

## HIGHWAY BLAST

# 34 Afghans killed as bus hits Taliban bomb

**KABUL:** An explosion yesterday hit a bus travelling on a highway between two cities in western Afghanistan, killing 34 passengers, including children, and injuring 17, officials said.

Security has been deteriorating across Afghanistan, with the Taliban and Islamic State fighters mounting near-daily attacks on Afghan forces, government employees and civilians.

The blast on the highway linking the provincial capitals of Herat and Kandahar took place in the Ab Khorma area of Farah



*A child receiving treatment after he was injured in a blast on the Kandahar-Herat highway in Ab Khorma, Farah province, yesterday.*

AFP PIC

province, said provincial police spokesman Mohibullah Mohib.

"The bomb was freshly planted by the Taliban insurgents to target Afghan and foreign security forces," he said.

Taliban officials were not immediately available for comment and there was no claim of responsibility for the attack.

Government and aid officials said the numbers of those being killed was rising because of ex-

plosives newly planted by the Taliban, who now controlled more territory than at any point since their ouster 18 years ago.

Yesterday's blast came ahead of presidential elections next month, when United States officials and Taliban representatives were also due to resume talks to agree to a timetable for the withdrawal of foreign forces in exchange for security guarantees. **Reuters**

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