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Al Jazeera

Afghan children among bus blast victims

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At least 26 people have been killed and others wounded in two separate bomb attacks in Afghanistan, one in the east and one in the west of the country.

On Thursday, a roadside bomb tore through a minibus in Herat in western Afghanistan, killing 24 people, including seven children, local officials said.

"We have been in touch with the local police chief in Herat, and he said that at least 24 people were killed in the blast and many of them children," Al Jazeera's Charles Stratford said, reporting from Kabul.

"At least nine others were injured and are in very serious or critical condition," he added.

The bus, packed with passengers, was travelling between the district of Obe in Herat province and the provincial capital, said Moheyddin Noori, a spokesman for the provincial governor.

The blast was possibly caused by a land mine, Noori said.

The incident highlighted the problem of IEDs (improvised explosive device), which foreign and Afghan military say are incredibly difficult to detect, our correspondent noted. The Taliban has denied responsibility for the blast, he said.

Meanwhile, a suicide bomber attacked a US-run base used by international forces in Gardez, the capital of eastern Afghanistan's Gardez province, police and the US-led NATO coalition said.

The bomber detonated a small truck laden with explosives at the entrance to the military-civilian compound, killing two Afghan security guards, officials said.

In a statement e-mailed to the media, Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid said the attack was carried out by a 70-year-old man from Nuristan province in eastern Afghanistan.

A coalition spokesman told AFP that the bomber had tried to enter the base in a vehicle but detonated his explosives when he was stopped by guards.

The base in Gardez houses small groups of international troops and civilian experts known as Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT), and is one of 20 across the country run by various western nations.