

Regional Overview: South Asia 19-25 January 2020

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January 30,
2020



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Bringing clarity to crisis

Key trends in South Asia last week include: electoral violence around mayoral election campaigning in Bangladesh's Dhaka city as well as around municipal elections in India's Telangana state; continuing clashes between supporters and opponents of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 (CAA) across India as well as in Pakistan; and continuing operations by Indian security forces against domestic rebel groups in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K).

Electoral violence took place across multiple countries in South Asia last week. In **Bangladesh**, violence was reported during campaigning for mayoral elections in the capital city, Dhaka, for the second week running. Supporters of the ruling Awami League (AL) reportedly attacked the opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party's (BNP) Dhaka north city mayoral candidate and his supporters during election campaigning. Furthermore, several clashes were reported between supporters of BNP's Dhaka south city mayoral candidate and supporters of an AL candidate during electioneering in the south of the city. Although the two mayoral positions of Dhaka City Corporations have limited jurisdiction over agencies that implement development in the city, the posts are highly contested as the mayors receive cabinet minister status ([Dhaka Tribune, 28 May 2019](#)).

Similarly, in **India**, sporadic violence was reported between supporters of the state's ruling party, Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS), Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Indian National Congress (INC) during Telangana state municipal elections. BJP leaders had openly admitted to encouraging defections of top leaders of the opposition including Telugu Desam Party and INC to fulfill the party's aim at emerging as an alternative to the regionally-dominant TRS ([Economic Times, 2, July 2019](#)). While, the BJP managed to slightly improve their power in the state, TRS won 105 out of the 120 municipalities and 6 out of 9 municipal corporations in Telangana ([Times of India, 25 January 2020](#)).

Elsewhere in India, nationwide demonstrations continued against the CAA. Demonstrations were held by women's groups across several states including Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh, emulating an ongoing protest organized mainly by Muslim women in Delhi since 15 December 2019 ([BBC, 4 January 2020](#)). In West Bengal, Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh, violent clashes were reported between supporters and opponents of the Act. Additionally, two women in Rajasthan and West Bengal were reportedly attacked by locals who suspected them of conducting surveys for the CAA and National Register of Citizens (NRC). Demonstrations against the CAA also continued across Sindh province in **Pakistan**.

Meanwhile, Indian security forces continued their operation against militant outfits Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (HM) and Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) in J&K. Five HM militants, three JeM militants and two Indian security personnel were reportedly killed during the operations.



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