

QUETTA: Boxing Olympian and Deputy Director of Pakistan Sports Board Quetta centre Syed Abrar Hussain was shot dead on Thursday. Police termed an “apparent” case of sectarian killing. Abrar Hussain, who was born on February 9, 1961 in Quetta, had represented Pakistan in the 1984, 1988 and 1992

Olympic Games. In addition, he had won several accolades for the country, including the 1985 South Asian Games gold medal in Dhaka, as well as the 1990 Asian Games gold in Beijing.

The boxer was also the recipient of the Sitara-e-Imtiaz and was awarded the President’s Gold Medal in 1991. Overall, Hussain had won 11 gold, six silver and five bronze medals at national and international events during his illustrious career.

According to eyewitnesses, he was driving home after offering prayers when some men riding a motorbike opened fire on his vehicle. “It could be an incident of sectarian targeted killing, but investigations are under way to trace the culprits,” said DIG (operations) Hamid Shakil.

The Olympian belonged to the Shia community, more than 12 members of which have fallen prey to sectarian violence over the past two months. However, so far no group has claimed responsibility for Hussain’s murder. His body was later shifted to the CMH hospital to discourage protests.

Commenting on the incident, Hussain’s colleague Naeem Akhat, said: “I was at the Ayub Stadium when someone told me Hussain was lying injured near the main gate. He had no enmity with anyone.”

“Our national heroes are being brutally murdered at public places. I have yet to see the police arrest anyone responsible for such killings,” said Mohammad Ali, one of Hussain’s trainees. Ali said Hussain had refused to transfer to Islamabad because he wanted to serve the people of Quetta.

During his last interview, which was published in the Daily Express on June 10, Hussain had expressed serious concern over the deteriorating law and order situation in Balochistan, particularly the rise in targeted killings in Quetta. “I am upset and distressed because of the worsening law and order situation which has left a negative impact on sports activities in the province,” he said.

Meanwhile, the country’s boxing fraternity expressed utter shock over Hussain’s murder. The Pakistan Boxing Federation (PBF) termed his murder an irreparable loss to the sport. “Abrar

Boxing Olympian shot dead in Quetta

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was a legend,” PBF Secretary Akram Khan said. “It’s a huge shock.”

Pakistan’s most successful boxer Mohammad Waseem was also dejected. “It’s a huge loss,” said Waseem, who clinched the Commonwealth Games bronze medal last year. “He used to give us valuable tips.” The PBF has postponed upcoming national tournaments including the NBP National Ranking Tournament which was to start in Quetta from Friday, as well as the Youth Boxing Tournament in Karachi.

Credit: Express Tribune