central to a network of militant groups linked to the Taliban. Its even nastier offshoot, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) is widely considered to be al-Qa'ida's franchise in Pakistan.

Yet far from taking on these groups, the provincial Punjab government has displayed dangerous indulgence. Earlier this

year, its law minister toured the town of Jhang alongside the SSP's leader, courting votes in a local by-election.

Yesterday's attack was widely suspected to have been the work of militants closely aligned with the SSP. When al-Qa'ida arrived in the western borderlands, hard-line Sunni outfits like the SSP and LeJ provided them infrastructure: a steady supply of recruits and a network across the country.

An army offensive in Punjab is unlikely to work and may even inflame the problem. But there is broad support for a concerted police effort against the SSP and like-minded groups. For that to happen, however, the provincial Punjab government will have to grasp the urgency of the problem.

# The Edun Project

Ali Hewson – aka Mrs Bono – talks about her new charity fashion range, the African school which inspired her, and life with a superstar

## THE NEW REVIEW

TRAVEL  
THE BEAUTIFUL  
INSPIRATION  
FOR 'UNDER  
MILK WOOD'



SPORT  
THE DULL MONTY:  
WHY THE RYDER  
CUP CAPTAIN IS  
PLAYING SAFE