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VIOLENCE IN PAKISTAN

Separatist attacks, retaliation kill 88

REUTERS, *Quetta*

At least 67 militants were killed yesterday as they battled Pakistan's security forces in multiple cities across the southwestern province of Balochistan, four security officials told Reuters.

Some 10 police and security personnel and 11 civilians were also killed during the orchestrated militant attacks, said the officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity. Twenty-four police officers were injured.

The military's media wing did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Pakistan's Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, in a statement, condemned the attacks and praised security forces for repelling them, saying they had killed dozens of militants.

The attacks came a day after Pakistan's military said it killed 41 militants in separate raids in Balochistan, which borders Iran and Afghanistan and has faced a decades-long separatist insurgency.

The banned separatist group Baloch Liberation Army (BLA)

claimed responsibility for yesterday's attacks, saying it had launched them simultaneously across the province. The BLA said it had killed 84 Pakistan security personnel.

67 militants, 10 security personnel, 11 civilians among dead

Balochistan separatist group BLA claims responsibility

Pakistan blames foreign hand behind the attack

Security officials said armed men launched attacks in several urban areas, including the provincial capital Quetta and the port city of Gwadar, prompting operations by the army, police and counterterrorism units.

Hospitals were placed on emergency

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Pakistan security personnel inspect the blast site after an attack by Baloch separatists in Quetta yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Israeli strikes leave 32 dead across Gaza

IDF admits around 70,000 died in the Palestinian territory



AFP, *Gaza City*

Israeli air strikes killed 32 people, including children, in Gaza yesterday, according to the Palestinian territory's civil defence agency, as the military said it had attacked in response to a Hamas ceasefire violation.

Despite a US-brokered truce entering its second phase earlier this month, violence in the Palestinian territory has continued, with both Israel and Hamas accusing each other of violating the agreement.

The latest bloodshed comes after Israel announced it would reopen the crucial Rafah crossing between Gaza and Egypt on Sunday for the "limited movement of people".

"The death toll since dawn today has risen to 32, most of them children and women," said the civil defence agency, a rescue force operating under the Hamas authority,

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Draft media, broadcasting ordinances a mockery Say TIB, BJC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The draft ordinances of the National Media Commission and Broadcasting Commission are a parting mockery to the public expectations, said Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) yesterday.

The demand for a unified, independent and effective media commission for independent journalism in Bangladesh has existed for a long time -- a demand that was also reflected in the report of the Media Reform Commission.

The report was handed in more than ten months ago and the interim government did not implement any of its recommendations.

Instead, at the very final stage of its tenure, it has published two draft ordinances of the two commissions, it said.

TIB believes that the preparation of the two drafts -- with the apparent objective of imposing greater control over the media sector and seeking public opinion within only

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Misinformation rose by 30pc in 2025

Finds Dismislab; nearly 60pc of all disinformation involved politics

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In 2025, fact-checkers recorded a 30 percent surge in false or misleading content compared to the previous year, marking a sharp escalation in both volume and sophistication.

The nature of disinformation also shifted. Two out of every three fact-checks involved political narratives, half of them spread through video, and one in ten generated using artificial intelligence, signaling an increasing use of technology to circulate false information, according to an analysis by Dismislab, a fact-checking organisation.

For its annual review of 2025, Dismislab analysed the headlines of more than 4,000 distinct fact-check reports published in 2025 and compiled a top-ten list of individuals who appeared most frequently in disinformation headlines.

Ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina topped the list, with her name appearing in 274 fact-check headlines. A large share of this misinformation involved her old videos, photographs, and statements that were spread as "recent". Another major strand centered on rumors of Sheikh Hasina's return to power.

Interim government Chief Adviser Dr Muhammad Yunus came second, appearing in 150 fact-check headlines. Most of these false claims involved

SHARE OF MISINFORMATION	
Politics	57.90%
Law & order	7.40%
Religion	6.40%
International affairs	5.90%
Disaster	4.10%
Entertainment	3.50%
Defence	3.10%
Fraud	2.10%
Sports	2%
Education	1.30%
Economy & development	1%
Health	0.90%
Others	2.70%

portraying his government as unstable and illegitimate. Repeated false claims also circulated stating that "Yunus has resigned" or would resign, and that the army had issued him a "deadline" for resignation.

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Mob killings double in Jan

Says MSF's monthly report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Deaths from mob beatings more than doubled in January compared to the previous month, while the number of deaths in jail custody also saw a sharp rise ahead of the national election, according to a new study.

In January, 21 people were killed in mob beatings, up from 10 deaths recorded in December 2025, according to the Manabadhikar Shongskriti Foundation's monthly monitoring report.

The report, which was released yesterday, termed the human rights situation in January as "alarmingly violent and complex".

The human rights organisation led by Sultana Kamal highlighted a disturbing rise in mob violence.

"The failure of the state to take visible steps against such extrajudicial killings has emboldened perpetrators, leading to a rise in casualties," the report said, describing the incidents as a clear sign of the public's loss of trust in the rule of law.

The report also noted an increase in the recovery of unidentified bodies in January: 57. In December last year, 48 bodies were recovered.

The safety of individuals in state custody remains a critical concern: deaths in prison custody jumped to 15 in January from nine in December. Additionally, two individuals died in the custody of law enforcement agencies in January.

MSF attributed the rise in prison deaths to medical negligence, inhumane treatment and failures in prison administration.

With the 13th national election weeks away, electoral violence has also risen.

Four people were killed and 509 were injured in election-related clashes in January, as opposed to one death the previous month.

The report also pointed out a surge in the use of "unnamed accused" in police cases.

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Rybakina wins maiden Australian Open

AFP, *Melbourne*

Elena Rybakina took revenge over world number one Aryna Sabalenka to win a nail-biting Australian Open final on Saturday and clinch her second Grand Slam title.

The big-serving Kazakh fifth seed held her nerve to pull through 6-4, 4-6, 6-4 at Rod Laver Arena in Melbourne in 2hrs 18mins.

It was payback after the Belarusian Sabalenka won the 2023 final between two of the hardest hitters in women's tennis.

The ice-cool Rybakina, 26, who was born in Moscow, adds her Melbourne triumph to her Wimbledon win in 2022.

"Hard to find the words now," said Rybakina, and then addressed her beaten opponent to add: "I know it is tough, but I hope we play many more finals together."

Turning to some Kazakh fans in the crowd, she said: "Thank you so much to Kazakhstan. I felt the support from that corner a lot."

It was more disappointment in a major final for Sabalenka, who won the US Open last year for the second

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EFFICIENT FARMING... Farmers in Khulna are growing tomatoes along the aisle of a fish enclosure, which is on a piece of land that is primarily being used for paddy farming. The photo was taken yesterday in Dakshin Beelabad.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

5 farmers die in Naogaon road crash

UNB, *Dhaka*

Five farmers were killed when a garbage truck crashed into a battery-run cycle van on the Mohadevpur-Patnitala Road in Naogaon's Mohadevpur upazila yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Biren Pahan, 35, son of Koko Pahan; Ujjal Pahan, 38, son of Naren Pahan; Bipul Pahan, 25, son of Jhatu Pahan; Sanju Orao, 45, son of Marang Orao; and Biplab Bahan, 22, son of Jhatu Pahan, of the upazila's Nupur area. All of them were passengers on the battery-run cycle van.

The farmers were on their way to Mohadevpur haat to sell turmeric when the garbage truck hit the cycle van, leaving two dead on the spot and three others injured, said Shahidul Islam, officer-in-charge of Mohadevpur Police Station.

On information, police recovered the bodies, he said, adding that the injured were taken to the upazila health complex, where doctors declared them dead.

Police could not arrest anyone as the driver and his helper fled the scene.

"Efforts are underway to arrest both of them," the OC said.