**Assassinated Pakistani Minister Was on Watchlist for Retaliation: Report**

**Lahore:** A Pakistani provincial minister killed in a suicide bomb attack had been warned he was a target for retaliation by a militant after police killed the leader of the radical sectarian group last month.  
  
Punjab Home Minister Shuja Khanzada was among at least 20 people killed at his political office near his hometown of Attock, about 80 km west of the capital, Islamabad, yesterday. A Pakistani provincial minister killed in a suicide bomb attack had been warned he was a target for retaliation by a militant after police killed the leader of the radical sectarian group last month.  
  
Mr Khanzada had told Reuters that police had cautioned him to increase security and restrict his movements following the killing of Lashkar-e-Jhangvi chief Malik Ishaq in a shootout with police on July 29.

  Two days after Ishaq's killing, Mr Khanzada said that he, along with at least 20 other top politicians and senior bureaucrats in Punjab province, had been told that they could be targeted in reprisal attacks.  
  
A Punjab police official, Haider Ashraf, said police had increased security at major government installations, issued advisories to potential targets and increased the number of checkpoints across the province following Ishaq's killing.  
  
"Obviously they are always trying to hit us, and after Malik Ishaq's killing the threat was definitely heightened," Mr Ashraf said.  
  
Police have said that Ishaq, who for years lead Lashkar-e-Jhangvi on a spree of deadly bombings and gun attacks on minority Shia Muslims, was killed in a shootout during a raid as he tried to escape.  
  
Others have said his death bore the hallmarks of an extrajudicial killing.  
  
After yesterday's suicide bombing, two smaller offshoot militant groups claimed responsibility for killing Khanzada, but police, in a preliminary report today, identified Lashkar-e-Jhangvi as well as fellow militants the Pakistani Taliban as prime suspects.  
  
Two suicide bombers affiliated with the Taliban carried out the bombing at Mr Khanzada's office, according to a provincial government official familiar with the report, who spoke on condition of anonymity as he was not authorised to speak to the media.  
  
Two additional suicide bombers had been deputed to Lahore, the provincial capital, to attack Mr Khanzada's residence, the official said, but they were recalled after the Attock attack.  
  
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