

Pak hangs 8 convicts ahead of Peshawar school attack anniversary

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Islamabad: Pakistan today executed eight convicted murderers in different jails of its Punjab province, bringing the total number of executions to 310 since it lifted a moratorium on the death penalty following a terror attack on an army run school in December last year.

The hangings were carried out just a day before the first anniversary of the Peshawar school attack that left over 150 people, mostly students, dead and prompted the government to lift the six-year moratorium on the death penalty.

The latest executions were carried out in jails of Multan, Bahawalpur, Gujrat, Attock and Dera Ghazi Khan, according an official of interior ministry. "Two convicts each were hanged in Multan, Bahawalpur and Gujrat and one each in Dera Ghazi Khan and Attock," said the official.

"They were convicted for separate murders." Today's hangings takes the number of execution to 310 in less than one year, in a shocking development to the local and international human right activists.

Organisations like the UN, the EU, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have demanded Pakistan to stop the hangings. However, Pakistan rejected their demands, saying that it will help to deter militancy in the country.

The rights activists reject the argument as more than 90 per cent hanged since restoration of moratorium were those convicted for murder and were not involved in terrorism. Initially executions were resumed for terrorism offences only. Later, the government lifted moratorium on the death penalty in all capital cases on March 10.

- PTI