

Schools attacked to stop minds opening

Visiting Nobel Laureate Kailash Satyarthi tells press

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nobel Laureate Kailash Satyarthi yesterday said terrorists were attacking schools on realising that quality education opened children's minds and helped them escape traps designed to create fundamentalists and terrorists.



"We have seen it in Nigeria, Yemen, Pakistan and many parts of the world," he told a press conference Campaign for Popular Education (Campe) organised at a hotel in the capital.

At the forefront of the global movement to end child slavery and exploitative child labour since 1980, the Noble Peace Prize winner arrived with his wife Sumedha Kailash on a two-day visit yesterday.

Stating that about 58 million children worldwide are being denied education while another 250 million quality education, he said it would be a shame if even a single child was unable to attain quality education.

"I strongly feel that denial of education is

also violence against children. Every child is born with this divine right to learn. So they cannot afford to continue with illiteracy," said Kailash.

"Child labour, poverty, illiteracy form a triangular paradigm...if you allow illiteracy, in fact, denial of education to continue, you cannot eradicate poverty without the eradication of illiteracy.

"If they are working in mines, factories and farms and fields and as domestic helps, then they are denied education and vice versa," he said. An additional US \$ 22 billion per year, one fourth of what Americans spend on tobacco, can ensure quality education for all children, he said.

"When the world says education is the best defence then why don't we ask the defence ministers of the world to earmark some from the defence budget for education.

"Because education is the biggest safeguard which will help you to get rid of terrorism, fundamentalism and many of the evils which are prevailing in the society," he said.