

Afghan Taliban announce start of 'spring offensive'

Kabul
The Afghan Taliban launched their "spring offensive" yesterday, heralding fresh fighting in the drawn-out conflict as embattled security forces struggle to recover from a devastating attack on a military base one week ago.

Operation Mansouri -- named after the group's former leader, killed in a US drone strike in 2016 -- will target foreign forces with "conventional attacks, guerrilla warfare, complex martyrdom attacks, insider attacks", an insurgent statement said.

"The enemy will be targeted, harassed, killed or captured until they abandon their last posts," it continued.

The annual spring offensive normally marks the start of the "fighting season", though this winter the Taliban continued to battle government forces, most successfully in last week's attack on the military base outside the northern city of



A damaged mosque near the army compound outside Mazar-i-Sharif in Balkh province after Taliban attack

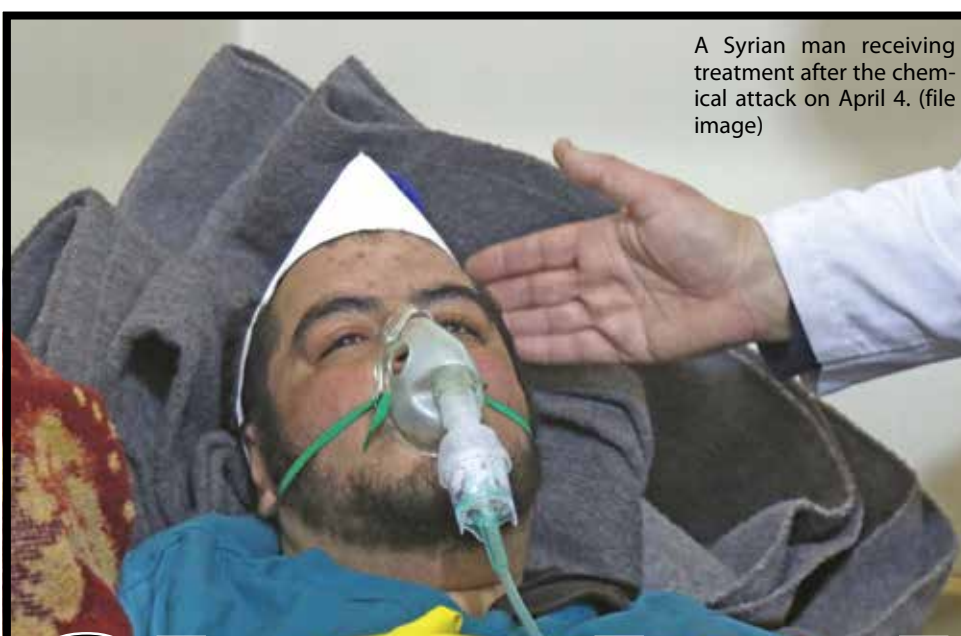
Mazar-i-Sharif.

The massacre last Friday saw insurgents armed with guns and suicide bombs slaughter at least 135 young recruits, according to the official toll, though multiple sources have claimed it is much higher.

The assault is believed to be the deadliest by the Taliban on an Afghan military target since they were driven from

power in 2001, and fuelled fears of insider attacks -- when Afghan soldiers and police turn their guns on colleagues or on international troops.

The attackers carried passes to the base, sources said, and were dressed in Afghan army uniforms. The defence minister and army chief resigned, and at least 35 soldiers have been arrested over the incident.



A Syrian man receiving treatment after the chemical attack on April 4. (file image)

Chemical weapons used 45 times in Syria

The Hague

Experts from the world's watchdog tasked with destroying chemical weapons are probing reports that toxic arms have been used 45 times in Syria since late last year, the body's chief said yesterday.

Director general Ahmet Uzumcu said there was "a huge list of allegations" of the use of toxic arms reported to the operations hub of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

In the "second part of 2016, 30 different incidents, and since the beginning of this year, 15 separate incidents, so 45," he told a reporters, brandishing a list of several pages which he chose to keep confidential.

They include the April 4 sarin gas attack on the rebel-held town of Khan Sheikhun that was reported to have killed 88 people, including 31 children.

"All these allegations are recorded by our experts, who follow this every day from our



Ahmet Uzumcu operations centre," Uzumcu said.

The OPCW is currently trying to ensure it is safe enough to deploy its fact-finding team to the town for further analysis, after Uzumcu said last week that "incontrovertible" test results from OPCW-designated labs on samples taken from victims showed sarin gas or a similar substance had been used.

The government of Syrian

President Bashar al-Assad has "already stated that they would support this mission, actually they have invited us to go via Damascus," he said.

"The problem is that this area is controlled by different armed opposition groups, so we need to strike some deals with them to ensure a temporary ceasefire, which we understand the Syrian government is willing to do," he added. (AFP)

A Venture of VKL Holdings & Al Namal Group

MIDDLE EAST HOSPITAL
TRUSTED HEALTH CARE FOR LIFE



مستشفى الشرق الأوسط
رعاية صحية مميزة مدى الحياة



MATERNITY PACKAGES

15% OFF

Offer valid until 31st May 2017

SERVICE	BEFORE	NOW
Antenatal Package	BD: 280	BD: 240
Normal Delivery Packages		
Normal Delivery	BD: 600	BD: 510
Antenatal/Normal Delivery Package	BD: 850	BD: 725
Caesarean Packages		
Caesarean Section Package	BD: 950	BD: 810
Antenatal/Caesarean/Postnatal Package	BD: 1200	BD: 1020



Dr. Asra Qaseem Ali Khan
MBBS, MD, FICMCH, ARCOG (UK)
Diploma In Reproductive Medicine and Embryology (Germany)
Specialist
OBS & Gynecology



Dr. Ann Bahiah
MBBS, MChChB, CABM
Head of the Department
Consultant
OBS & Gynecology



Dr. Urli Canares Avellanosa
MBBS, MD, DPOG, FPOGS
Specialist
OBS & Gynecology

Our Insurance Partners



For Appointments
17 36 22 33

24x7
EMERGENCY

Near Al Hayat Shopping Centre, Segaya Avenue, Kingdom of Bahrain

www.mehospital.com | Follow us @ mehospitalbh