EDITOR’S NOTE:

Greetings from the editorial team of ‘Voices from FATA’!

In the November-December 2013 issue of our newsletter, we take our readers to the beautiful valley of Bajaur Agency renowned for its marble industry; Joveria Hassan's photo album relating a trip to the area not only portrays its scenic beauty but also shows the spirit and courage of locals who continue to work for the betterment of their lives and livelihood. Our cover story, ‘Welcome to FATA – the Wild Wild West of the East’ begins on Page 2.

In the FATA Security Monitor section it was observed that violence further reduced towards the end of 2013; even though in general reports of violent incidents in FATA decreased in contrast with the rest of Pakistan, some particular instances such as bomb blasts and suicide attacks caused much loss to life. For more detailed analysis on violence trends in 2013, please refer to Page 5.

In the news section, we have highlighted three important issues; namely health, education and necessary Non Food Items (NFI) for flood-affected IDPs living across KP. Health care facilities across the tribal belt are in dire straits and despite promises – from both the public and private sector – services are not available to ordinary citizens. The same is the case with IDPs who are in desperate need of utility items and protection, especially in the harsh winter months. Lastly, during the National Assembly question hour, it was observed that over 32% of FATA’s schools have been destroyed thus affecting thousands of pupils; however, no measures have been taken thus far for their rehabilitation or reconstruction. To read the full news articles, please go to Page 7.

With the coming NATO withdrawal coming closer, we hope that conditions improve and the people of Pakistan’s tribal belt are given respite from the constant turmoil and strife!
Welcome to FATA – The Wild Wild West of the East!¹

We have always, like many others, talked and written about the problems facing the tribal region and rarely are there any accounts of the beauty and resources that it has to offer, not only for the rest of the country but also the world.

As a cover story for this issue, we have included a photo album by Joveria Hassan who visited FATA’s scenic Bajaur Agency and the marble industry the area is renowned for.

Welcome to FATA – the Wild Wild West of the East. This picturesque landscape, which continues to hit the headlines for all the wrong reasons, has much more to it than one could imagine. Nature has bestowed these rough and rugged mountains of FATA with unlimited reserves of marbles. In the post conflict zone of Bajaur the ongoing production of Marble is contributing considerably towards the economic uplift of the local communities.

¹ Read more travel safety tips on the WorldNomads.com Safety Hub: http://journals.worldnomads.com/joveriahassan/photo/43477/974583/Pakistan/Welcome-to-FATA-the-Wild-Wild-West-of-the-East-This-picturesque-landscape-wh#ixzz2sKSeVONy
Follow us: @travelsafety on Twitter | worldnomads on Facebook
“Tough men (at marble mines), living on the edge, day in day out”. Standing at the edge of the mountain, where the exploration and production of marble is underway, a miner is busy explaining the technical process to the local policeman (commonly known as Khasadar/levis force). In this underserved post-conflict region, we were pleased to see the modern mechanical tools and techniques being made available for the production of marble.

Traditional mud-houses on the naturally abundant mountains of FATA; one of the peaks, storing marble deposits, clearly shows a mud-house (at the top), attacked and destroyed due to militancy.
Modern machinery, being used for the production of marbles, reduces the wastage to 80%.

A high-spirited tribesman, working hard at marble mines to earn a better living for his family, and hoping for peace to return.
In keeping with the downward trend of previous months, fewer incidents of violence in November and December 2013 were reported. There were no occurrences of any mortar shelling, tribal/factional clashes or landmine explosions – only one incident of the last category was reported in December resulting in two casualties.

However, despite an overall decrease in violence, some increase in individual occurrences such as bomb attacks, drone strikes and suicide bombings was observed. While three bomb blasts/attacks were reported in September and October, the combined statistics of the last two months of 2013 show five incidents which resulted in 10 deaths and seven people who were injured. Similarly, four drone strikes were conducted from across the border in November and December killing 18 suspected targets.

It is the first time that violence in FATA has been consistently decreasing on average since the beginning of the War on Terror; this is in complete contrast with the rest of

---

Voices from FATA: Nov-Dec 2013

the country where incidents of terrorism-related violence have drastically increased. The reasons for decrease in violence in FATA could be many; ranging from a shift in policy, military successes in eliminating prominent militants, and the possibility of peace talks with these groups.

However, despite a decrease in the frequency of violent incidents throughout the tribal belt, the number of casualties and injuries affecting people in general remained on the higher side. As seen in the figure below, the number of casualties from January to July 2013 averaged at 216 per month despite fewer incidents of violence.

For instance, about 23 persons were killed and more than 70 others injured in a blast at the election rally of JUI-F candidates at a Madrassa in Sewak village in Kurram Agency of FATA on 06th May 2013. Along with local tribesmen, two bodyguards of the JUI-F candidate from NA-38, Munir Orakzai, and six of his close relatives were also injured in the blast.

![Graph showing number of incidents, killed, and injured from January to December 2013.](image)

**FIRST EVER DRONE STRIKE OUTSIDE FATA – 21ST November 2013**

**Drone Strike in KP kills 6**

A US drone strike in the Thal area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Hangu district killed at least six people, including a senior member of the Taliban-linked Haqqani network, and injured another early on Thursday.

Pakistan strongly condemned the drone strike reiterating its stance that the strikes violate the country's "sovereignty and territorial integrity".

Foreign Office Spokesman Aizaz Ahmed Chaudhry in a statement said "there is an across the board consensus in Pakistan that these drone strikes must end”.

CAMP also joins the GoP in condemning this and other drone strikes conducted across FATA and now KP.

FATA IN THE NEWS

Governor for better health facilities in FATA

PESHAWAR: Taking serious note of the lack of specialist doctors in the tribal region, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Shaukatullah on Thursday asked the authorities to take special measures for making health specialties fully functional in each of the Agency Headquarters Hospitals in FATA.

Taking stock of the situation at a meeting at Governor’s House here, he said the vacant posts in each healthcare institution needed to be filled to help the people avail the medical treatment facilities within their respective areas.

FATA Additional Chief Secretary Arbab Muhammad Arif and Secretary Health and Social Sectors Fata Aftab Akbar Durrani and the relevant programme managers attended the programme.

The meeting evaluated the performance of National TB Control, eye-care and Integrated Vector Management Programmes. The last one is for controlling diseases like malaria, dengue and lashminia which spread because of mosquito bites.

The governor took a keen interest in the number of the population benefitting through such programmes. He desired that special measures were also required to promote awareness amongst people both in respect of precautionary measures and the state of available healthcare facilities for making their proper treatment possible.

“There is a dire need to rationalise the available resources and ensure their optimum utilisation,” he added.

http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-7-211597-Governor-for-better-health-facilities-i

1.2m people urgently need winter items

ISLAMABAD: With the advent of winter, recent returnees to Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and those affected by the earthquakes in Baluchistan urgently need winter items as they are being faced with health and residential problems, said UNOCHA bulletin for October-November released on Wednesday. “FATA and Baluchistan's people are among an estimated 1.2 million people living in vulnerable circumstances and in need of urgent winter support”, reported the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (UNOCHA).

“There are new winter access, hygiene and nutrition needs for IDPs and returnees in FATA and KP”, it added. The bulletin has mentioned lack of adequate shelter and feared that during the winter months, it will increase health problems among people affected by these emergencies. Pneumonia, measles, frostbite and acute respiratory infections may peak from November to February.

According to the shelter cluster, 1.2 million people require non-food items (NFIs) such as blankets, quilts, shawls, kitchen sets, sleeping or plastic mats, jerry cans and solar lamps to cope with the harsh winter expected this year. This caseload comprises returnees and IDPs in the FATA and KP as well as people recovering from earthquakes and floods in Baluchistan, Punjab and Sindh. The onset of winter poses particular concerns in relation to recent IDP returnees to the Tirah Valley in FATA, where the majority of houses are reported as destroyed, UNOCHA reported.
Returnees to Upper Swat, Kohistan, Upper Dir, Shangla, Buner and Lower Dir in KPK; South Waziristan, North Waziristan and Kurram Agency in FATA and thousands of those affected by floods in Sindh, Punjab and Baluchistan are still in need of shelter, the billeting mentioned. Referring to working of the non-governmental organizations, the UNOCHA has claimed that those affected by the earthquakes in Baluchistan in September face serious risks as majority of houses in the villages visited in Awaran and Kech districts were damaged or destroyed by the earthquakes.

The UN organisation acknowledged that in earthquake affected areas of Baluchistan, the government and humanitarian distributions had met the majority of immediate needs. However, it underlined the need for providing winterized tents and NFI packages to provide adequate protection for families with damaged and destroyed houses in the coming months. The UNOCHA further stated that in addition to the ongoing efforts with respect to shelter, the government authorities and their humanitarian partners are endeavouring to undertake public health preparedness steps for winter and cold waves to prevent and mitigate the adverse health effects of cold temperatures in high risk areas. However, it mentioned to difficulties being faced in reaching out certain areas due to security concerns.

Meanwhile, the World Health Organisation (WHO) has prepositioned 38 emergency health kits for 80,000 people for three months. — APP

http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=224354

NA question hour: Over 32% schools in FATA destroyed

ISLAMABAD: The upper house of the parliament was informed on Friday that over 32% of the education institutions in the tribal areas of Pakistan have been destroyed in militancy.

Minister for States and Frontier Regions (Safron), Lt General (retd) Abdul Qadir Baloch informed the National Assembly that over 1,029 educational institutions are non-functional in the federally administered tribal areas (Fata). He added that majority of the schools were destroyed in the military operation against militants.

“Over 947 educational institutions were completely closed due to [the] worsening law and order situation while 82 schools have been damaged in FATA,” Qadir informed the lawmakers in a written reply. Some 4,664 government schools were operational in 2008 in Fata, according to Bureau of Statistics of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa’s reports.

Member National Assembly Qaisar Jamal Afridi of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf had raised the question over closure of educational institutions in tribal areas. “Education system in Fata has been completely destroyed—it must be revived now no matter what,” he told The Express Tribune.

He said that it seems that the federal government has nothing to do with over seven million people—as only 3,000 schools are partially operating in the tribal areas, he observed. The only two degree colleges in Dera Adam Khail and Frontier Peshawar have already been destroyed in militancy, he said, adding that he was trying to convince international donors to invest on education in these areas.

Providing a breakdown, the written reply informed the parliament that as many as 944 schools were destroyed in military operations, while 31 in sectarian violence, 16 in floods and eight schools were damaged in local disputes. Around Rs1 billion will be needed to reconstruct secondary schools, Rs650 million for primary schools, Rs500 million for colleges and Rs550 million for elementary schools.

Published in ‘The Express Tribune’, December 7th, 2013