

## **Taliban attack checkpoint near Afghan-India Friendship Dam in Herat, kill 10 policemen**

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**Kabul:** At least 10 policemen were killed and four others were injured when Taliban militants attacked a checkpoint near India-made Salma Dam (also known as Afghan-India Friendship Dam) in the landlocked nation's Herat province.

An Afghan official said that a group of Taliban militants attacked the checkpoint near the dam and fled after killing the policemen. Jelani Farhad, spokesman for the Governor of the western Herat province, said that the Taliban attacked late Saturday. No one immediately claimed the attack.

The Taliban have steadily expanded their reach across Afghanistan since US and international forces formally concluded their combat mission at the end of 2014, switching to a support and counterterrorism role.

In an address Sunday marking the start of Eid al-Fitr, a major Muslim holiday, President Ashraf Ghani reiterated his call for the Taliban to return to peace talks.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Afghan President Ashraf Ghani had in June 2016 jointly inaugurated the dam, a Rs 1,700 crore infrastructure project by India in strategically important Herat province, reflecting new Delhi's strong commitment to reconstruction of the war-ravaged country.

The Afghan-India Friendship Dam on the river Chist-e-Sharif in western Herat neighbouring Iran, irrigates 75,000 hectares of land and will generate 42MW of power.

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