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4 die as Torkham border gate stays shut

4/30/2013

As Pakistan keeps the Torkham border crossing closed in eastern Nangarhar province, four Afghan patients have died, local authorities said on Tuesday.

Given the lack of appropriate health facilities in the country, most people from eastern parts of Afghanistan take their patients to Pakistan's northwestern city of Peshawar for medical treatment.

Pakistani border guards once again shut the Torkham gate at 8.30am, stranding a large number of Afghans, including the sick and elderly, the border police commissioner said.

Col. Hidayatullah Orya told Pajhwok Afghan News four sick people lost their lives as a result of Pakistani guards' refusal to let them cross the border.

Sahibzada, a shopkeeper in the border town, claimed the gate closure had led to testy exchanges between Pakistani and Afghan border guards.

Last week, the Pakistani government announced the border would be sealed on polling day on May 11 for security reasons. However, the guards shut the gate ahead of that date.