

Regional Overview: South Asia 5-11 January 2020

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Bringing clarity to crisis

Key trends in South Asia last week include: organized violence involving domestic rebel groups in Pakistan, as well as notification of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 (CAA) as a law amidst continued demonstrations against the Act in India.

In **Pakistan**, at least 17 people, including a senior police officer, were reportedly killed in two bomb explosions by Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan offshoot Hizbul Ahrar. One of these is a suspected suicide attack inside a mosque during Friday prayers. The explosions marked the return of violence in Balochistan province following a respite over the previous weeks.

In **India**, the Government of India formally notified the controversial CAA as a law amidst continued nationwide anti-CAA demonstrations. The CAA came into effect as of 10 January 2020 ([Times of India, 17 December 2019](#)). Critics argue the Act is exclusionary toward the Muslim population, and is opposed by the northeastern states of India over concerns regarding the implications of the Act on demographic changes.

Nationwide demonstrations across India were also held to condemn an attack by masked assailants injuring at least 26 students and teachers at New Delhi's Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU). Students and teachers were demonstrating against indiscriminate hostel fee hikes at JNU. The assailants are suspected to be members of a right-wing student group linked to the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The university, often referred to as the "bastion of left-wing student politics" in the country ([Al Jazeera, 6 January 2020](#)), has consistently resisted the BJP government over various issues, including the recent controversial CAA. Demonstrators suspect that the attack was linked to the left-leaning student bodies' opposition to the CAA ([BBC, 6 January 2020](#)).



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