

## **Taliban kidnap 27 passengers in Afghanistan**

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**Kabul:** At least 27 passengers were kidnapped on Tuesday after Taliban militants intercepted three vehicles in Afghanistan's southern province of Helmand.

"Armed militants stopped two trucks and a long-distance bus along Kabul-Herat Highway in Gereshk district. They captured several passengers and took them to nearby villages," a security source told Xinhua news agency.

Aqa Noor Kentoz, the provincial police chief, said his forces had launched a search operation to locate and rescue the captives.

Qari Yousuf Ahmadi, a purported Taliban spokesman, said the group took the 27 people for interrogation in Gereshk.

The Taliban-led insurgency has been rampant since early April when the militant group launched its annual rebel offensive in different areas of the country.

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