Taliban Kills Three Hostages in Baghlan: Official

By Ily Tahl

The Taliban group has confirmed the killing of three hostages in Baghlan province. The group’s spokesman said in a statement that the hostages were killed during a successful military operation.

"We have conducted different operations in different districts of Baghlan in which we have huge success," said Taliban’s Spokesman, Ahmad Shams.

"We will continue to raid and attack our enemies and will not let them rest," he added.

This comes as the Taliban has been stepping up its operations in different parts of Afghanistan in recent months.

KABUL - Bodies of the three hostages were found in the northern province of Baghlan.

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Helmand Produces 24,000 Tonnes of Pomegranates

The Agriculture Department said on Thursday: "But farmers complain the government has not provided them with any kind of cooperation in looking after their orchards or enhancing the fruit yield.

"Gulab Shah, a resident of Nad Ali district, told Pajhwok Afghan News he planted pomegranate saplings on 10 acres of land.

"The yield is good but we don’t have a gauft market for the fruit. The government has granted us no facilities," he grumbled.

Ahmad Shams, head of the orchard owners’ union, said around 30 types of pomegranate plants were experimented with, giving good yields.

He beheld Helmand, Afghanistan’s largest opium-producing province, could be transformed into a pomegranate-producing province if the government co-operation was restored.

"Director General Zalmay Akhlo said pomegranate orchards had been established on 1,156 hectares of land, which yielded 24,683 tonnes of the fresh juicy fruit this year.

"However, efforts were underway to find a good market for the fruit in other provinces. Helmand produced 2,100 tonnes of pomegranate last year."