**Text 1**

KABUL: A suicide bomber killed at least 32 people and wounded 34 when he struck inside a mosque in Maymana city in northern Afghanistan during Eid al-Adha prayers on Friday, officials said.

The attacker was wearing a police uniform when he blew himself up in the crowded Eid Gah mosque in the provincial capital of Faryab province, deputy provincial governor Abdul Satar Barez told AFP.

"As a result of the explosion, 32 people are dead, 17 civilians and 15 police and intelligence agents. The provincial police chief, Abdul Khaliq Aqsai is among the wounded," he said.

Most provincial government officials were also at the mosque, which was crowded on the first day of the four-day holiday for the festival of Eid, which is celebrated throughout the Muslim world.

"We had just finished Eid-ul-Adha prayers and we were congratulating and hugging each other," Barez said.

"Suddenly a big explosion took place and the area was full of dust and smoke and body parts of police and civilians were all over the place. It was a very powerful explosion."

There was no immediate claim of responsibility, but suicide bombings are a favourite weapon of Taliban Islamists trying to topple the Western-backed government of President Hamid Karzai.

Eid al-Adha is a celebration in which Muslims slaughter animals for feasts and distribute a portion of the meat among the poor, and the first day draws large crowds to mosques around the world.

Northern Afghanistan is relatively peaceful, with the Taliban, who were ousted from power in a US-led invasion in 2001, concentrating their operations in the south and east of the country.

But they have recently stepped up their activities in the north, despite the presence of more than 100.000 NATO troops in the country.

Last week, a huge roadside bomb ripped through a minibus carrying guests to a wedding party in the northern province of Balkh, near Faryab, killing 19 people and wounding 16 others.

The United Nations says 1.145 civilians were killed in the war in the first six months of this year, blaming 80 percent of the deaths on insurgents.

Last year as a whole, a record 3.021 civilians died in the war, the United Nations has said.

But Afghan police and government officials have increasingly become targets as local forces take on more responsibility for the fight against the insurgents as NATO prepares to pull out.

The foreign combat troops are due to withdraw by the end of 2014 and there are fears that the Taliban will extend their activities across wider swathes of the country against ill-prepared Afghan forces.

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