



TERROR TRACKER

Newsletter by Counter Terrorism Centre



MANOHAR PARRIKAR INSTITUTE FOR
DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES
मनोहर पर्रिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान



ISIS' TWIN BLAST IN IRAN KILLS 100

Seven More Years to Indian Twitter Handler of ISIS

THREE TERROR STRIKES IN BALOCHISTAN

TTP Launches New Militant Wing 'ISTRANA'

AI CHATBOTS POSE RISK OF RADICALISATION

Britain Bans Hizbut Tahreer, Designates it Terrorist Group

+ MORE NEWS & ANALYSES

ISIS CLAIMS TO BE BEHIND TWIN BOMBINGS IN IRAN

OVER 100 KILLED, INJURED IN KERMAN IN DEADLIEST ATTACK SINCE REVOLUTION



Iranian youth salvaging valuables from the burning wreckage of the bomb blasts that rocked ceremonies marking Oassem Soleimani's assassination in Kerman on 3 January 2024. — HW

On 3 January 2024, more than 100 people were killed and injured at an event honouring General Qassem Soleimani after twin bombing attacks (the second attack taking place twenty minutes after the first blast went off) occurred in the south-eastern city of Kerman. ISIS' Amaq Agency claimed responsibility for the deadly attacks.

The terrorist outfit claimed that the attacks 'dealt a strong security blow to the Iranian government at a time when several parties are trying to promote Iranian project in the region.' These suicide bombings were the deadliest attacks faced by the country since the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Iranian officials, including the President and the Supreme Leader, threatened retaliatory action in response to the terrorist attacks. President Raisi vowed that 'undoubtedly, the perpetrators of this cowardly attack will soon be identified and punished for their heinous act by the capable security and law enforcement forces.'

The President's Senior Advisor, Mohammad Jamshidi accused the US and Israel of being the primary perpetrators on X (Twitter) – 'Make no mistake. The responsibility for this crime lies with the US and Zionist regimes and terrorism is just a tool.'

Several countries and leaders, including the United Nations Security General, condemned the terrorist acts. – [Reuters](#), [The National News](#)

ISIS TWITTER ACCOUNT HANDLER GETS SEVEN YEARS IN JAIL



MEHDI MASROOR BISWAS

On 16 January 2024, a Bengaluru-based special court for terrorism cases, convicted Mehdi Masroor Biswas (an ISIS sympathiser and a social media propagandist) for trying to 'wage a war against an Asiatic Power in alliance, promoting enmity, and for encouraging terrorism.'

He was an engineering graduate and hailed from West Bengal. He will spend at least the next seven years in prison. Biswas was arrested in December 2014 in a joint operation carried out by Bengaluru's Central Crime Branch and Internal Security Department. His arrest took place after the United Kingdom's Channel 4 News Channel revealed that he used the @shamiwitness handle to aid the recruitment of British nationals into ISIS. – [The Indian Express](#)

TTP LAUNCHES NEW MILITANT WING 'ISTRANA'



A graphic purportedly representing TTP militants

Dera Ghazi Khan region police are on high-alert following reports that the banned terrorist organisation Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) has launched a new wing comprising highly-trained, well-equipped and ferocious wing to specifically target the Punjab police personnel to make inroads into the province's territory.

As per well-placed sources, at least three Dera Khan checkpoints — Lakhani, Jangi and Trijman — situated in the hardcore tribal areas have become particularly vulnerable. The new TTP wing is responsible for some recent deadly attacks on the law-enforcement agencies personnel in Dera Ismail Khan in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

A senior official told Dawn that initially the outfit named 'Istrna' comprised only 10 to 12 militants, however, some recent intelligence reports suggest that its strength has now increased to around 50.— [WION](#), [Dawn](#)

THREE TERRORIST ATTACKS KILL 15 IN BALOCHISTAN

BLA CLAIMS TO HAVE TAKEN CONTROL OF MACH CITY, SURROUNDING AREAS



View of the charred truck container torched by Balochistan Liberation Army at central Bolan district, in Balochistan province, on January 30, 2024. — AFP

Heavily armed terrorists launched three coordinated attacks, including one on a high-security prison, in Pakistan's restive Balochistan province, leaving four law enforcement personnel and two civilians dead and triggering a gun-battle in which nine of the militants were also killed.

The Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) claimed on 30 January 2024 that it has taken control of Mach city and its surrounding areas for the past 15 hours as part of "Operation Dara-e-Bolan."

In a statement, Jeeyand Baloch, a BLA spokesperson said, "Four Baloch freedom fighters of the Majeed Brigade have made the ultimate sacrifice." According to the statement, "the BLA's Special Tactical Operations Squad (STOS) took control of all entry and exit routes in the area by placing explosive mines to hinder any potential enemy reinforcement... The Fateh Squad has taken charge of key locations like the Police Station, Railway Station, and various areas in Mach city".

This comes after Balochistan's interim Information Minister, Jan Achakzai, said on Monday that the Pakistan Army had successfully foiled three simultaneous militant attacks in the Mach area of Balochistan. Achakzai had said that there were "reports of a few rockets fired from the hilly area in Mach, Balochistan." However, BLA claimed its Majeed Brigade encircled the main camp of enemy (Pakistani) forces, establishing fortified positions after infiltrating from multiple directions. "The Fidayeen of Majeed Brigade will fight till their last bullet. So far at least 45 enemy personnel have been killed in Mach, and 10 were killed in the Peer Ghaib attack", the statement further said. — [The Hindu](#), [India Today](#)

AI CHATBOTS POSE RISKS OF RADICALISATION: EXPERT

UK GOVT TECH TSAR FOR LEGISLATION AGAINST AI TERROR INCITEMENT



Jonathan Hall KC, the United Kingdom's Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, believes that his government must introduce fresh legislations to address security challenges posed by the potential radicalisation of artificial intelligence (AI) chatbots. This must done within the framework of updated online safety regulations and terrorism regulations.

He discovered as part of his investigation into this issue that one of the AI chatbots, presenting itself as a senior ISIS leader, attempted to recruit him into the terrorist organisation. He was an engaging with an AI chatbot on the character.ai website.

Additionally, he pointed out that character.ai's terms and conditions merely prohibit 'only to the submission by human users of content that promotes terrorism or violent extremism, rather than the content generated by its bots.'

Hall has asserted that the newly enacted Online Safety Act by the British government is insufficient to effectively deal with a generative and sophisticated artificial intelligence.

He has cautioned that the need for implementing new legislations will become necessary if people continue training terrorist chatbots. Moreover, he emphasised that 'our (British) laws must be capable of deterring the most cynical or reckless online conduct, and that must include reaching behind the curtain to the big tech platforms in the worst cases, using updated terrorism

**GOLDY BRAR,
KILLER OF
RAP STAR
MOOSAWALA,
DESIGNATED
TERRORIST**



GOLDY BRAR

India's Ministry of Home Affairs has declared Satinderjit Singh, popularly known as Goldy Brar, as a designated terrorist under Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. In 2022, the central government issued a Red-Corner Notice to INTERPOL. Brar is accused of carrying out multiple killings and trafficking arms, explosives, and ammunition using drones.

Furthermore, the charges against him also refer to how he espouses radical ideology, has threatened pro-nationalist leaders, and made demands for ransom. Goldy Brar has claimed responsibility for Sidhu Moosewala's (a Congress politician and popular rap star) murder in 2022. – [Hindustan Times](#)

UK BANS HIZB UT-TAHRIR, DESIGNATED AS TERRORIST GROUP

On 19 January 2024, the United Kingdom officially banned Hizb ut-Tahrir and designated it as a terrorist organisation under the Terrorism Act 2000 for anti-Semitism and supporting terrorism and terrorist organisations.

Earlier, in 2005 and 2011, British governments had considered or attempted to ban this outfit.

The most recent and successful attempt to proscribe it took place following the 7 October attack carried out by Hamas against Israel.

Following this, Hizb ut-Tahrir was thrust into the spotlight and onto the authorities' radar.

It, in its social media posts, publicly called on Muslim countries to 'get your armies and go remove the Zionist oppressors.'

This reignited calls and pressure on the government to ban the organisation. – [*The International Centre for Counter-Terrorism*](#)

India Extends Ban on SIMI by Five More Years

India's Ministry of Home Affairs has extended the ban against the Students Islamic Movement of India or SIMI for five more years.

Mr. Amit Shah, the Minister for Home Affairs, tweeted, 'Bolstering PM Narendra Modi ji's vision of zero tolerance against terrorism Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) has been declared as an Unlawful Association for a further period of five years under the UAPA.

The SIMI has been found involved in fomenting terrorism, disturbing peace and communal harmony, to threaten the sovereignty, security, and integrity of Bharat.' – [*Live Mint*](#)

3 US Soldiers Killed By Pro-Iran Radicals

Three American service members were killed and several dozen wounded in a drone attack on 28 January 2024.

This attack occurred on an American base in northeast Jordan. The base is close to Jordan-Syria border.

President Joe Biden accused the 'radical Iran-backed militant groups operating in Syria and Iraq' of carrying out the attack. – [*CBS News*](#)

Public Display of Nazi Symbols Criminalized

On 8 January 2024, a federal law criminalising sale or public display of terrorist and Nazi groups' symbols came into effect in Australia.

This is believed to be the 'first legislation of its kind' and viewed as a response to surging anti-Semitism.

The offenders will be required to serve up to twelve months in prison. However, the law exempts the use of or sale of Nazi symbols for academic, sacred religious, and educational purposes. – [*Jurist*](#)

India-Kyrgyz Anti-Terror Exercise

On 22 January 2024, India and Kyrgyzstan began their 11th edition of the joint military exercise, which includes anti-terror drills, known as KHANJAR.

The Special Forces Training School in Bakloh (Himachal Pradesh) is hosting the two-week military exercise this year. This is annual event which alternatively takes place in India and Kyrgyzstan.

On the one hand, the Indian delegation was represented by the Parachute Regiment (Special Forces). The Kyrgyz delegation was represented by the Scorpion Brigade. Each delegation was represented by 20 service personnel. – [*The Statesman*](#)

Africa 'Epicenter of Terror': UN Chief

António Guterres, the United Nations Secretary General, referred to Africa as the 'global epicentre of terrorism' during a meeting in New York on 24 January 2024. He added that terrorist organisations, including ISIS and al-Qaeda (as well as their affiliates) have exploited 'local conflicts and fragilities to serve their ends.' Guterres also called for violent extremism to be 'rooted out.' – [*UN News*](#)

Jihadi Attack in Vienna Foiled

Muhammadrajab B, a Tajik national, will be deported from Germany to Austria soon. He is suspected of plotting a terrorist attack in Vienna where he intended to target the Prater Park and St. Stephen's Cathedral.

He was detained by authorities in the German city of Cologne in December 2023 and is suspected to have an association with the Islamic State in Khorasan Province. – [*RFE/RFL*](#)