Peace Activists Call on Govt-Taliban to End the War

KABUL - Members of the Helmand Peace Convoy on Sunday called on the Afghan government and the Taliban leadership to honor the demands of the Afghan people and reach a ceasefire agreement to end the ongoing bloodshed in the country. They said the resolve by all parties to continue the war in the country is a shame.

“This nation has shown they are ready for peace, this is the greatest achievement. The ceasefire was a controlled experiment. The government is ready whenever the Taliban want ceasefire. The ceasefire was 98 percent successful,” Ghani said.

He also stated that many Taliban members are tired of the war and want peace, but they need to see the nation showed that it is ready for reconciliation.

Ghani announced a ceasefire on June 17, which was carried out over Eid-ul-Fitr. The Taliban also called a ceasefire over Eid, but only for three days. Over Eid, Ghani extended the government’s ceasefire - but this ended on Friday. However the Taliban failed to respond and immediately after Eid resumed attacks across the country.

“War must become a shame in Afghanistan so that the two sides realize war is a shame and they must stop waging war,” said ex—treasurer leader Gulab Khayr.

Helmand Peace convoy members, who are carrying out a sit-in protest outside the US embassy in Kabul, said on Saturday they will continue their protest until contact has been made with the Taliban. Ghani extended the government’s ceasefire - but this ended on Friday.

The peace activists initially said they would not disperse even though security forces dispersed crowds during different missions and embassies in a bid to be heard.

Afghan—Hakim Hamidzad, one of the Helmand activists, has been relating his personal experiences with the difficulties. [More on P4].

More Than 300 Parwan Schoolchildren Poisoned

GHARDAI - More than 300 students were taken sick after drinking poisonous water in central Parwan province on Sunday morning, an official said.

Deputy Director of Education Naziruddin Rahimi told Pajhwok Afghan News there were 319 students affected.

Rahimi said 117 students had thrown some poisonous substance in the canal - a usual practice - while 192 were taken sick due to drinking the toxic water.

The director said after drinking the toxic water, some students felt dizzy, while others suffered from stomach ache.

Parwan Civil Hospital Director Dr Hassan Musadq confirmed more than 300 students had been brought to the civil hospital for medical treatment after being poisoned.

At least 12 students are stated to be in critical condition and the rest are under observation in the hospital. [More on P4].

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