



Afghans celebrate the 102th Independence Day of Afghanistan with the national flag in Kabul, yesterday. Flag-waving protesters took to the streets of more Afghan cities yesterday as popular opposition to the Taliban spread.

PHOTO: AFP

MORE NEWS

Three dead, 50 wounded in blast targeting Shia in Pakistan

At least three people were killed and 50 others wounded when a bomb explosion ripped through a Shia Muslim procession in central Pakistan yesterday, officials said. Security was high as the religious minority marked Ashura during the holy month of Muharram, a flashpoint for sectarian violence in previous years. Social media videos showed bleeding victims lying on a road being assisted by members of the public. Authorities have suspended mobile phone services in major cities as a security measure during Ashura processions. No group claimed responsibility for the blast till filing the report.

Pfizer jab declines faster than AstraZeneca: study

The effectiveness of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine against Covid-19 declines faster than that of the AstraZeneca jab, according to a new study published yesterday. "Two doses of Pfizer-BioNTech have greater initial effectiveness against new Covid-19 infections, but this declines faster compared with two doses of Oxford-AstraZeneca," researchers at Oxford University said. The study, which has not been peer reviewed, is based on the results of a survey by Britain's Office for National Statistics that carried out PCR tests from December last year to this month on randomly selected households. Pfizer had "greater initial effectiveness" but saw "faster declines in protection against high viral burden and symptomatic infection", when looking at a period of several months after full vaccination, although rates remained low for both jabs, it added. "Results suggest that after four to five months effectiveness of these two vaccines would be similar," the scientists said.

China marks Tibet anniversary with call to accept Party rule

China yesterday marked the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Tibet Autonomous Region on the roof of the world, with a call to accept the rule of the Communist Party. Beijing has ruled the remote region since 1951, after its People's Liberation Army marched in and took control in what it calls a "peaceful liberation". "Tibet can only develop and prosper under the party's leadership and socialism," Wang Yang, who heads a national organisation responsible for uniting all races and all parties under the leadership of the Communist Party, said at the event in the region's capital, Lhasa. The celebration, attended by almost 10,000 people, was held at the foot of the iconic Potala Palace, a sacred Buddhist site associated with the Dalai Lamas.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

Taliban hasn't changed

Says Biden; UK minister says Afghanistan's fate means West now perceived as weak

REUTERS, Washington

The Taliban must decide whether it wants to be recognized by the international community, US President Joe Biden said in an ABC interview aired yesterday, adding that he did not think the group had changed its fundamental beliefs.

Asked if he thought the Taliban had changed, Biden told ABC News, "No."

"I think they're going through a sort of existential crisis about: Do they want to be recognized by the international community as being a legitimate government? I'm not sure they do," he said, adding that the group appeared more committed to its beliefs.

But, he added, the Taliban also had to grapple with whether it could provide for Afghans.

"They also care about whether they have food to eat, whether they have an income that ... can run an economy, they care about whether or not they can hold together the society that they in fact say they care so much about," Biden said in the interview, taped on Wednesday. "I'm not counting on any of that."

He also added that it would take economic and diplomatic pressure -- not military force -- to ensure women's rights.

Meanwhile, British Defence Secretary Ben Wallace yesterday said the fate of Afghanistan after

a 20-year war led by the United States means that the West's resolve is now perceived as weak by major adversaries such as Russia.

"What I'm uncomfortable with is that we have a world order now where resolve is perceived by our adversaries as weak, the West's resolve," Wallace told BBC TV.

"That is something we should all worry about: if the West is seen not to have resolve and it fractures, then our adversaries like Russia find that encouraging," Wallace told LBC radio.

"Around the world, Islamists will see what they will view as a victory and that will inspire other terrorists," Wallace said.

In Moscow, Nikolai Patrushev, secretary of Russia's Security Council and one of President Vladimir Putin's closest allies, questioned Washington's commitment to Ukraine in light of the rushed exit from Afghanistan.

"Kyiv is obsequiously serving the interests of its overseas patrons, striving to get into Nato," Patrushev told the Izvestia newspaper, referring to Ukrainian aspirations - strongly opposed by Moscow - to join the US-led military alliance.

"But was the ousted pro-American regime in Kabul saved by the fact that Afghanistan had the status of a principal US ally outside Nato? (No). A similar situation awaits supporters of the American choice in Ukraine," predicted Patrushev.

Sole surviving Khmer leader denies role in genocide

AFP, Phnom Penh

The last surviving senior Khmer Rouge leader denied responsibility for genocide committed more than 40 years in Cambodia during his closing remarks Thursday to an international tribunal.

Under the ultra-Maoist Khmer Rouge regime led by "Brother Number 1" Pol Pot, some two million Cambodians died from overwork, starvation and mass executions from 1975-1979.

Khieu Samphan -- one the secretive regime's few public faces -- was sentenced in 2018 by a UN-backed court to life in prison for genocide committed against ethnic-minority Vietnamese.

But his lawyers have argued since Monday in daylong appeal hearings that the tribunal had taken a "selective approach" to witness testimony to convict him.

Khieu Samphan claimed he was not part of the killing machine that exterminated nearly a quarter of Cambodia's population rejecting in forceful closing statements the label of "murderer".

"I have never committed them," the 90-year-old said yesterday at the end of the hearings.

Whatever the verdict to his appeal on genocide charges may be, Khieu Samphan yesterday said his fate was already sealed.

"No matter what you decide, I will die in prison," he said. "I'm judged symbolically, rather than by my actual deeds as an individual."

The verdict for the appeal is expected to come in 2022.



Sabri poised to become Malaysia PM

REUTERS, Kuala Lumpur

Former Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob moved closer yesterday to forming the next government after securing a parliamentary majority from the same coalition that collapsed earlier this week.

Muhyiddin Yassin resigned as prime minister on Monday after conceding he had lost support from his alliance, bringing to an end a fraught 17 months in office.

If confirmed, Ismail Sabri's appointment would mark the return of the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) party to leadership, three years after it lost a general election because of corruption allegations.

Muhyiddin yesterday said Sabri has the support.

The support was conditional on Ismail Sabri ensuring that the new cabinet members were free from graft charges, he said in a statement.

Ismail Sabri, 61, has the support of 114 lawmakers out of the 222-seat parliament, UMNO lawmaker Ahmad Maslan said on Twitter.

King Al-Sultan Abdullah, the constitutional monarch who will be appointing a new premier, is scheduled to meet with the country's other senior royals today. A decision on the new government head is likely to be announced after that.

TALIBAN FIGHT TRUST DEFICIT WITH PR BLITZ

Smiling and waving at journalists, posing for selfies in the streets and even sitting down for a TV interview with a woman journalist, the Taliban appear to have launched a public relations blitz, telling Afghans -- and the world -- that life under their rule will be different this time. But Taliban 2.0 is a hard sell. Memories of the militants' brutal 1996-2001 regime and the near-two-decade insurgency that killed tens of thousands are etched on Afghan minds -- especially women and religious minorities.

WHAT ARE THE TALIBAN PROMISING?

"On ideology, and beliefs, there is no difference," longtime Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said in his first press conference. "(But) based on experience, maturity, and insight, no doubt there are many differences." He ticked off all the boxes -- a full amnesty for all, women would have rights, including to education and work, the media would be independent and free, and an inclusive government would be created in a country where ethnic and sectarian rifts run deep. Taliban have also vowed that Afghan soil will not be used against other nations, and that they want to be a part of the international community. In arguably one of their most astonishing gestures, they sent representatives to a ceremony marking Ashura, one of the most important periods of the year for Shia Muslims -- considered heretics by many hardline Sunnis, such as the Taliban. But all the vows come with a caveat: everything must be in line with the principles of Islam, as they interpret it.

WHY IS THERE SUCH LOW TRUST IN THE TALIBAN?

Much like last week, the Taliban promised general amnesty to their opponents when they first captured Kabul 25 years ago. "We do not believe in any kind of revenge," their leader Mullah Omar told Kabul residents on September 25, 1996. Two days later, the Taliban shot former president Mohammed Najibullah, dragged his bloodied body outside and hung it from a post. While the group is trying to show a moderate, new face

from Kabul and Doha, reports have emerged of their fighters harassing journalists and not letting women enter universities in some parts of the country. Images of women have been covered up or vandalised on storefronts around Kabul. And their enforcers in rural Afghanistan and smaller cities are still reportedly brutalising people. Just over a week before capturing Kabul, the Taliban claimed responsibility for killing the head of the government media centre -- the same place where their spokesman spoke of independent journalism on Tuesday. "They have better PR now," Pashtana Durrani, who runs a women's education charity, told Britain's Channel 4 in an interview. "What they are saying in press conferences and what they are doing on the ground... are two different things," she added. "It's a grave reality that they haven't changed, they're the same people."

DOES WORLD BELIEVE THEIR PROMISES?

Not yet. Despite their months-long campaign of assurances, Afghans are terrified. And the Taliban's promises have yet to win them any diplomatic recognition. Analysts and officials say there is no guarantee Taliban will get the funds it needs to revive its fragile economy unless Western donors are convinced that rights are protected and groups like al-Qaeda no longer find haven in Afghanistan. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Wednesday echoed warnings from other governments: "We will judge this regime based on the choices it makes and by its actions rather than by its words."

SOURCE: AFP



Former Afghan President Hamid Karzai, accompanied by the old government's main peace envoy, Abdullah Abdullah, sits for talks with members of the Taliban delegation in this undated handout released yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Bangladesh College of Physicians and Surgeons (BCPS)

67, Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Sarani, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.

No.CPS-355/2021/29136

Date: 17-08-2021

Schedule for FCPS Part-I, FCPS Part-II (Final), Preliminary FCPS Part-II, FCPS (Sub-Speciality), FCPS Mid-Term and MCPS written examinations to be held in September, 2021.

FCPS Part-II (Final), Preliminary FCPS Part-II, FCPS (Sub-Speciality) and MCPS Examinations.

Subject	Paper	Date	Time	Venue
All Subjects	Paper - I	01.09.2021 (Wednesday)	9.00 A.M.	BCPS, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.
	Paper - II	02.09.2021 (Thursday)	12.00 Noon	

FCPS Mid-Term Examination

Subject	Paper	Date	Time	Venue
1. Anaesthesiology 2. Medicine & Allied 3. Obstetrics & Gynaecology & Allied 4. Ophthalmology & Allied 5. Paediatrics & Allied 6. Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation 7. Psychiatry 8. Surgery & Allied	Paper - I	01.09.2021 (Wednesday)	9.00 A.M.	BCPS, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.
			10.40 A.M.	
	Paper - II	02.09.2021 (Thursday)	9.00 A.M.	
			12.00 Noon	

FCPS Part-I Examination

Morning

Subject	Paper	Date	Time	Venue
1. Anaesthesiology 2. Biochemistry 3. Dermatology & Venereology 4. Haematology 5. Histopathology 6. Medicine & Allied 7. Microbiology 8. Ophthalmology & Allied 9. Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation 10. Radiology & Imaging 11. Radiotherapy	Paper - I	04.09.2021 (Saturday)	9.00 A.M.	BCPS, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.
			10.40 A.M.	
			10.40 A.M.	
	Paper - II	05.09.2021 (Sunday)		
	Paper - III	06.09.2021 (Monday)		

Noon

Subject	Paper	Date	Time	Venue
1. Dental Surgery (Conservative Dentistry & Endodontics, Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, Orthodontics & Dentofacial Orthopedics and Prosthodontics) 2. Obstetrics & Gynaecology & Allied 3. Otolaryngology - Head & Neck Surgery 4. Paediatrics & Allied 5. Psychiatry 6. Surgery & Allied	Paper - I	04.09.2021 (Saturday)	12.00 Noon	BCPS, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.
			01.40 P.M.	
			01.40 P.M.	
	Paper - II	05.09.2021 (Sunday)		
	Paper - III	06.09.2021 (Monday)		

Program for OSPE/IOE/Oral, OSCE/Clinical, Practical & examinations for FCPS Part II (final), Preliminary FCPS Part-II, FCPS (Sub-Speciality), FCPS Mid-Term and MCPS examinations will be notified on the Notice Board and Website of BCPS well in advance.

The list of the examinees and the name of the venue of the OSPE & IOE, OSCE/Clinical, Oral & Practical examinations will be notified on the Notice Board and Website of BCPS on the day before examination (after 8.30pm).

The Admit Card for the FCPS Part-I examination will be available through online only from 22 August to 6 September 2021, (till completion of the FCPS Part-I examination) and for FCPS Part II (final), Preliminary FCPS Part-II, FCPS (Sub-Speciality), MCPS and FCPS Mid-Term examinations will be available through online only from 22 August to 6 October 2021 (till completion of the examination). Please visit BCPS website (exams.bcps.edu.bd) and login password protected profile and print admit card. Please contact examinations department if there is any problem related to download of the admit card. **Admit Card of July 2021 session (to be held in September) is a prerequisite for entering the examination hall.**

- No Admit Card will be issued after the deadline.
- No Admit Card will be printed and distributed from BCPS campus.

Instructions for Examinees

- Examination hall will be opened one hour before commencement of the examination. Examinees will go directly to the examination hall.
- Examinees are not allowed to stay anywhere other than the examination hall.
- Carrying mobile phones / laptops / tabs / wrist watch / calculator / other electronic devices / bags / jackets / water bottles / beverage cans / lighter / pens / metal objects other than keys by the examinees is prohibited. Carrying such materials shall be subject to expulsion from examination.
- Examinees are not allowed to write anything on the admit card/instruction sheet or keep any other papers. These may lead to cancellation of the paper.
- FCPS Part-II written qualified examinees have to download "Information Update Form" from BCPS website (www.bcps.edu.bd) immediately after publication of the written result and have to send the filled up form back to BCPS 5 (five) days before clinical examination through e-mail (query@bcps-bd.org) or by hand/postal. It is mandatory to submit the form. If found, incorrect information and incomplete form, examination will be held as per legal action will be taken against the candidate.
- NO MASK NO SERVICE.
- Follow all the safety measures to prevent transmission of COVID-19.

Professor Md. Titu Miah
Controller of Examinations

GD- 1493

Trapped in Kabul's no-man's land

AFP, Kabul

Thousands of Afghans were packed yesterday between Taliban checkpoints and a US-imposed ring of steel around Kabul's main airport, desperate to get aboard any flight out following the return of the hardline Islamist group.

Even more were mobbing foreign embassy compounds in the capital, as rumours spread that visas were up for grabs or safe passage on offer at least as far as the airport.

Unconfirmed reports on social media say several people have been killed as US forces and the Taliban struggle to contain the desperate throngs on their respective sides of an unofficial no-man's land.

"I went to the airport with my kids and family... the Taliban and Americans were shooting," said one man who until recently had worked for a foreign NGO.

"Despite that, people were still moving forward (to get in) because they knew a situation worse than death awaited them outside the airport."

There have been chaotic scenes since the weekend, when the Taliban drove unopposed into the capital



after a two-week lightning offensive that capped a simmering 20-year insurgency.

Distressing pictures and video have emerged of people desperately trying to get aboard any flight leaving -- even resorting to climbing on a US military Hercules as it rolled down the runway for take-off.

Some semblance of order has been restored, but thousands have been left stranded between the Taliban and US lines -- clinging to an unrealistic hope that they will be let in and evacuated. The Taliban have provided official

escorts for some foreign embassies -- taking their nationals as well as Afghans -- and they are being allowed in by the Americans.

But even that journey -- which can take several hours for just a few kilometres (miles) is fraught with heartbreak.

"There were people beating on the windows of the bus, trying to get inside," said a woman who made it through on Wednesday.

"The Taliban with us fired in the air to chase them away."

There was desperation also near the diplomatic enclave yesterday, as thousands clamoured to get the attention of anyone at now largely deserted embassies.

"I was told that if I get my name and my details and my phone on a paper to the French embassy they will take me," said one man.

Hundreds of people sat on pavements begging for scraps of paper or to borrow a pen to do the same.

Washington said Wednesday the Taliban were reneging on pledges to allow Afghans who worked with the United States and its allies out of the country and asked for compliance.