

800 die in Baghdad shrine stampede

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1 September, 2005

THE ARTICLE

800 die in Baghdad shrine stampede

BNE: Another tragedy hit Baghdad yesterday when at least 800 people died in a stampede. The victims were mostly women and children. They were among hundreds of thousands of Shiite Muslim pilgrims, who were walking to the Khadimiya shrine to attend a religious festival. The stampede started when rumors spread that a suicide bomber was in the crowds of worshippers. People panicked and quickly tried to escape. Thousands of people fell into the Tigris River resulting in the overwhelming loss of life.

Iraqi Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari has declared a three-day period of mourning. Politicians were blaming each other for the deaths. Shiite festivals regularly attract huge crowds and are often targeted by Sunni extremists. Some leading Shiites have accused Sunni groups of trying to create divisions between Iraq's Shiite and Sunni populations. Many in Iraq feel Sunnis are trying to start a civil war. The tragedy is the single biggest loss of life in Iraq since the US-led invasion.

WARM-UPS

1. IRAQ NEWS: Do you often follow news of Iraq? What do you think about what's happening there every day? Do you ever hear good news coming out of Iraq?

2. PEOPLE AND PLACES: What do you know about the following people and places that are often in the news on Iraq? What part might they play in Iraq's future?

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| • Sunni | • Muktada al-Sadr |
| • Shiite | • Jalal Talabani |
| • Kurd | • Al-Qaeda |
| • Abu Musab al-Zarqawi | • George W. Bush |
| • Saddam Hussein | • Other _____ |

3. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

Tragedy / Baghdad / stampede / religious festival / pilgrims / rumors / panic / Tigris River / mourning / Shiite / Sunni / civil war / US-led invasion

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

4. TRAGEDY: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "tragedy". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

5. GOOD NEWS: Here is some good news that might be printed in newspapers in the future. What do you think of these headlines? Are they possible?

- Iraqi people thank US troops
- No bombings in Iraq for 6 months
- President George W. Bush speaks in front of Iraqi parliament
- Iraq and Israel sign peace deal
- Coalition forces leave Iraq after security returns
- Iraq becomes world's largest oil producer
- Saddam Hussein sentenced to life in prison
- Al-Qaeda declares new Iraq a success

6. QUICK DEBATE: Students A think Iraq will be in a state of chaos for at least a decade. Students B think life in Iraq will become normal after elections take place. Change partners often.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- | | |
|--|-------|
| a. Another tragedy struck the people of Baghdad at a religious festival. | T / F |
| b. The victims were mainly Iraqi policemen. | T / F |
| c. A stampede was triggered by rumors of a suicide bomber. | T / F |
| d. Thousands of people fell into the Tigris River. | T / F |
| e. The Iraqi Prime Minister has cancelled his three morning meetings. | T / F |
| f. Shiite festivals are frequently targeted by Sunni extremists. | T / F |
| g. Many in Iraq feel Shiites are trying to start a civil war. | T / F |
| h. The tragedy is the single biggest loss of life in Iraq in recent years. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|-----------------|------------|
| a. hit | frequently |
| b. mostly | go to |
| c. attend | announced |
| d. spread | accusing |
| e. resulting in | circulated |
| f. declared | struck |
| g. blaming | shocking |
| h. regularly | leading to |
| i. leading | mainly |
| j. overwhelming | top |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| a. Another tragedy hit | mostly women and children |
| b. The victims were | each other for the deaths |
| c. attend | bomber was in the crowds |
| d. rumors spread that a suicide | of mourning |
| e. resulting in the overwhelming | civil war |
| f. a three-day period | Baghdad yesterday |
| g. Politicians were blaming | loss of life |
| h. festivals regularly attract | Shiite and Sunni populations |
| i. create divisions between Iraq's | a religious festival |
| j. trying to start a | huge crowds |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words in the column on the right into the gaps in the text.

800 die in Baghdad shrine stampede

BNE: Another _____ hit Baghdad yesterday when at least 800 people died in a stampede. The _____ were mostly women and children. They were among hundreds of _____ of Shiite Muslim pilgrims, who were walking to the Khadimiya shrine to attend a _____ festival. The stampede started when _____ spread that a _____ bomber was in the crowds of worshippers. People _____ and quickly tried to escape. Thousands of people fell into the Tigris River resulting in the overwhelming _____ of life.

Iraqi Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari has _____ a three-day period of mourning. Politicians were _____ each other for the deaths. Shiite festivals regularly _____ huge crowds and are often _____ by Sunni extremists. Some leading Shiites have accused Sunni groups of trying to _____ divisions between Iraq's Shiite and Sunni populations. Many in Iraq _____ Sunnis are trying to start a civil _____. The tragedy is the single biggest loss of life in Iraq since the US-led _____.

panicked
victims
suicide
religious
tragedy
loss
thousands
rumors

war
attract
create
declared
invasion
targeted
feel
blaming

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words '**civil**' and '**war**'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the gap fill. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT "IRAQ" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about Iraq.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- | | |
|----------------|--------------|
| • hit | • mourning |
| • victims | • blaming |
| • festival | • extremists |
| • rumors | • divisions |
| • escape | • war |
| • overwhelming | • single |

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. What did you think when you first read this headline?
- b. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- c. What were your feelings after you read the article?
- d. Do you think the stampede will lead to more violence?
- e. Why are Sunnis and Shiites fighting each other in Iraq?
- f. Could anything have been done to stop this stampede?
- g. What do you think life is like in Baghdad for ordinary people?
- h. Do you think the situation in Iraq is getting better or worse?
- i. Would you attend a religious event in your own country if terrorist attacks had recently taken place?
- j. Have you ever been in a crowd of tens of thousands of people?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. What should Iraqi politicians do now?
- d. Do you think Sunnis and Shiites will be able to live together and give Iraq a chance for peace?
- e. What do you think al-Qaeda is trying to do in Iraq?
- f. Do you think Iraqi people would prefer the return of Saddam Hussein?
- g. When do you think Iraq will be a peaceful country?
- h. Do you think civil war will start in Iraq?
- i. What advice would you give to George W. Bush over Iraq?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

CITIZEN INTERVIEW: In pairs / groups, write down questions you would like to ask an average Baghdad citizen about his/her life. The following ideas may be useful:

- The Khadimiya shrine stampede
- Sunnis and Shiites
- Al-Qaeda
- Security
- Democracy
- US forces
- Electricity
- Neighbors
- Saddam Hussein
- The future

Take turns in role playing the interviewer and the Baghdad citizen. Change partners and discuss what you heard from previous partners.

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

800 die in Baghdad shrine stampede

BNE: Another _____ hit Baghdad yesterday when at least 800 people died in a stampede. The _____ were mostly women and children. They were among hundreds of thousands of Shiite Muslim pilgrims, who were walking to the Khadimiya shrine to _____ a religious festival. The stampede started when rumors _____ that a suicide bomber was in the crowds of worshippers. People _____ and quickly tried to escape. Thousands of people fell into the Tigris River resulting in the overwhelming _____ of life.

Iraqi Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari has _____ a three-day period of mourning. Politicians were _____ each other for the deaths. Shiite festivals regularly _____ huge crowds and are often targeted by Sunni extremists. Some leading Shiites have _____ Sunni groups of trying to create divisions between Iraq's Shiite and Sunni populations. Many in Iraq _____ Sunnis are trying to start a civil war. The tragedy is the single biggest loss of life in Iraq since the US-led _____.

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information on the Baghdad stampede. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

3. SUNNI AND SHIA: Make a poster explaining the differences between the Shia and Sunni people and religions. What does each of them want in the new Iraq? Show your posters to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all find out about similar things?

4. DIARY / JOURNAL: You are a resident of Baghdad. Write the diary / journal entry for one day in your life. Read what you wrote to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. T b. F c. T d. T e. F f. T g. F h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|-----------------|------------|
| a. hit | struck |
| b. mostly | mainly |
| c. attend | go to |
| d. spread | circulated |
| e. resulting in | leading to |
| f. declared | announced |
| g. blaming | accusing |
| h. regularly | frequently |
| i. leading | top |
| j. overwhelming | shocking |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| a. Another tragedy hit | Baghdad yesterday |
| b. The victims were | mostly women and children |
| c. attend | a religious festival |
| d. rumors spread that a suicide bomber was in the crowds | bomber was in the crowds |
| e. resulting in the overwhelming loss of life | loss of life |
| f. a three-day period of mourning | of mourning |
| g. Politicians were blaming each other for the deaths | each other for the deaths |
| h. festivals regularly attract huge crowds | huge crowds |
| i. create divisions between Iraq's Shiite and Sunni populations | Shiite and Sunni populations |
| j. trying to start a civil war | civil war |

GAP FILL:

800 die in Baghdad shrine stampede

BNE: Another **tragedy** hit Baghdad yesterday when at least 800 people died in a stampede. The **victims** were mostly women and children. They were among hundreds of **thousands** of Shiite Muslim pilgrims, who were walking to the Khadimiya shrine to attend a **religious** festival. The stampede started when **rumors** spread that a **suicide** bomber was in the crowds of worshippers. People **panicked** and quickly tried to escape. Thousands of people fell into the Tigris River resulting in the overwhelming **loss** of life.

Iraqi Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari has **declared** a three-day period of mourning. Politicians were **blaming** each other for the deaths. Shiite festivals regularly **attract** huge crowds and are often **targeted** by Sunni extremists. Some leading Shiites have accused Sunni groups of trying to **create** divisions between Iraq's Shiite and Sunni populations. Many in Iraq **feel** Sunnis are trying to start a civil **war**. The tragedy is the single biggest loss of life in Iraq since the US-led **invasion**.