Bomb at Afghan dogfight kills 3

AFP, Kandahar

A bomb planted on a motorcycle ripped through a crowd gathered to watch a dog fight in southern Afghanistan on Friday, killing three people and wounding more than 30, officials said.

Eighteen children were among those injured after the attack in Lashkar Gar, capital of southern province Helmand, a headquarters for the Taliban insurgency sweeping Afghanistan eight years after the 2001 US-led invasion.

"The number of casualties we have registered is 31 wounded and three dead," the head of Helmand's health directorate, Anayatullah Ghafari, told AFP.

"The wounded include 18 children aged 15 years or younger," he added.

The bomb was placed on a motorcycle parked near the dog-fighting pit and was detonated remotely as a crowd gathered to watch the fight, said Kamaludin Khan.

In February 2008, more than 80 people died and dozens were wounded in the bombing of a dog fight in Kandahar, which neighbours Helmand and the spiritual capital of the Taliban, in one of Afghanistan's deadliest suicide attacks.

Dog fighting, a popular Afghan winter sport, was banned by the extremist Taliban

government during its 1996-2001 stint in power.

Helmand is the focus of an imminently expected US, Nato and Afghan offensive to clear insurgents from one of their bastions, south of Lashkar Gar in the Marjah district.

Senior military officials have said the operation will be the biggest in Afghanistan since the Taliban launched their insurgency soon after their regime was overthrown in a US-led invasion following the September 11, 2001 attacks.

The United States and Nato allies are deploying an extra 40,000 troops to Afghanistan this year, on top of more than 100,000 foreign forces already fighting the Taliban-led insurgency in the country.

Most of the new troops are heading south, officials say, taking the fight to insurgents in a bid to flush them out of populated areas to create a suitable environment for development and job creation.

On Thursday, the United deputy Helmand police chief States urged Nato allies to send thousands of trainers to help strengthen Afghan security forces as the overall commander in Afghanistan said security was no longer deteriorating.

"I do not say now that I think it's deteriorating. I said that last summer and I believe that was correct. I feel differently now," US General Stanley McChrystal told reporters.

Of other ministries and

divisions, the health and

family welfare ministry spent

Tk 2,339 crore (33.5 percent) of

its total allocation, the water

resources ministry spent Tk

384 crore (25.9 percent), the

local government division Tk

3,122 crore (39.4 percent), the

housing and public works

ministry Tk 296 crore (23.7

percent), and the roads and

railways division spent Tk

and divisions, a few other

important ministries also failed

to spend their budget allocation

in the first six months of the

said many ministries' expendi-

tures during this period are

lower than those in the same

period of the last fiscal year.

These ministries have identi-

fied delay in finalising tender

processes as the main cause for

the low implementation of

recently-signed deals with

the organisational strength,

they will try to bring like-

minded political forces onto a

common platform after com-

pleting the district councils by

meetings at the grassroots will

emphasise organising a

union-level representatives'

conference, like the one held

in 2005 under supervision of

Tarique Rahman, now senior

would also review the recom-

mendations that came at the

2005 union representatives

Professor Ahmed Kabir of

ers will take part in the meet-

ing at the city's Saifur Rahman

Chowdhury of SUST will be in

Professor Kamal Ahmed

Leaders and pro-BNP intel-

lectuals will discuss strategies in

relation to the political situation

and "Tarique's contribution to

A documentary on Tarique

According to party deci-

might be screened at each of

sions, similar meetings will be

arranged also in Dhaka,

Chittagong, Mymensingh,

Cox's Bazar, Khulna, Jessore,

Rajshahi, Bogra and Barisal.

politics and development".

Auditorium.

the meetings.

the chair.

Mirza Alamgir said they

vice-chairman of the party.

BNP insiders said the

Besides having a reading of

India and Tipaimukh dam.

The finance ministry official

current fiscal year.

budget, he added.

FROM PAGE 1

this month.

conference.

Khaleda

Besides these 10 ministries

1,429 crore (27.0 percent).

revised budget.

Big ministries would be increased in the

officials said the figure is low

as they are yet to spend the subsidy amount, which constitutes a major portion of the allocation. While performance of the

Energy and Mineral Resources Division is well, the Power Division has a lacklustre performance.

In terms of percentage, however, the Energy and Mineral Resources Division has fared best, implementing around 71 percent of its total budget allocation although the amount spent is much less than those of the education and primary and mass education ministries.

The size of the total budget for this fiscal year is Tk 1,13,819 crore. These 10 ministries and divisions got allocation of Tk 47,221 crore.

In the last budget session of parliament, the government passed the Finance and Budget Management Act to increase efficiency for implementation and to cut wastage.

However, the ministries efficiency in budget imple-

mentation has not improved significantly. Seven of the 10 ministries

and divisions could not implement even 40 percent of their total allocation. A finance ministry official

said the pay hike for civil servants in the new pay scale did not come into effect until December 2009, which kept the overall expenditure low. At the same time, money allocated for a number of large programmes to generate employment could not yet be

The official said many ministries are yet to achieve the desired efficiency in implementing the budget mainly because of delay in tender processing and lack of

efficient officials. Some leaders, however, An officer in the planning said the programmes are ministry said the World Bank mainly aimed at boosting the temporarily withheld financfield-level activists and restoring in many of its projects after ing the image of Tarique, who the government amended the was detained on graft charges procurement act. This also during the caretaker governdelayed implementation of ment rule. Our staff correspondent

the budget of the ministries concerned. from Sylhet adds: BNP stand-An official of the education ing committee member Brig ministry said they took initia-Gen (retd) ASM Hannan Shah tives to start implementing will attend today's meeting as their programmes from the

chief guest. beginning of the fiscal year. Giving an example, he said Shahjalal University of except for a few cases, they Science & Technology (SUST), distributed school textbooks Professor M Rashed Hasnat of in time, which generally gets Sylhet Agricultural University, delayed every year. Steps were former BMA vice-president Dr also taken so that stipends and Shamimur Rahman and oth-

educational materials reach students in time. The energy and mineral

resources division spent Tk 519 crore (70.9 percent) of its total allocation of Tk 732 crore while the power division spent Tk 678 crore (18.9 percent) of its total allocation of Tk 3,578 crore in the first six months of this fiscal year.

Power division sources said they could not complete the their power generation proects.

tender processes for most of Sources at the agriculture ministry said a major part of its subsidy would be utilised in

the next Boro season. The

allocation to the ministry

5 Hizb ut-Tahrir FROM PAGE 16

east gate of Baitul Mukarram, Reazul near Baitul Aman Mosque at Dhanmondi and Wahidul in front of the Newmarket Mosque.

The three were distributing leaflets of the banned outfit to devotees in front of the mosques after Juma prayers.

The contents of the leaflet blamed the prime minister for her relation with India and the USA, police said. Tipu Sultan, sub-inspector

of Dhanmondi Police Station, said the operatives of the banned organisation held a conference a few months back at a market in Dhanmondi Around 70 students of different private universities took part in the conference. Meanwhile, police arrested

two activists of the same outfit at the main gate of the Ambarkhana Mosque in Sylhet city while they were distributing leaflets after Juma prayers yesterday. Locals caught Farhad Shafi Chowdhury and Mahfuzur

Rahman, students of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, and handed over them to Kotwali police. Farhad is a first year student of industrial engineering

and Mahfuzur Rahman a first

year student of petroleum engineering at the university. Police said they were distributing leaflets with messages calling for establishing "caliphate" in Bangladesh.

Kiwis kill

FROM PAGE 16 balls) and Imrul Kaves (33)

producing 71 runs in 10.4 over.

But as it has been the case so often than not, the Tigers batting collapsed in familiar fashion and were eventually bowled out for 190.

Earlier, Oram and Broom combined to put on 123 runs for the seventh wicket which was the best for New Zealand against all nations surpassing Adam Parore and Lee Germon's 115 against Pakistan in 1996-97. New Zealand also had key

ODI debut, and Ross Taylor's 51 from 52 balls. Bangladesh lost the momentum once Imrul was caught by Brendon McCullum off Andy

contributions from Peter

Ingram, who made 69 on his

McKay. Kiwi skipper Daniel Vettori then claimed three for 33, Martin Guptill picked up two for seven and Tamim's innings

featured ten boundaries. The second one-dayer will take place at the University Oval in Dunedin on Monday.

Football final

FROM PAGE 16

However it was the first time Bangladesh hockey team drew with India. Their previous best performance against the hockey superpower was a 1-0 defeat in Seoul Asiad way back

The men's cricket team however sent Pakistan packing with a 52-run win at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium to set up a gold medal clash with Sri Lanka on Sunday.

Elsewhere, India continued to dominate with their swimmers setting the National Swimming Complex afire on the opening day of the competition with their natants lifting four out of five gold decided on the day. The Indian shooters also dictated terms at the National Shooting Range in Gulshan, where they claimed all four gold decided on the day.

It was however a day of silver for Bangladesh in swimming where they won three. The highlight of it was Mahfuza Khatun's brave effort in the women's 50m breaststroke, where she finished 0.28 seconds behind Sri Lanka's gold winner Minekasashmini Natasha

Karunarathne. India improved their tally to 40 gold, 17 silver and 10 bronze. Pakistan remained in the sec ond position with a tally of 6-16-9 while Bangladesh stayed at third place with 5-10-19.

Meanwhile, the glamorous athletics competition starts a the Bangabandhu National Stadium today.

NU to receive

FROM PAGE 1

the admission process. The students had earlier sat for admission test and had qualified for admission. This process would assign students to their desired departments.

The National University authorities on February 3 decided to go for online admission process for Dhaka College and Suhrawardi College, Dhaka, following hindrances to viva voce at different colleges. The admission seekers were requested to email their admission information to nu.admission.info@gmail.com and info@nuadmission.com.

In the emails, an admission seeker would have to provide their admission roll number, name, merit rank, score, college code and name of their college, five desired subjects (according to preference mentioned in the SIF form submitted earlier), mailing address, email address and contact number.

Hamim's home

demise."

death was better for me than

being alive. Arnab was pre-

paring to go to Australia for

studying his BBA but all

dreams of my family were

shattered with his premature

sleepless night almost every

this...why did he have to get

killed? It is now better for me

to die," Samia said, "I want to

see the end of such deaths.

No more kids should meet

Lawmaker Tarana Halim

and her relatives are trying to

wage a social movement to

Tarana said she would

make every effort to make a

comprehensive road safety

law where there would be no

loopholes through which any

criminal can go unpunished.

The criminals should get life

well-off families. If these

families don't get justice

what about the others?" she

said, adding, "We must stand

spreading out against the sky

the reporters rose to leave

but a suppressed sobbing

held them back, "My nephew

would never ask for a bicycle

ride...who will ask me at night

if I have a dinner or not?"

Hamim's uncle Riazuddin

Shiplu began to cry uncon-

Teachers and students of

Willes Little Flower School,

family and relatives of

Hamim and rights activists

will form a human chain in

front of the school at 11:00am

tomorrow demanding safe

roads and punishment to the

driver responsible for

Shamsur Rahman, the

driver of the killer bus who

was on a remand, will be

produced before the court

Human Chain

Hamim's death.

When the evening was

"These children are of

sentence.

trollably.

prevent road accidents.

such tragic death."

day since Arnab's death.

She said she had passed

"How can I live a life like

NEWS

FROM PAGE 1 saying often. "Hamim would-

n't sleep unless I returned home from business at night," he added.

Since the day of accident Hamim's mother Sonia Sheikh has been speechless with a blank look in her eyes.

"Sonia grabs the T-shirt of Hamim and, in a fit of hysteria, bursts into sobs saying: 'My Hamim...Hamim...come son...come and sleep by my side'," said Hamim's grandmother Afsana Begum at their residence in Suritola in the old part of the city. The sombre silence in the

house was broken as Samia Halim, who lost his 20-yearold son Saif Ahmed Arnab in a road accident, along with Arnab's aunt lawmaker Tarana Halim arrived at Hamim's house. Wailing, weeping and sobbing were all; even an onlooker couldn't help crying.

Saif Ahmed Arnab was also killed in a road accident in the city's Rampura around two months back.

None of the visitors could hold back their tears when one of the relatives took out a photograph of six-year-old Hamim.

Hamim's grandmother Afsana Begum said Sonia had not been able to eat anything or sleep even for a moment for the last two days even after taking injection and sleeping pills.

"We have no words to console her," she said, adding that relatives, teachers from Hamim's school and neighbours are pouring into the house but none can help Sonia with food.

"Please do something so that no kids die in road accidents like my Hamim," Hamim's father Motaleb's cry pierced the air as he went on to say: "Who will wait for me now?"

Samia Halim in an emotion-choked voice said, "After I lost my son I turned into a living corpse. Even

Huge crowd

FROM PAGE 16 queues were seen in front of

stalls, which had new novels of popular writers. At least 235 new books, the

highest so far in one day, covering a wide range of genres, including novels, poetry, essays, research texts, biographies, and accounts of the Liberation War arrived at the fair yesterday and most of the stalls witnessed good sale.

Visitors, especially children and young people, were seen busy taking autographs of writers and poets who were on the fair premises. A good crowd was also seen at the writers' corner.

In the afternoon, dust kicked up by the huge crowd created some difficulties for the visitors.

Parents, however, expressed dissatisfaction over the poor variety and number of children's books available at the fair. "Most of the books are based on cartoons and foreign stories. I

have not found many that reflect the culture of Bangladesh," said Mannan, who came with his sevenyear-old daughter. The stalls with thrillers

caught the eyes of older children. The new books include

Dhakay Prothom and Deep Dipantor by Muntasia Mamun, Agun Koylay Pora Jibon by Mohith Kamal, Chironjib Sheikh Mujib translated by Kabir Chowdhury, Lilian Upakkhayan and Tumi Amar by Imdadul Haq Milon, Nirbachito Hashir Golpo by Anisul Huq, The Age of Iron translated by Kabir Chowdhury, Rakhhash Kokkhosh o Bhokkhok, Protidiner Ain Somporke by advocate Elina Khan and Jaloz: Biggan Kolpokahani.

As per regular programme, a seminar on the history of the Language Movement was held at the

Reckless driving

FROM PAGE 1

Hasan bleeding profusely from the head, they added.

They also said the victims were taken to Al-Raji Hospital at Farmgate by the people nearby in a CNG run autorickshaw, where on duty doctors declared Sumi dead.

Police reached the hospital after getting information of the accident and transferred Hasina and Hasan to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

A doctor on duty at the neuro-surgery department of DMCH said Hasina became unconscious several hours into her admission, and while she was awake she could not

Mintu, a street hawker who was selling peanuts near the site of the hit and run, said, "The woman was waiting near the infant in one arm and holding the girl's hand with the other. I was busy with my customers. Suddenly I heard a loud sound and looked back, and saw the woman and the children lying on the road.'

He said the infant was bleeding from the head and crying, while the woman and the little girl were lying motionless.

The traffic constable who was on duty in front of the Prime Minister's office, around 100 metres from the spot, said he noticed a car and a bus rushing towards

Farmgate after he had heard a loud sound.

Hasina's mother-in-law Zhahura Khatun said Hasina had gone out to collect kindling form Old Airport with her children as she is forced to cook on an earthen stove using kindling as fuel for fire due to a lack of gas pressure at the gas stove.

Zahura also said a neigh bourhood beggar in the afternoon informed her that a little girl had been killed in a road accident nearby, following which she rushed to DMCH to find that the girl was her granddaughter, and her daughter-in-law and grandson were in critical condition. She said her son also Sumi's father, Monjur, is a rickshaw puller.

Tejgaon police said last me to cross the road carrying night that they had yet to identify the vehicle that had hit the three victims at Shaheenbagh. Garment factory worker

doctors declared him dead.

with the help of passers-by.

Saiful Islam was run over and killed by a Mirpur bound minibus while he was trying to cross Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue from the southwestern corner of Hotel the city wall to find out more Sonargaon intersection around 7:30am. Police took structures. Saiful to DMCH following the accident, where on duty

team found a mud stove of 400 BC in Mahasthangarh Tejgaon police arrested the archaeological site during an bus driver and seized the bus archaeological excavation, sources said.

Barbaric Pak schoolteacher tortures 10-year old girl to death

ANI, Lahore

In a shocking incident, a female Pakistani teacher thrashed a 10-year old girl to such an extent that she fell unconscious and died later in the hospital. According to reports, the

government schoolteacher in Jhukkay village of Lavyah district, severely tortured class two student, Nazia for not bringing her notebook.

The schoolteacher has been booked for murder.

"Stern action would be taken against the teacher if it's proven that she tortured the student," The Daily Times quoted Layyah District Police Officer (DPO) Muhammad Saleem, as saying.

Nazia received serious injuries to her head and other parts of the body, and died after remaining unconscious for two days.

1 wounded

Injured Khalilur Rahman, 36, is undergoing treatment at Khulna Medical College Hospital.

Sources said a police team led by SP Mizanur Rahman of Bagerhat was patrolling Harbaria Nandabala canal area in the range on information about a planned robbery. Sensing their presence, a

band of pirates started shooting at the law enforcers around 3:00pm. The police and pirates had

exchanged at least 800 rounds

of bullet during the four-hour gunfight before the pirates finally retreated. Khalilur, who was driving a motorboat carrying the police

team, was shot in the neck. Four persons have been arrested in this connection. They are Alam Gazi, Tuku, Ronny, sons of Abdul Hamid of Joymoni village under Mongla

upazila, and Alam Sheikh,

son of Yousuf Sheikh South Chila village under the same upazila.

A number of bullet-proof jackets, security guard uniforms, three engine boats, 20 bullets, 200 shells of cartridges, two 21-inch televisions, a laud-speaker and a pair of binoculars were recov-

ered from the spot. The pirates reportedly belonged to infamous Zulfikar Bahini.

JMB deserters

Meanwhile, Uttara police on Wednesday night showed Jamal and Mizanur Rahman, another friend of Rashidul, arrested in Rashidul murder

They suspect the two might have a hand in the killing.

On Thursday, police produced Jamal and Mizan before a Dhaka court, seeking to have them placed on a seven-day remand each. But the court granted four days'.

Kazi Nisharul Arif, deputy commissioner of DMP Uttara zone, said they have shown the two arrested as they gave contradictory statements.

He said Jamal claims he deserted JMB in 2003, but a Special Branch report shows that he was involved in JMB till as late as 2005.

Mizan was with Rashidul when the latter was killed.

1,500-yr old

FROM PAGE 16 including sandstones were used along with brick to construct the floor of the gate. The width of the gate was at least 2.95 metres, according to archaeologists.

They however could not give further details at this moment. Dr Jean-Francois Salles,

programme director and team leader of the French team, said that the city entrance was for ordinary "We have found some bronze and iron objects

including iron nails during excavation which were used for making door and other purposes," said Berliet. Archaeologist Naheed Sultana said, "We found 22

building level in the city area of the ancient site during excavations from 1993." The joint team started excavation in mid-January this year in the south part of

archaeological objects and A few years ago, a joint Geo from Karachi.

Smart card

FROM PAGE 1

Khurshed Alam Chowdhury, director general of Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET).

This will greatly reduce their initial hassles at the airport, he said, adding that a migrant will have to keep the card safe with highest priority, as besides the passport, it bears proof of an overseas worker's valid documents.

The BMET in assistance with Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology is introducing the new system on pilot basis. It will be fully functional by February 20, Chowdhury told The Daily Star Thursday.

A jobseeker will obtain the smart card when he has clearances from BMET after completing all the formalities. He will not be allowed to pass the airport immigration without the card once the system is fully operational, he said.

Until now, immigration police record travellers' information but with the introduction of the smart card the BMET welfare desk will keep data of a worker's departure and arrival, said an official of Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment.

This system will help the government preserve the exact data of Bangladeshi workers staying overseas, he said, adding that the migrants face a lot of problems abroad but our embassies can hardly take instant measures, as it is difficult to identify the status of a worker if someone seizes his passport.

In most manpower import-

ing countries, employers seizing their workers' passports and abusing them has

become a common practice. Under such realities, workers become helpless and face much trouble. "But if a smart card holder loses his passport, he can

place the card at Bangladesh

embassy, which can promptly

check his information and take immediate steps to address the problems," the official said. BMET Director Nurul Islam said families of dead migrant workers face huge difficulties in getting compensation money from BMET or district manpower offices. This is because

the migrants' nominees need to be freshly determined, which requires verification. In the new system, the smart card will include names and photographs of the nominees. Therefore, the nominees can easily be identified However, if someone fails to present the smart card, the previous process of verifica-

nees, he said. Asked what happens if a worker loses his smart card, Khurshed Alam said a way would surely be devised to address such cases.

tion will determine the nomi-

pilot basis, we shall add new features to it based on our experiences," he said. Asked how smart card can help check passport forgery,

"As we start the system on

Chowdhury said forging smart card is impossible. Workers will get fast solutions with the smart card if they are in trouble. It is expected that they will refrain from any forgery.

Mortar attack

FROM PAGE 16

ceremonies culminating at midday (0900 GMT) on Friday. "The visitors included Arabs

and about 100,000 foreigners from the Gulf states, Syria, Lebanon, Iran, Tanzania, the United States, Norway and Belgium," Hir said. Television pictures showed

crowds massed near the shrine

stretching into the far distance and carrying flags adorned with Imam Hussein's image. Around 30,000 police and soldiers were on duty in the

spate of attacks. "I travelled all this distance to tell terrorists that their actions will not stop us from visiting Imam Hussein," Jaber al-Temimi, an Iranian who arrived three days ago after

among a crowd of Shia pilgrims

near Baghdad, killing 41 people

including women and chil-

walking from the border, told Iraqi government to refer to al-On Monday, a female sui-

lined up for security checks at one of the many food and rest stations set up on the route to Karbala. Defence ministry spokesman Major General

She detonated an explo-

sives-filled belt as devotees

Mohammed al-Askari said the woman bomber came from Diyala province, northeast of Baghdad, that has in the past been a stronghold of al-Qaeda, which still has a local presence. Prime Minister Nuri al-

holy city, following the recent Maliki's office blamed the Baath party of executed dictator Saddam Hussein for that "We hold Baathists and

their Takfiri allies responsible for this massacre," it said. Takfiri is a term used by the

Qaeda members. On Wednesday, a second cide bomber blew herself up suicide attacker ploughed a bomb-laden vehicle into pilgrims on the outskirts of Karbala, killing 23 of them and

Suicide bombers

dren, and wounding more than wounding 147.

vehicle.

AFP earlier.

Muharram in Karachi, a city of 16 million people with a sprawling port on the Arabian

"I saw a man riding a motorcycle. He hit the bus on the wrong side of the road, on the left, and then there was a huge explosion," said Jaafar Ali, a mechanic in his mid-20s, who had been travelling in another

"Some of my friends were sitting in that bus. I'm going to the hospital. I don't know whether they are dead or survived," he told AFP in tears.

Nails, of the type often packed in bombs, pierced the walls and doors of a bungalow on the side of the road. Blood stained the inside of the bus and shoes were lying nearby on the road, said an AFP reporter. "We have counted 12 dead

bodies and more than 50 injured. There are children and women among the killed and wounded," Doctor Seemi Jamali, chief of Jinnah Hospital in Karachi, told AFP. "Twelve of the injured are in

a critical condition. The injured

told me a man riding a motorcycle hit the bus and then the explosion came," she added. "Ten people were killed and more than 20 were injured in the second bomb blast. This happened in front of the emergency ward of Jinnah

Hospital," Jameel Soomro, a

spokesman for the govern-

is the capital. The attacks were carried out by suicide bombers on motorcycles, a bomb disposal official

"Both of the blasts are of the same nature. Both were suicide and both were on motorcycles," Munir Ahmad Sheikh told private television channel

"In the first attack, the

exploded himself," he added. The attack happened in a smart residential area on the main Faisal highway that

intersects the city. Volunteers

helped evacuate the wounded

as ambulances raced past

second attack, the bomber

sitting on a motorcycle

armed security forces patrolling the area. On December 28, a bombing killed 43 people and reduced to a bloodbath a parade marking the holiest

Shia day of Ashura earlier in Muharram. Pakistan's feared Taliban network claimed responsibility for that attack, sparking riots that caused huge financial

Sectarian violence periodically flares in Pakistan between Shias, who beat and whip themselves in religious fervour during Ashura, and the country's majority Sunnis, who oppose the public display of

Shias account for about 20 percent of Pakistan's mostly Sunni Muslim population of 167 million. More than 4,000 people have died in outbreaks of sectarian violence in Pakistan since the late 1980s.

Pakistan has seen a recent decline in militant attacks, attributed both to the success of a US drone war and Pakistani offensives in the tribal belt by the Afghan border where Taliban and al-Qaeda networks ment in Sindh, where Karachi are based. Last month, 153 people

> were killed by militants in Pakistan -- nearly half the 275 an AFP tally.

ment in the last five days, following 48 similar killings last

killed in October, according to But security had been stepped up in Karachi with a wave of political violence killing at least 37 activists from rival parties in the local govern-

bomber hit the bus. In the month