

Taliban's pressure leads to closure of 300 schools in Afghanistan

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KABUL, Oct. 4 (Xinhua) -- Continued militancy, Taliban's mounting pressure and intimidation have led to the closure of over 300 schools in Afghanistan's southern provinces, a local newspaper reported Wednesday.

"More than 300 schools have been closed down in Afghanistan's troubled southern provinces with 145 of them only in Kandahar," Daily Outlook writes.

The continued security incidents and Taliban's threat has deprived some 70,000 boys and girls from getting education, Outlook quoted Mahbobullah Khan an official at the Education Department in Kandahar as saying.

Southern provinces which include Kandahar, Zabul, Helmand and Uruzgan commonly known as the heartland of Taliban has been the scene of increasing insurgency over the past two years.

More than 1,300 people mostly militants have been killed in Taliban-linked insurgency in the southern region since last May bringing the number of casualties to more than 2,400 this year.

Marzia, 15, who was studying at the girl's high school in Lashkar Gah the provincial capital of Helmand province, gave up her studies in mid September after her father made her leave due to fear of attack.

"My father told me to stop attending school because he feared that one day our school could be targeted by bombs or even by suicide attackers," Outlook quoted Marzia as saying.

Taliban militants which had banned girl's school during their six-year reign have killed at least one teacher, two students and few employees of educational institutions in Afghanistan's southern region over the past one year.

More than 200,000 students are out of schools across the country because of school closures due to fear of attacks, a senior official at the Education Ministry Mohammad Sidiq Patman admitted.

"After the collapse of Taliban we started attending schools with a better hope for our future but now after five years, unfortunately it seems that we are again going back to the dark age," Outlook quoted Marzia as saying. Enditem

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