

In This Issue

- 2 terrorists including 'high-value target' killed in Dera Ismail Khan operation
- Education – A Shield against Crime
- Notes from a former police chief: Battling violence during Pakistan election
- 24 terrorists killed in operations in Balochistan's Mach, Kolpur over last three days
- 10 cops martyred, 6 injured in attack on DI Khan police station
- 2 militants killed in North Waziristan IBO
- An ever-evolving terrorism threat
- 2 terrorists killed in intelligence-based operation in KP's Mardan
- Election Policing Dilemma
- 1 cop martyred, 3 injured in exchange of fire with terrorists in Mardan



2 terrorists including ‘high-value target’ killed in Dera Ismail Khan operation

Security forces killed two terrorists, including a “high-value target (HVT)”, during an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa’s Dera Ismail Khan district, according to the military’s media wing.

A press release issued by the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) said the IBO was conducted based on the reported presence of terrorists.

“During the conduct of operation, intense fire exchange took place between own troops and terrorists as a result of which HVT terrorist ringleader Ashraf Sheikh and terrorist Burhan Ullah were sent to hell,” the ISPR said.

It added that the two were actively involved in numerous terrorist activities, including the targeted killing of innocent civilians. The ISPR further said that weapons, ammunition and explosives were also recovered.

“Sanitisation operation is being conducted to eliminate any other terrorist found in the area. Locals of the area appreciated the operation and expressed their full support to eliminate the menace of terrorism,” the ISPR said.

Security forces had killed a terrorist in an exchange of fire during an IBO in KP’s North Waziristan district on Monday.

Three militants were killed in an IBO in Titterkhel town of Lakki Marwat district on Saturday.

Pakistan has witnessed an uptick in terror activities in the past year, especially in KP and Balochistan after the banned militant Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan ended its ceasefire with the government in November 2022.

According to an annual security report issued by the Centre for Research and Security Studies, Pakistan witnessed 1,524 violence-related fatalities and 1,463 injuries from 789 terror attacks and counter-terror operations in 2023 – marking a record six-year high.

KP and Balochistan were the primary centres of violence, accounting for over 90 per cent of all fatalities and 84pc of attacks, including incidents of terrorism and security forces operations.

SOURCE: DAWN, FEBRUARY 1, 2024

Education – A Shield against Crime

BY DR SYED KALEEM IMAM



“School serves the same social functions as prisons and mental institutions-to define, classify, control, and regulate people”-Michael Foucault

In our school days, we had a classmate named Jamshed (a pseudonym), who had little interest in academics. In those times, corporal punishment was a norm, but even the teachers’ canings couldn’t motivate him to open his textbooks. It seemed that the constant scolding only fueled his aversion to studying.

As years passed, Jamshed’s path took a dark turn. He never managed to pass his matriculation exam, and gradually slipped into the shadows of the underworld. Initially, he dabbled in gambling, but soon was entangled in more serious criminal activities. Despite hailing from a respectable family, his life took a tragic trajectory.

In a grim twist of fate, Jamshed’s life came to a violent end when he was killed in a police encounter. His journey from a carefree schoolboy to a notorious criminal serves as a poignant reminder of the complexities of life’s choices and consequences.

No wonder if he was a case of Hirchi’s social bond theory which suggests that individual is less likely to engage in criminal activities when they have strong attachments to family, school and work. His control theory assumes the bond of affection for the conventional person is a major

deterrent to delinquency. The stronger this bond, the more likely the person is to take it into account when and if he contemplates a criminal act.

I embarked on my career as an educationalist, drawn by an insatiable thirst for knowledge. My journey led me to the hallowed halls of the Philosophy Department at Karachi University. Despite the ridicule I faced for choosing what some deemed a peculiar subject, deep within, I treasured its essence-originating from the Greek words “*philein sophia*,” signifying a love for wisdom -an odyssey to comprehend the very essence of our being.

As I ventured into the world of policing, I endeavored to infuse the wisdom of philosophy into my every action. To some, I was the “philosopher cop,” perhaps uttered in jest, but I wore that moniker with pride.

Throughout my 33-year journey donning the police uniform, I crossed paths with countless individuals akin to Jamshed. Diverse in their origins, yet united by a shared trait—lack of education or education devoid of true enlightenment. For many, it served merely as a ticket to employment. But when the moment arrived to reveal their latent demons, they seized it without hesitation.

In the realm of crime, the education of the perpetrator may vary, painting unique circumstances. I once encountered a peculiar case involving a highly educated woman, married to a scholarly man. She orchestrated a charade, claiming she was robbed by muggers after leaving an ATM. Skeptical of her story, I instructed the investigative team to dig deeper. To my dismay, the bitter truth emerged - it was a domestic dispute in disguise

Another incident involved a medical college student who swindled her parents’ jewelry. Blinded by ignorance, her parents hastily pointed fingers at their domestic servant, subjecting the poor maid to intense police scrutiny. However, the shocking revelation left the parents in embarrassment.

In the past few decades, our education system has plummeted into a deep abyss. The sole focus is on chasing grades, and even teachers’ progress hinges on how many of their student’s secure “A” grades. Parents too yearn for impressive results, leaving character development by the wayside.

Schools and colleges have become vulnerable hunting grounds for drug peddlers. Recently, the insidious scourge of crystal meth, popularly known as “Ice,” has seeped into our educational institutions, particularly in urban cities. Those ensnared by its grip, when funds run dry, resort to stealing from their parents or engaging in criminal activities.

At this critical juncture, the response from the so-called “education wizard” is far from transformative; instead of providing therapy and guidance to mend juveniles behavior, they further cement their habits and hardens their path towards a life of crime, rather than breaking free from its grasp.

This alarming situation aligns with “differential association theory” of Sutherland who posits that criminal behavior is learned through association with others who engage in criminal activity, and

the environment, in this case, our deteriorating schooling system, plays a pivotal role in this unfortunate transformation.

In a scenario of limited edification, the pathway to criminality often emerges as individuals face constrained options for legitimate employment. This susceptibility exposes them to manipulation by criminal influences, pushing them towards unlawful activities. In our case, the lack of tutoring has diminished skills, reduced social awareness, and a heightened likelihood of resorting to unlawful actions to fulfill basic needs.

Pakistan, a nation deeply rooted in religious fervor, sends a multitude of pilgrims to, and its generosity in alms and donations is renowned. Yet, paradoxically, it stands atop a perilous peak of crime, corruption, and injustice. It's unbelievable how crime soars even during the holiest of months and times, with one major reason being that teaching is lamentably in a mess. A robust overhaul is imperative; otherwise, we risk being burdened with worthless degrees that hold no sway in the fiercely competitive global arena.

In nations that prioritize education and cherish human values, prisons often stand empty, for where there is no crime, jails have no purpose. Countries like Norway and Denmark have transformed prisons into libraries and other beneficial institutions. Contrastingly, our confinement facilities overflow, and those who enter, leave as even more formidable, unyielding criminals.

If the government is genuinely committed to eradicating crime, it must prioritize and elevate the standard of education, recognizing its pivotal role. Currently, Pakistan's public expenditure on education, at a mere 1.7 percent of GDP, stands as the lowest in the region. It is imperative to acknowledge that without access to quality education, or with inadequate educational opportunities, criminality tends to proliferate. This stark reality should serve as a compelling reason to stir our collective conscience and demand a fundamental shift in our approach to education and its vital connection to crime prevention.

Education stands as the unyielding antidote to the venom of crime, with law and policy serving as its watchful guardians. Rather than merely addressing the symptoms of criminality, we must embark on a transformative journey, nurturing an environment where knowledge flows freely, unburdened by the shackles of debt. I reiterate the strong connections to family, education, and work serve as an impenetrable shield against the siren call of criminality.

Let's remember the chief challenge in any crime-afflicted community is not merely the punishment of criminals but, more crucially, the prevention of the young from being rapt by the allure of crime.

Source: WENEWS.PK, FEBRUARY 1, 2024

Notes from a former police chief: Battling violence during Pakistan election

DR SYED KALEEM IMAM

As Pakistan braces for the 2024 elections, law enforcers face a daunting task. There has perhaps never been a time like this. Anger and disappointment are widespread, and so is a hope that election day- February 8- will mark the beginning of something better.

Elections in Pakistan have always been a time of turbulence. In fact the first direct general elections, held in 1970, led to the country's disintegration, plunged East Pakistan into a bloodbath and led to the creation of Bangladesh.

I recall a picture published in a 1977 edition of Time magazine showing a candidate stealing and running away with a ballot box. Massive rigging in the elections held that year triggered huge protests by the combined opposition. The worsening law and order situation eventually gave way to a military coup. The promise of elections within three months stretched to eleven years, only to be realized after the plane crash that caused General Zia's demise.

More recently, the 2013 elections gave us the famous "35 punctures" slogan, and elections in 2018 brought with them the stigma of being "selected." The country has also suffered immensely from election-centered violence, including the tragic assassination of Benazir Bhutto in the run-up to the 2008 polls. The same elections also saw major suicide bombings targeting political rallies and candidates, killing 37 people.

The following elections, held in May 2013, were the bloodiest in Pakistan's history, with more than 240 people killed in the lead-up. Military operations resulted in a substantially improved environment for the 2018 elections.

This time, threats from groups like the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) and Daesh have cast a dark shadow over pre-election campaigns. In 2023, there were 1,500 reported terror incidents, resulting in 900 fatalities and 2,000 injuries. Their distribution was significantly concentrated in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Balochistan, which accounted for 57 percent and 41 percent of all incidents respectively. More recently, numerous political candidates and workers have been killed in pre-election barbarity. Adding to the tension, clerics in Kohistan have announced a fatwa against women candidates, deeming their participation in democracy un-Islamic. A foul smell of blood is already in the air.

Without the PTI, forthcoming elections already stand defaced. There is no level playing field due to the ruthless abuse of power by virtually all state institutions. Unfortunately, the other major parties are glad for it. It doesn't matter if they're next in line as long as they win.

Due to the widespread impression that the elections are a 'fixed match', the traditional fervor in election-related activities is missing this year. However, the law-and-order situation remains grave. Balochistan is particularly volatile due to an increase in the BLA's activities, as well as protests over missing persons. The agitation in Gilgit-Baltistan is equally alarming.

Many political leaders have received threatening calls, mainly for extortion. The miscreants have the potential to retaliate if their demands are not met. It is not just non-state actors who are involved. Some brazen forces from within the deep state are also forcing candidates to join hands with their opponents. These activities will intensify if many independent candidates win. Such a scenario will worsen the prevailing tense atmosphere.

Amid this rising wave of militancy and crime, governance issues and fierce political competition, the challenge for LEAs are enormous. As an officer in the police service, I was closely involved in all elections held since 1990. I can vouch that, barring a few, our politicians and other powers are more than willing to use any means to win. The act of maintaining impartiality is extremely difficult in a situation where a herd mentality is prevalent.

Security sectors must take stock of the situation. Provincial executives and police chiefs have a great responsibility being the direct physical arm of the state. They must realize that the misuse of authority will only earn them ignominy and be a source of embarrassment for their children.

Security forces must craft rules of engagement to guide their responses in various settings during elections. 'Use of force' models in contracts with electoral institutions must be clear. The police's prime duty must be to merely maintain steadfast neutrality and ethical conduct. It must allow political gatherings but detain lawbreakers when necessary.

More women should be utilized in election security. Timely intelligence sharing ought to be prioritized: it is key to take pre-emptive actions rather than be forced to react. Rigorous police training, information gathering, strategic vigilance, and alliances with various stakeholders will also help toward containing frenzy before and on election day. LEAs will also need to be compelling in their communication because they need to keep connected with the public at large. To this end, they should leverage technology to remind the communities they serve that they are there to safeguard democracy and public rights.

Elections are a time when the public most needs law enforcement agencies to ensure safety. To do so, they have to remain focused. Distracting their attention by having them execute any agenda other than election security can have disastrous consequences. For this reason, the heads of all agencies must put their foot down against any demands to overstep their mandate. They need to keep their eye on the ball. The safety of millions is in their hands. We're in for tough election security if history is anything to go by. A somber legacy is once again being written.

SOURCE: ARAB NEWS, FEBRUARY 1, 2024

24 terrorists killed in operations in Balochistan's Mach, Kolpur over last three days

Twenty-four terrorists were killed during firefights and clearance operations in the Mach and Kolpur towns of Balochistan, the military's media affairs wing said.

On Monday night, security forces had thwarted three "coordinated attacks" launched by terrorists using rockets and sophisticated weapons in Mach, some 70 kilometres from the provincial capital. The terrorists also targeted a hotel and six shops in the Kolpur area and set them on fire.

While interim Balochistan Information Minister Jan Achakzai had initially attributed the attack to terrorists affiliated with the Aslam Acho group, responsibility was later claimed by the Majeed Brigade of the proscribed Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA).

Security forces immediately responded to the attack and took up positions. The gun battle between terrorists and security forces had continued for several hours.

According to a statement issued by the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) today, terrorists attacked Mach and Kolpur complexes in Balochistan on the night of January 29 and 30.

"Law enforcement agencies deputed on security offered stiff resistance and forced the attackers to repulse. These terrorists were then hunted down in the ensuing sanitisation and clearance operations which have now been concluded after clearing and securing the area," the ISPR said.

"During the firefights and sanitisation/clearance operations, in the last three days, 24 terrorists have been sent to hell," the army's media wing said.

It identified Shehzad Baloch, Attaullah, Salah Uddin, Abdul Wadood and Zeeshan as "key terrorists" among the dead. The ISPR said the identification process of remaining terrorists was in process.

During the intense exchange of fire, "four brave members of law enforcement agencies, having fought gallantly, embraced martyrdom" along with two innocent civilians, it added.

"Effective response by law enforcement agencies is a testament to their unrelenting resolve in the fight against terrorism," the ISPR said, adding that Pakistan's security forces stood "shoulder to shoulder" with other LEAs to ensure peace and stability in the country.

Pakistan has recently witnessed an uptick in terror activities, especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan.

According to an annual security report issued by the Centre for Research and Security Studies, Pakistan witnessed 1,524 violence-related fatalities and 1,463 injuries from 789 terror attacks and counter-terror operations in 2023 – marking a record six-year high.

KP and Balochistan were the primary centres of violence, accounting for over 90 per cent of all fatalities and 84pc of attacks, including incidents of terrorism and security forces operations.

SOURCE: DAWN, FEBRUARY 2, 2024

10 cops martyred, 6 injured in attack on DI Khan police station

Ten cops were martyred while six were injured in a late-night attack on the Chodwan police station in Dera Ismail Khan, police said.

The attack came three days before the general elections were scheduled to take place on February 8.

Regional Police Officer (RPO) Nasir Mehmood confirmed the casualties to Dawn.com.

“More than 30 terrorists launched an attack from three directions. There was an exchange of fire for over two-and-a-half hours,” Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provincial police chief Akhtar Hayat Gandapur told AFP.

Gandapur told AFP the attackers briefly seized control of the police station during the assault in the early hours of Monday.

Malik Aneesul Hassan, the deputy superintendent of police in Draban, told Reuters that after entering the building, the militants “used hand grenades which caused more casualties to the police”.

Security concerns in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan have risen as both provinces have witnessed multiple attacks over the past few days.

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) and the security apparatus had reviewed the law and order situation last week, stating that polls would be held at their scheduled time.

Caretaker KP Chief Minister Justice (rtd) Arshad Hussain Shah condemned the attack and expressed his grief over the loss of lives.

In a statement, he conveyed his condolences to the families of the martyrs and prayed for the speedy recovery of the injured.

CM Shah said KP police had rendered “eternal sacrifices” for peace in the province and that “such cowardly attacks would not demoralise them”.

He asserted that the government would help the bereaved in “every way possible”.

SOURCE: DAWN FEBRUARY 5, 2024

2 militants killed in North Waziristan IBO

Two terrorists were killed in an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's North Waziristan district, the military's media affairs wing said.

According to a press release issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), security forces conducted an IBO last night on the reported presence of terrorists.

"During the conduct of operation, intense fire exchange took place between own troops and terrorists, as a result of which two terrorists were sent to hell, including terrorist ringleader Ayubullah Mansoor," the ISPR said.

It added that weapons, ammunition and explosives were also recovered from the militants who "remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities, including targeted killing as well as extortion and abduction of innocent civilians".

"Sanitisation operation is being conducted to eliminate any other terrorist found in the area. Locals of the area appreciated the operation and expressed their full support to eliminate the menace of terrorism," the ISPR said.

The development comes a day after 10 police officials were martyred and six others injured in a pre-dawn attack by dozens of militants on a police station in Dera Ismail Khan, as violence escalated ahead of general elections this week.

A spokesperson for Dera police said that militants, equipped with sophisticated weapons, attacked the Chaudhwan Police Station in Daraban tehsil at around 3am, adding that cops inside the building retaliated and a gun battle continued for around two and a half hours. The militants escaped after the attack under the cover of darkness.

Last week, the ISPR said that 24 terrorists were killed during firefights and clearance operations in the Mach and Kolpur towns of Balochistan over three days.

The statement had come after security forces had thwarted three "coordinated attacks" launched by terrorists using rockets and sophisticated weapons in Mach. The terrorists also targeted a hotel and six shops in the Kolpur area and set them on fire.

Pakistan has witnessed an uptick in terror activities in the past year, especially in KP and Balochistan after the banned militant Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan ended its ceasefire with the government in November 2022.

According to an annual security report issued by the Centre for Research and Security Studies, Pakistan witnessed 1,524 violence-related fatalities and 1,463 injuries from 789 terror attacks and counter-terror operations in 2023 – marking a record six-year high.

KP and Balochistan were the primary centres of violence, accounting for over 90 per cent of all fatalities and 84pc of attacks, including incidents of terrorism and security forces operations.

SOURCE: DAWN, FEBRUARY 6, 2024

An ever-evolving terrorism threat

SHAUKAT JAVED

The US withdrawal from Afghanistan in August 2021 has led to a surge in terrorism in Pakistan. Nothing is safe from terror attacks – cantonments, airbases, police lines, counterterrorism department centres, police stations, army, paramilitary and police posts, toll plazas, polio vaccination teams, political leaders and their rallies, and the list goes on.

Convoys and vehicles of law-enforcement agencies (LEAs) are attacked by improvised explosive devices (IEDs) every other day. Apart from this, during the past few months, around a dozen of the most wanted terrorists on India's list have also been eliminated in Pakistan by unknown gunmen, which Pakistan attributed to the doing of Indian agents using a network of local assailants.

Terrorism in its present shape started after the incidents of 9/11, prior to that we faced sectarian incidents and occasional acts of terrorism by militant groups. After the advent of the 'war on terror' in Afghanistan in which Pakistan became an active partner, the country saw a spike in blasts, suicide attacks and IED attacks. The year 2009 was the worst year when more than 2,000 terrorist attacks took place. Ever since there has been a consistent and significant decline in terror incidents, and during the 2009-2020 period such attacks decreased by almost 90 per cent.

A reversal in the trend was witnessed in 2021. In 2023, the number of terror incidents increased to an alarming figure of more than 1,500, including 28 suicide attacks. On average, four terrorism incidents occurred every day resulting in an average of 77 martyrdoms of military and police personnel and civilians every month. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) was the worst affected province, facing 57 per cent of the total incidents. Balochistan witnessed 41 per cent of such incidents. In 2023, 48 per cent more terrorist incidents took place, resulting in a 51 per cent increase in the number of martyrs when compared with 2022, according to the National Counter Terrorism Authority (Nacta).

In KP, one contributory factor of this surge is believed to be the freedom of movement of TTP leadership in Afghanistan. In the past, most TTP leaders were killed by US drone strikes. Under the rule of the interim government of the Afghan Taliban, they have no fear and are moving about in the open without any threat. Apart from the TTP, the Islamic State of Khorasan Province (ISKP) is another terrorist outfit operating in KP. While the TTP targets LEAs, the ISKP targets political leaders/rallies and persons belonging to the Shia sect.

In Balochistan, separatist militant organizations have changed their tactics. In the last three years, they have used IEDs and mines to restrict the movement of LEAs. The ISKP has also reportedly forged an alliance with a sectarian organization Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and is involved in terrorist

acts in Balochistan, Karachi and rural Sindh. This surge has eroded the sense of security in people in general and in the business community in particular.

The state's response to this precarious situation is lopsided. The first national internal security policy (NISP) was formulated in 2014 to address critical security issues and concerns with an institutionalized response through Nacta. The policy was in the launching stage when an attack on Jinnah International Airport Karachi took place; it was claimed by the TTP and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU). A military operation, Zarb-e-Azb, was thus launched in North Waziristan along the Pak-Afghan border with the aim to evacuate locals and then decimate militants.

This operation displaced about a million people from North Waziristan. Amid the operation, a gory act of terrorism occurred in Army Public School Peshawar, taking the lives of 150 persons including 134 children. This deadly terror attack demanded a focused, measurable and time-restricted response on the national level.

For that purpose, a 20-point National Action Plan (NAP) was carved out of the NISP. The plan briefly outlined the goals to eradicate terrorism from the country. The successful Operation Zarb-e-Azb, the convictions of terrorists through military courts, and the lifting of the moratorium on death penalties led to reasonable success in effectively dealing with the terrorist threat in the short term. Terrorist activities saw a major decline, and around 200 attacks were reported in 2020. This effectiveness could not be sustained after the interim Afghan government came into power.

In his interview with Shuja Nawaz of the Centre for Governance Research, former Nacta chief Tariq Parvez said, "While we got the short-term objectives right in countering terrorism, we erred in terms of formulating long-term policies and responses to the terrorist threat. For long-term solutions to succeed you should let the civilian institutions, whose role it is to counter terrorism, play their role. Till then the counterterrorism effort was primarily military-led with the civilian institutions playing second fiddle. That was one weak area in our response. The second weak area was that our entire focus was on kinetic actions while the non-dynamic part – the ideological part and the part that deals with the factors that breed terrorism – was ignored."

The National Action Plan (NAP) was revised in 2021 separating kinetic and non-kinetic domains. The former contained five points while the latter had 14 points. All the kinetic measures were largely achieved while much action is required in the non-kinetic domain. Our response after every incident of terrorism is knee-jerk. We repeat the same hollow slogan of our resolve to quell the menace with joint concerted effort without any holistic plan. We seem to be content by burying our martyrs with honour and by giving their families a good shuhada package.

The first step required in the non-kinetic domain is to develop a proper counter-narrative in response to terrorists' narratives. Nacta has developed a good national narrative available on its website, but it is primarily based on the Paigham-e-Pakistan fatwa issued in 2018 and signed by 1,800 religious scholars belonging to all Muslim sects in Pakistan. This decree is ratified only by

the religious elite, disregarding ethnic, socio-economic and political marginalization, leading to violent extremism.

The newly merged districts of Fata which were a stronghold of terrorists lacked in establishing a proper administrative, police and judicial system. Insufficient investments in developing infrastructure, provision of education and health facilities, rehabilitation of displaced population and removal of restrictions on the free movement of locals provoked frustration among people, especially the youth, in these areas where poverty is double than in the rest of Pakistan.

The rise of the PTM, a nonviolent protest movement is the result of this frustration. Instead of meaningful engagement with the PTM, authorities wrongly presented them as a threat even though two of its leaders were elected to the National Assembly in the 2018 elections. This short-sighted policy needs an immediate overhaul.

It is also important to consider the fact that no-go areas in the shape of the provincially administered tribal area (PATA) in District Malakand in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), B Areas in Balochistan, and illegal tribal areas in District DG Khan and Punjab's Rajanpur are providing safe havens to terrorists and criminal gangs. The merger of these areas will dismantle these safe havens and demoralize the terrorists.

We should also stop playing with non-state actors. It is time to say goodbye to proxies; the policy of 'good' and 'bad' Taliban has not worked. This policy tool should be shunned. All counterterrorism actions should be based on credible data developed through research by academics hired for the purpose of security-related issues.

The issue of refugees should be dealt with under international law and practices. Nacta claims that a majority of suicide attacks during 2023 were carried out by Afghan nationals who illegally crossed the borders. Thus, after sending back illegal refugees, the remaining ones should be granted refugee status and be confined to refugee camps as was done by Iran.

All federations in the world have federal counterterrorism police organizations, but there is no such department in Pakistan. The Anti-Terrorism Act, 1997 is a federal law with delegated powers to the provinces. A federal police organization dealing exclusively with terrorism cases must be established at the earliest.

To effectively control terrorism and crime, the revamping of the whole criminal justice system must be undertaken as a priority. A police reforms committee consisting of retired and serving IGP's formed under the Pakistan Law and Justice Commission submitted its comprehensive report in February 2019, which is eating dust with the federal and provincial governments. Its implementation coupled with the capacity building of the police be undertaken without delay.

There is no central oversight body for the coordination and implementation of various policy layers. Nacta was formed to do this job, but neither its capacity was built, nor was it given due importance by successive governments.

One of the weak areas of response nowadays is the state of Pakistan itself, which is in a weak position compared with 2020. Today, we have political instability and an economic meltdown, and our present efforts to counter terrorism and violent extremism are far from satisfactory.

The disillusioned youth, especially in KP and Balochistan, is drawn towards militant organizations out of frustration. Only a stable representative government elected through a fair electoral process can meet this tall order.

SOURCE: THE NEWS, FEBRUARY 8, 2024

2 terrorists killed in intelligence-based operation in KP's Mardan

Two terrorists were killed by security forces during an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Mardan district, the army's media wing said.

According to a statement by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), security forces conducted an IBO in the district on the reported presence of terrorists.

"During the conduct of the operation, after an intense fire exchange, two terrorists were sent to hell," the ISPR said.

It added that weapons, ammunition and explosives were also recovered from the slain terrorists, who "remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities in the area".

It further said that a sanitisation operation is being conducted to eliminate any other terrorists found in the area.

"Local populace appreciated the operation and expressed their full support to security forces in eliminating the menace of terrorism," the ISPR statement concluded.

A day earlier, the ISPR said a militant ringleader was killed during an operation in KP's Khyber district.

Last week, two militants, including a senior commander, were killed in an IBO in North Waz-iristan district.

On February 5, 10 police officials were martyred and six others injured in a pre-dawn attack by dozens of militants on a police station in Dera Ismail Khan, as violence escalated ahead of the general elections.

On February 2, the ISPR said that 24 terrorists were killed during firefights and clearance operations in the Mach and Kolpur towns of Balochistan over three days.

The statement had come after security forces had thwarted three "coordinated attacks" launched by terrorists using rockets and sophisticated weapons in Mach. The terrorists also targeted a hotel and six shops in the Kolpur area and set them on fire.

Pakistan has witnessed an uptick in terror activities in the past year, especially in KP and Balochistan after the banned militant Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan ended its ceasefire with the government in November 2022.

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SOURCE: DAWN, FEBRUARY 12, 2024

Election Policing Dilemma

DR SYED KALEEM IMAM

Soon after I began my career, I witnessed a colleague engaging in blatant corruption with complete disregard for its consequences. He would laugh off all warnings, confident that his wealth and connections would protect him. He would eventually see his downfall, not from his own actions but from crossing those in power.

There is a widely held belief that success is achieved by aligning oneself with power. This mindset is prevalent in both private and public sectors and continues to lead many astray. The cold, hard truth is that every untouchable eventually ends up being removed, regardless of how much they've cheated or how many boots they've licked. Appeasing the powerful and enriching oneself by going against moral norms and laws only takes one so far.

It is unfortunate that public opinion when it comes to condemning what is wrong has generally grown weaker and weaker since the late 1980s. Instead, one now finds many who are quite eager to participate in unlawful activities. The idea that 'anything goes' has become rather acceptable.

In the past, delinquent officers would be suspended for wrongdoing. Now, however, the sword usually swings against those in the lower cadres. The senior officers are typically appointed on the whims of chief executives, so they are merely transferred when their misconduct becomes too difficult to ignore. They are later readjusted to even better positions as a reward for their loyalty. The head of the organisation has rotted away as a result.

Saner elements within the police forces have been pleading consistently for correction and reform. Though there was initially some progress, we have recently returned to square one. Professionalism has fallen to its lowest level during our fraught times, and it is only a handful of Samaritan cops that are keeping us all afloat.

In the run-up to the recent elections, law enforcement was criticised widely on social media for its brutish practices, which included perpetrating violence on already vulnerable groups. As political polarisation grew, daggers were drawn, illegal actions justified, and what is atrocity was deemed acceptable. With those responsible hell-bent on fulfilling their personal agendas, the expectations from law enforcers, considered a tool of government, were horrendous.

In such scenarios, officers often assert that they simply acted in accordance with orders. However, this only indicates a lack of leadership and the absence of any sense of self-accountability. An important principle established through the Nuremberg trials is that individuals are responsible for following immoral orders. We must, therefore, start holding everyone who perpetrates an illegality to account.

There are too many men and women today in positions of power who take joy in cruelty and then blame others for their actions. The process must start with the political executives, bureaucrats, and even police officers who issue unlawful orders, but everyone who obeys such illegalities must also be brought to book.

Our short memory has led us to forget and absolve those responsible for the May 12 Karachi massacre, the Faizabad Dharna, the mess-up at Lal Masjid, APS Peshawar, Sahiwal encounter, custodial killings in Balochistan, and countless other incidents, including several high-profile murders. There was a need to relearn and do things differently after each of these incidents.

Unfortunately, on most accounts, the major failings of law enforcement were hushed up. Crooked elements became more brazen as a result. Side by side, bad policies and continuous interference infantilised law enforcement even further.

Can we choose progress instead of letting law enforcement continue to decay? Much worse has happened in other states, but there is consolation in their response when they resolve to prevent a repeat of the same tragedy. In our case, we appear to have given up. The rule of law and justice no longer seem relevant to our people.

Despite much pleading from the police hierarchy for urgent reforms, no durable action has been taken. Even though a variety of reform models are available, we generally choose expediency and ad hoc gains. If this situation is allowed to continue, public suffering is inevitable. In the hands of someone irrational and criminally inclined, a force otherwise meant for protecting others can do much harm. The key, therefore, lies in first changing the mindset of those in charge.

At the same time, we must also remember that law enforcement is expected to embody societal values as it steers through complex power dynamics. How can we expect officers to be fundamentally different from the society they serve? This question is especially pertinent when considering that everyone, to some extent, breaks the law while demanding strict adherence from others. Ultimately, nurturing a culture of integrity is crucial, as it will guide officers to serve the greater good. Only then can we bridge the gap between societal expectations and the realities of law enforcement and create a more just society.

When law enforcement is compromised, society devolves into a state of nature, and the rule of law gives way to the law of the jungle. To some, this may be preferable. For everyone else, it is chaos. This descent into chaos is facilitated by the inaction of good men, for 'the only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing'.

It is time for law enforcers to stand up and recall the oath and promise they made on the day they passed out from their academies. By simply holding themselves to a higher standard while understanding that they are always accountable for their actions, they can improve considerably in a very short time. They need to rebuild their relationship with the people they are supposed to serve. Social stability depends on it.

2024 stands out as one of the most glaring examples of professional and ethical erosion in election policing. Electoral outcomes cast a shadow on their legitimacy as a result of institutional

weaknesses and unchecked power dynamics. Will law enforcement continue its downward spiral, causing societal chaos and injustice?

Or will decisive action be taken to restore integrity, bridging the gap, and bringing new levels of accountability and fairness? Will the hotch potch alliance choose wisely in the coming days to determine the future of democratic policing.

SOURCE: EN.WENEWS.PK, FEBRUARY 19, 2024

1 cop martyred, 3 injured in exchange of fire with terrorists in Mardan



Superintendent of Police (SP) Aijaz Khan Sherpao.

One cop was martyred while three others were injured in an exchange of fire with terrorists in Mardan's Katlang tehsil , according to an official.

Speaking to Dawn.com, Mardan District Police Officer (DPO) Mardan Najeebur Rehman said that a police team headed by Rural Superintendent of Police (SP) Aijaz Khan Sherpao headed to the Mata Katlang area on the reported presence of terrorists.

He said that upon spotting the police team, the terrorists opened fire. "The militants also threw a grenade due to which SP Sherpao was martyred," the DPO said.

He further said that Rural Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Naseem Khan and two constables, Mansoor and Saleem, were injured in the incident. He said that the injured were initially taken to Katlang Hospital but were then shifted to Mardan Medical Complex Hospital.

DPO Rehman added that two of the militants were also killed in the exchange of fire.

The DPO said that an additional police contingent arrived at the scene after the SP was martyred, adding that officials had begun a search operation in the area.

In a post on X, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police paid tribute to the martyred SP. It further said that “terrorist commander Mohsin Qadir and his deputy Wasil” were killed.



Pakistan has witnessed an uptick in terror activities in the past year, especially in KP and Balochistan after the banned militant Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan ended its ceasefire with the government in November 2022.

According to an annual security report issued by the Centre for Research and Security Studies, Pakistan witnessed 1,524 violence-related fatalities and 1,463 injuries from 789 terror attacks and counter-terror operations in 2023 – marking a record six-year high.

KP and Balochistan were the primary centres of violence, accounting for over 90 per cent of all fatalities and 84pc of attacks, including incidents of terrorism and security forces operations.

SOURCE: DAWN, FEBRUARY 27, 2024