

## WORLD

# 3 American troops killed in Afghanistan

## French soldier also dies in fight against Taliban

FISNIK ABRASHI  
Associated Press

KABUL — Three U.S. troops were killed Saturday when roadside bombs ripped through their patrol in southern Afghanistan, while a French soldier died in a gun battle north of the

capital, officials said. The Americans were killed in the southern Kandahar province, said Navy Chief Petty Officer Brian Naranjo. He gave no further details on the blasts, pending notification of the victims' families.

Roadside bombs have become the militants' weapon of choice in Afghanistan, and the number of such attacks has spiked this year, as thousands of additional American forces have

joined the fight. President Barack Obama has ordered 21,000 additional troops to Afghanistan and expects the total number of U.S. forces here to reach 68,000 by year's end.

That's double the number of U.S. troops that were in Afghanistan in 2008 but still half as many as are now in Iraq.

Deaths among U.S. and other NATO troops also have soared this year. With 74 foreign troops killed —

including 43 Americans — July was the deadliest month for international forces since the start of the war in 2001.

Separately a French soldier was killed and two others were wounded during a clash with insurgents north of Kabul, the French military said in a statement.

The military said the slain corporal was part of a 230-strong joint Afghan and French force that came under attack from the Taliban in a

valley north of Kabul early Saturday. It did not say how many insurgents launched the attack, but said it led to a clash that lasted more than one hour and two French soldiers were wounded. There were no reports of Taliban casualties.

France has lost 29 soldiers in Afghanistan since 2001, and has 2,900 troops in the country.

In Paris, a statement from President Nicolas Sarkozy's office said he

condemned the soldier's killing and "reiterated France's determination to fight, alongside the Afghan people, against obscurantism and terrorism."

There are 62,000 U.S. troops and 39,000 allied forces in Afghanistan, on top of about 175,000 Afghan soldiers and police. Some NATO countries plan to withdraw their troops in the next couple of years, even as the U.S. ramps up its presence.

# 6 Pakistani Christians die in riots with Muslims

## Violence starts after allegations of defaced Quran

ASIF SHAHZAD  
Associated Press

ISLAMABAD — Hundreds of rioting Muslims attacked Christians in eastern Pakistan on Saturday, burning and looting their homes in a rampage that killed six Christians, including a child, and wounded 10 others in the latest violence against minorities in the conservative Muslim country.

The unrest started late Thursday, when members of a banned extremist Muslim organization began torching Christian homes in a village in the Punjabi city of Gojra after allegations that a Quran had been defaced, Federal Minister for Minorities Shahbaz Bhatti said.

Violence flared again Saturday, when shots were fired on a peaceful Muslim rally passing by a Christian neighborhood, said local minister Dost Mohammad Khosa. It remained unclear who fired the shots, he added.

"That made things worse. We are sure some miscreant elements have tried to exploit the situation," he said.

Television footage showed baton-wielding crowds running through the streets, blocking traffic and a railway line. Ransacked furniture lay outside blackened and burning homes, while a group of people rushed a man with burn injuries on a wooden hand-pulled cart through the streets.

Gunfire also could be heard ringing out.

Authorities said the six people killed included a child and four women, while Bhatti said about 40 Christian homes had been burned since Thursday.

Kamran Micheal, provincial minister for minorities, said the situation remained tense into the night, although police had dispersed the mob. He said negotiations were under way between government officials, representatives from the minority community and the villagers.

Micheal said he feared the death toll could rise as crews cleared the debris of burned houses. He said 10 people had

been wounded, four by gunshots, and two of those were in critical condition.

Paramilitary troops were sent to Gojra to help police control the situation, Interior Minister Rehman Malik said, amid allegations the police had failed to respond quickly enough to prevent the violence from escalating.

"Usually, Muslims and Christians live together peacefully. There have been some miscreants involved in this incident. We are investigating that," Malik said.

Christians make up a tiny minority of Pakistan's predominantly Sunni Muslim population of 160 million people. Although the two communities generally live peacefully, Muslim radicals have periodically targeted churches and Christians.

Minorities also face intimidation mainly because of discriminatory laws, including one that carries the death penalty for using derogatory language against Islam, the Quran and the Prophet Muhammad. This law is often misused to settle personal scores and rivalries.



Pakistani rescue workers on Saturday search for bodies trapped in the rubble of a five-story building that collapsed a day earlier in Karachi. The building apparently was weakened by heavy monsoon rains, said Mayor Mohammad Dilawar.

# 21 die in Karachi building collapse

ASSOCIATED PRESS

KARACHI, Pakistan — A five-story building collapsed in the southern Pakistani city of Karachi, killing at least 21 people, mostly women and children, authorities said Saturday.

Local Mayor Mohammad Dilawar, who was supervising the rescue work,

said the building caved in late Friday in the congested downtown Lea Market neighborhood.

A district government official, Masood Alam, said 21 bodies had been retrieved from the debris and that the toll could rise.

"We have so far removed almost half of the rubble," he said.

Rescue teams were having trouble moving through the narrow streets in the area.

The building apparently was weakened by heavy monsoon rains, Dilawar said.

Karachi, a city of more than 16 million people, has an aging infrastructure and a poor drainage system.

# A prayer for protection as schools reopen in Swat Valley

NAHAL TOOSI  
AND ZARAR KHAN  
Associated Press

MINGORA, Pakistan — The Taliban invaded their school, an explosion damaged it and a Pakistani army offensive forced them to leave it behind.

As classes in the Swat Valley resumed Saturday for the first time in months, this group of schoolboys began the day with a prayer for protection from the Quran.

"Say, 'I seek refuge in the lord of men, the king of men, the God of men, from the evil of the whisperer, who slinks off, who whispers into the hearts of men, from jinns and men!'" one student read to his teenage classmates at the school in Mingora, Swat's main city.

The resumption of school may be the most symbolic and psychologically critical step yet for authorities trying

to revive Swat. After all, destroying schools — girls' schools especially — was a favorite Taliban activity.

Still, attendance Saturday was sparse — less than 10 percent at some schools — though most schools opened, officials said. Some children studied in tents atop the rubble of their schools. Others braved classrooms where dust swirled in the air and coated workbooks.

"I like school. I love reading stories too much!" said 10-year-old Nazish Habib, one of around 30 girls who showed up at a girls' school that normally has around 700 students.

There are about 1,600 government-run schools in Swat. Over the past two years, Taliban in the region destroyed around 200 schools. Most were girls' institutions, though some prominent boys' schools were struck as well.



Students look out and smile from their classroom Saturday at a school in Mingora, the capital of Pakistan's troubled Swat Valley, where the Taliban has taken to destroying schools.

## Congratulations

### Airwell Introduces Innovative Oil Pump That Is Ideal For 'Stripper' Wells



Manager, Ray Brown, cuts the ribbon for the Gold Coat Ambassadors at the "Grand Opening" celebration of Airwell Oil & Gas, creators of an innovative new pump for low-volume wells.

Airwell Oil & Gas LLC recently celebrated its "Grand Opening" at 5016 Old Jacksboro Hwy, Suite B, with a ribbon-cutting ceremony featuring the Gold Coat Ambassadors of the Wichita Falls Chamber of Commerce & Industry. The company also is introducing to North Texas oil and gas operators "a new way to pump oil!"

General Manager, Ray Brown, said the company has received a great deal of interest from oil and gas operators in the North Texas area seeking an alternative to existing methods of pumping from low-flow "stripper" wells.

Airwell's innovative new pump uses compressed air to optimize a well's production by continuously pumping without any down-time or damage to pumping equipment. Designed and first tested in Australia, this revolutionary pump design is suited to pumping low volume wells.

Brown noted that one out of six barrels of crude oil produced in the United States comes from a marginal "Stripper" well. More than 85 percent of the oil wells in the United States are classified as marginal "Stripper" wells."

Airwell offers its pump on a lease basis as part of a complete oil pumping service. It is able to pump from depths as deep as 3,280 feet. It is self-adjusting for slow recharge wells.

For more information, contact Ray Brown at (940) 642-3851 or Sales Representative George Alderman at (940) 642-1079.

## Congratulations

### Parkway Grill Celebrates 25th Birthday



Owners, Scott and Melissa Plowman, cut the ribbon for the Gold Coat Ambassadors to celebrate the 25th Birthday of the Parkway Grill, 2719 Southwest Pkwy.

The Parkway Grill, 2719 Southwest Pkwy., celebrated its 25th birthday recently with a ribbon-cutting ceremony featuring the Gold Coat Ambassadors of the Wichita Falls Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

Owners, Scott and Melissa Plowman, have built the city's favorite sports-theme restaurant and bar where families and individuals love to eat, visit and watch popular sporting events on one of the restaurant's 44 televisions. "All of our food is fresh and made to order."

As part of its sports theme, the Parkway Grill is filled with sports photos and paraphernalia from local high schools and college teams as well as favorite professional teams.

Besides delicious food, the Parkway Grill provides a great fun atmosphere where there is always something going on. The Plowmans are very active in the community. In addition to owning the restaurant, Scott Plowman was recently elected secretary-treasurer of the Texas Restaurant Association.

He said one reason for their success is their belief in treating their customers right. "We have a lot of regular customers whom we enjoy seeing each week," said Scott.

Starting with about 20 employees, he noted the staff has grown to more than 50 today.

"We want to thank all of our loyal customers and employees for their support over the years."

The restaurant is open daily from 11 a.m. to midnight.