



Egypt leader looks to 'new capital' to cement his legacy

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## Indian trash-tackling brothers win award



GUAYAQUIL: Members of the Ecuadorian police remove the body of an inmate on the roof of a pavilion of the Guayas 1 prison in Guayaquil, Ecuador. — AFP

# Prison riot kills 68 in Ecuador

## Bloodbath as rival gangs battle with guns, explosives, blades

**GUAYAQUIL, Ecuador:** Prison inmates from rival gangs in Ecuador fought each other with guns, explosives and blades in a bloodbath that left at least 68 dead in the same prison where a riot in September claimed 119 lives, officials said. Authorities said late Saturday they had re-gained control of the prison in Guayaquil for a second time in as many days after President Guillermo Lasso's spokesman said fighting had again broken out earlier in the day between inmates from rival gangs tied to drug trafficking rings.

In the initial riot that began Friday night prisoners fought with "savagery," said Pablo Arosemena, governor of the province of Guayas where the prison is located. The riot began around 7:00 pm Friday when prisoners tried to enter Block 2 of the jail where their rivals were held, firing gunshots, detonating explosives and swinging machetes, and prompting police to move in. At least 68 prisoners were killed and another 25 were wounded, according to a statement which the Ecuador Prosecutor's Office posted on Twitter. In the second outbreak of fighting Saturday, inmates from two other blocks attacked each other, said presidential spokesman Carlos Jijon.

He confirmed a little while later that police had

pushed through to the prison's interior and that the situation was "under control." Officials said the violence started when one of the gangs inside the prison, the Tiguerones, was left without its leader because he was released after serving part of his sentence for stealing auto parts. Other groups, sensing weakness in the Tiguerones with that man gone, went on the attack to try to crush the gang, Arosemena said. He said their goal was "to go in and carry out a total massacre."

**'Help them'**  
Earlier Saturday, police officers in riot gear were seen climbing up the blood-stained prison walls, while the body of an inmate in an orange prison jumpsuit lay on the roof of the jail encircled by barbed wire. Images posted on social networks, whose authenticity has not been confirmed by the authorities, showed a pile of bodies in a night-time prison courtyard being consumed by flames while inmates standing nearby beat the bodies with sticks.



### Sept prison riot claimed 119 lives

In another video, a prisoner from the block that was being attacked says, "We are locked in our pavilion. They want to kill us all." "Please share this video. Please help us!" the inmate implores, as repeated bangs are heard in the background. Dozens of people gathered outside the prison gates

Saturday morning, fainting or weeping as they tried to learn the fate of their loved ones inside. "They are human beings, help them," read a banner held by one of the families, kept back by a deployment of police and soldiers supported by an armored car.

A group of women with one cell phone shouted prisoners' names to an inmate who was inside the prison and on the line, hoping to know if those men were still alive. "Here there are relatives from block two and they need to know about the boys," the woman holding the phone said. A crackly voice was heard from the phone but the signal was spotty and then there was just silence. At a coroner's office in the city, Felix Gonzalez

showed up holding his imprisoned son's ID card and asked if his body was there. "It is not fair for him to die for stealing a cell phone," Gonzalez told AFP.

More than 300 prisoners have been killed this year in Ecuador's criminal detention system, where thousands of inmates tied to drug gangs square off in violent clashes that often turn into riots. September's unrest was one of the worst prison massacres in Latin American history, and the latest deadly violence in Guayaquil only reaffirmed the broken state of Ecuador's jails. Rival drug gangs have been waging a bloody feud in the Guayas 1 prison in Guayaquil, a facility that was designed for 5,300 inmates, but houses 8,500.

But even after a crackdown in the wake of the September 28 tragedy that killed 119, the unrest has persisted, with at least 15 more inmates dying prior to Friday's deadly burst of violence. Two weeks after the September disaster, the president declared a 60-day state of emergency in a bid to tame surging drug-related unrest. Violence has spiked dramatically in recent months in Ecuador, where the economy is ailing. Between January and October this year, the country registered almost 1,900 homicides, compared to about 1,400 in all of 2020, according to the government. — AFP

## Queen suffers 'sprained back'

**LONDON:** Queen Elizabeth II has a "sprained back" and will miss Sunday's Remembrance service - her first planned public appearance since resting on medical advice, Buckingham Palace said. The ceremony honoring fallen troops is close to the monarch's heart and her absence will deepen concerns over her health after she stepped back on medical advice and spent a night in hospital undergoing unspecified tests at the end of last month.

She then resumed "light duties", but pulled out of a scheduled attendance at the UN climate change summit in Glasgow after being advised to rest. "The Queen, having sprained her back, has decided this morning with great regret that she will not be able to attend today's Remembrance Sunday Service at the Cenotaph," a palace statement said. "Her Majesty is disappointed that she will miss the service." Her son Prince Charles will lay a wreath on her behalf, as in previous years.

Charles and his son Prince William represented the family in Glasgow, making a series of speeches. A two-day trip to Northern Ireland was also shelved as was her appearance Tuesday at the General Synod, the national assembly of the Church of England which she heads. The 95-year-old was due to view Sunday's annual service in London from a balcony, as she has done since 2017, when she handed over some duties to younger members of the family. "Mindful of her doctors' recent advice, The Queen has decided not



LONDON: In this file photo, Britain's Queen Elizabeth II attends a ceremony at the Cenotaph on Whitehall in central London. — AFP

to attend", the statement said. Queen Elizabeth II succeeded her father, King George VI, in 1952 and next year is her Platinum Jubilee, marking her 70th year on the throne. She returned to her Windsor Castle residence, west of London, on Tuesday, after a long-planned weekend away at her Sandringham estate in eastern England. The palace has previously said it was her "firm intention" to attend Sunday's Remembrance event, which brings together veterans, their families and political leaders. The Queen, who also pulled out of the separate Festival of Remembrance event on Saturday, is head of the Armed Forces and served as a mechanic during World War II. Royal aides have blamed a busy

recent schedule that had left her "exhausted" but she was recently seen driving in the grounds of Windsor. She took a step back from work on October 20, the day after a reception at Windsor Castle where she chatted with Prime Minister Boris Johnson and US billionaire Bill Gates.

She spent the following night in hospital, her first since 2013, where Buckingham Palace said she underwent "preliminary examinations". The monarch had appeared in strong form in public until recently, despite the loss of her 99-year-old husband Prince Philip in April. She had attended official engagements almost daily, similar to her pre-pandemic workload, since returning from her traditional summer holiday in Balmoral, Scotland. — AFP

## 26 Maoist rebels killed in gunfight

**NEW DELHI:** At least 26 Maoist rebels were killed on Saturday in a gunfight with special commandos in a remote Indian forest, police said, the latest deadly clash in the vast country's longest armed conflict. Police said three commandos were badly wounded in the hours-long clash in the dense forests of Gadchiroli district, some 1,000 kilometers east of Mumbai, the capital of Maharashtra state.

Gadchiroli is one of dozens of Maoist hotbeds dotting the mineral-rich districts of central and eastern India where tens of thousands of guerrillas are fighting the government for better rights for marginalized and indigenous peoples. Police said the firefight erupted after special police commandos intercepted a group of rebels in the Mardintola forest.

"At least 26 Naxals are dead," an officer from Maharashtra police told AFP on condition of anonymity, using a local term for the left-wing rebels. The officer said special forces were still conducting a search operation in the remote area amid sporadic gunfire. Gadchiroli police chief Ankit Goyal told AFP that they were trying to retrieve the bodies of the slain Maoists. "The exact number of casualties and their

identities will be known after the bodies are recovered," Goyal said.

He said three police commandos were airlifted to the city of Nagpur for treatment after suffering serious injuries. The deadly clash in Gadchiroli is the latest in India's long-running Maoist insurgency that began in the 1960s, and has cost thousands of lives. The government has deployed tens of thousands of forces to battle the rebels across the insurgent-dominated region known as the "Red Corridor", which stretches across several central, southern and eastern states.

Delhi has also pumped millions of dollars into infrastructure development in the remote areas dominated by tribal communities, and claims to have confined the armed insurgency to 53 districts in 2020, down from 96 in 2010. Police in eastern Jharkhand - one of the worst affected states - said Friday they had arrested a top leader of the outlawed rebel group, Prashant Bose, who is in his late 70s, had a bounty of 10 million rupees (\$134,000) on his head and was arrested in the state's Seraikela district. Bose is accused of orchestrating more than 100 violent attacks over the last four decades. — AFP