

Quotes of the day



This is the right decision. A wise decision. And the best decision for America.

PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN ON US TROOPS PULL OUT FROM AFGHANISTAN



US forces for 20 years tried ... to civilise the people who live there, to instill their own norms and standards of life in the widest possible sense of this word. ... The result is zero, if not a negative one all round.

RUSSIAN PRESIDENT VLADIMIR PUTIN ON US'S 20-YEAR-LONG AFGHAN WAR



We owe an immense debt to those who worked with the Armed Forces in Afghanistan and I am determined that we give them and their families the support they need to rebuild their lives here in the UK.

UK PRIME MINISTER BORIS JOHNSON



A Taliban fighter (C) walks past shoppers along Mandawi market in Kabul yesterday, a day after the US pulled all its troops out of the country to end a brutal 20-year war -- one that started and ended with the hardline Islamist in power. PHOTO: AFP

TALIBAN RULE IN AFGHANISTAN  
FIVE KEY CHALLENGES

The Taliban have won the war -- now they have to govern Afghanistan. The transition presents an enormous test for the Islamists in a desperately poor, diplomatically isolated country where deep-seated political, social and ethnic problems have been compounded by more than four decades of war. Here are five challenges facing the Taliban:

**LACK OF TRUST:** There is widespread suspicion about the Taliban among Afghans, and for good reason. The last time the group was in power from 1996 to 2001, it imposed a harsh interpretation of Islamic law. They banned women from education and public spaces, brutally executed political opponents and massacred religious and ethnic minorities such as the Hazaras. The Taliban have promised a softer system this time around, including rights for women. They have also pledged an inclusive government, holding talks with a variety of movers and shakers in Afghan politics -- including former US-backed president Hamid Karzai. They have even sent representatives to the Shia Hazara minority, which suffered brutal violence at the hands of the Taliban in the 1990s. While there has been relief in some parts of rural Afghanistan where people wanted an end to the violence, many Afghans say that actions, not words, matter. Women, particularly in cities, remain fearful of stepping outside, and there is at least one pocket of armed resistance in the Panjshir valley, a traditional anti-Taliban bastion.

**ECONOMIC, HUMANITARIAN CATASTROPHE:** Afghanistan is one of the poorest nations in the world. After the Taliban were toppled in 2001, huge amounts of foreign aid flowed into the country. International assistance was more than 40 percent of GDP in 2020. Most of it is now suspended, with no guarantees about the rest. The Taliban also do not have access to Afghan central bank funds held in the United States. This crunch could spell disaster, as the Taliban need to figure out how to pay government employees and keep running critical infrastructure such as water, power and communications. The United Nations has also warned of a humanitarian catastrophe, with food stocks running low because of disruptions caused by conflict as well as



Facing uncertainty, people gather outside a bank building in Kabul on Sunday. PHOTO: AFP

a severe drought. As insurgents, the Taliban had large revenues -- hundreds of millions of dollars according to estimates by UN monitors. But that is a tiny amount compared with Afghanistan's national requirements, experts have said. The Taliban have gained some sources of income after taking over Afghanistan, such as customs revenue from border crossings, but that too is a fraction of national needs.

**BRAIN DRAIN:** Beyond the cash crunch, the Taliban face another critical shortage: skilled Afghans. As US-led forces began to withdraw and the previous government started to lose control, Afghans with skills, experience and resources headed for the exits. They included bureaucrats, bankers, doctors, engineers, professors and university graduates, all terrified of life under the Islamists. The Taliban appear aware of the impact such a brain drain could have on the Afghan economy. Their spokesman has urged skilled Afghans not to leave, saying the country needed "experts" such as doctors and engineers.

**DIPLOMATIC ISOLATION:** The Taliban's first regime was largely a pariah on the global stage. This time, they appear keen on wide international recognition, even as most nations have suspended or closed their diplomatic missions in Kabul. The group has contacts with regional powers such as Pakistan, Iran, Russia and China, as well as Qatar -- which hosted the Taliban's political office for years. But none have recognised them yet, and the United States has said any legitimacy "will have to be earned". In an apparent sign of the divide on how to handle the Taliban, China and Russia abstained from a UN Security Council resolution requiring the group to let Afghans leave. Moscow and Beijing did not use their veto after language related to the Taliban was softened, experts said.

**IS TERROR THREAT:** The Taliban may have taken control of Afghanistan but the threat of terror attacks in the country has not ended with their insurgency. Their jihadist rival, the regional chapter of the Islamic State group, has already carried out a deadly suicide attack in Kabul, killing more than 100 people at the airport during the evacuation operation. The Taliban and IS are both headline Sunni extremists, but the latter has an even harsher and brutal interpretation of Islamic law. IS has said it will continue to fight in Afghanistan, and its statements have described the Taliban as apostates. The Taliban now face a sharp role reversal: they have to defend the Afghan people from the kind of attacks their own fighters carried out for years.

SOURCE: AFP

Turning from Afghanistan, the US sets focus on China

AFP, Washington

After two decades of focus on Afghanistan, the United States' withdrawal this week allows the country to shift its concentration to the east, where superpower rival China is now the number-one priority.

In an indication of Washington's strategic turn, Vice President Kamala Harris was in Southeast Asia last week even as the US pullout from Afghanistan moved into its turbulent final days, hoping to strengthen US allies' pushback against the region's giant.

Harris accused Beijing of "actions that... threaten the rules-based international order," particularly its aggressive claims of territory in the South China Sea.

Her tour of Singapore and Vietnam was seen as an effort by the administration of President Joe Biden to reassure Asian allies, who were left somewhat disquieted by the US pullout from Kabul after the sudden fall of the Afghan government that Washington had propped up for nearly 20 years.

Ryan Hass, a foreign policy specialist at

the Brookings Institution, said the debacle of the US pullout from Afghanistan will not have a lasting impact on Washington's credibility in Asia.

Derek Grossman, a former Pentagon official and now a defense expert at the Rand Corporation think tank, said China could seek advantage in fostering good relations with the Taliban.

Beijing could decide quickly to recognize the Taliban government, even as Washington and other Western governments hold off as they hope to convince Afghanistan's new rulers to moderate their hardline policies.

"China, as a new great power in competition with the United States, probably wants to demonstrate its unique way of handling world events, which tends to be -- often reflexively -- the opposite of Washington's approach," Grossman said.

"Recognizing Taliban-run Afghanistan would contribute to the perception that it is Beijing, and no longer Washington, that is now setting the agenda and shaping the future regional order," he said.

Pakistan frets over security threats Says influence on Taliban waning

REUTERS, Islamabad

There is growing concern among Pakistani officials about security in neighbouring Afghanistan, as the Taliban tries to form a government and stabilise the country following the departure of US and other foreign forces.

Islamabad is particularly worried about militant fighters from a separate, Pakistani Taliban group crossing from Afghanistan and launching lethal attacks on its territory. Thousands of Pakistanis have been killed in jihadist violence in the last two decades.

US officials have repeatedly accused Pakistan of supporting the Afghan Taliban. Islamabad, one of the few capitals to recognise the Taliban government that was toppled in 2001, denies the charge.

Pakistan's government has said that its influence over the movement has waned, particularly since the Taliban grew in confidence once Washington announced the date for the complete withdrawal of US and other foreign troops.

The official, who has direct knowledge of the country's security decisions, said Pakistan planned to send security and intelligence officials, possibly even the head of the powerful Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agency, to Kabul to help the Taliban reorganise the Afghan military.

UN sees fivefold surge in 50 yrs Warns extreme events becoming more frequent and costly

REUTERS, Geneva

The number of disasters, such as floods and heatwaves, driven by climate change have increased fivefold over the past 50 years, killing more than 2 million people and costing \$3.64 trillion in total losses, a UN agency said yesterday.

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) says its "Atlas" is the most comprehensive review of mortality and economic losses from weather, water and climate extremes ever produced.

It surveys some 11,000 disasters occurring between 1970-2019, including major catastrophes such as Ethiopia's 1983 drought, which was the single most fatal event with 300,000 deaths, and Hurricane Katrina in 2005 that was the most costly, with losses of \$163.6 billion.

"Thanks to our early warning service improvement we have been able to have a decrease of the casualties at these kind of events, but the bad news is that the economic losses have been growing very rapidly and this growth is supposed to continue," WMO Secretary-General Petteri



Taalas told a press conference.

"We are going to see more climatic extreme because of climate change and this negative trend in climate will continue for the coming decades," he said.

The report showed an accelerating trend, with the number of disasters increasing nearly fivefold from the 1970s to the most recent decade, adding to signs that extreme weather events are becoming more frequent due to global warming.

Costs from the events also surged from \$175.4 billion in the 1970s to \$1.38

CLIMATE DISASTERS

- Costs amount to \$3.64 trillion since 1979
- Most of 2m deaths occurred in poorer countries

trillion in the 2010s when storms such as Harvey, Maria and Irma ripped through the United States.

But while hazards became more costly and frequent, the annual death toll has fallen from more than 50,000 in the 1970s to around 18,000 in the 2010s, suggesting that better planning was paying off.

More than 91 percent of the 2 million deaths occurred in developing countries, the report said, noting that only half of the WMO's 193 members have multi-hazard early warning systems.

4.1b living without any social safety nets: UN

AFP, Geneva

Over half of all people in the world have no social protections, the United Nations said yesterday, even after the pandemic spurred countries to offer more services to their populations.

In a report on the state of social protection globally, the UN's International Labour Organization said that 4.1 billion people were living without any social safety net of any kind.

Social protection includes access to health care and income security measures related especially to old age, unemployment, sickness, disability, work injury, maternity or the loss of the main breadwinner in a family, as well as extra support for families with children.

In 2020, only 46.9 percent of the global population benefited from at least one such protection, according to the report -- ILOs first on the subject since 2017.

That low rate came even as access to healthcare, sickness and unemployment benefits have more than ever proved their relevance during the Covid-19 pandemic.

ILO chief Guy Ryder urged countries to centre their recovery efforts around boosting social protections. "Countries are at a crossroads," he said in a statement, stressing that "this is a pivotal moment to harness the pandemic response to build a new generation of rights-based social protection systems." Countries on average spend 12.8 percent of their gross domestic product on social protections, excluding health care, but such spending also varies dramatically.

While wealthy nations dish out 16.4 percent of their GDP for such protections, low-income countries spend just 1.1 percent, the report found.

Low-income countries would meanwhile need to invest another \$77.9 billion -- equivalent to 15.9 percent of their GDP.



SEPTEMBER 02

1945 - Japanese leaders aboard the US battleship Missouri signed an unconditional surrender, ending World War Two.

1945 - The Democratic Republic of Vietnam was proclaimed with Ho Chi Minh as president.

1992 - The US and Russia agree to a joint venture to build a space station.

2002 - Some 103 world leaders gathered in Johannesburg for a formal UN meeting about a plan to help the poor and the environment at the Earth Summit.

SOURCE: REUTERS

MORE NEWS

China gets new route to Indian Ocean through Myanmar

China's special envoy for Asian Affairs Sun Guoxiang visited Myanmar last week for talks with its military rulers, as a new route spanning the Southeast Asian nation opened up connecting Chinese trade flows to the Indian Ocean. Separately, China's embassy in Myanmar announced the opening of the new trade route linking Yangon's port on the Indian Ocean to the Chinese border province of Yunnan and by rail onwards to Chengdu in the southwestern province of Sichuan.

Defamation case: Singapore PM awarded \$275,000

Singapore's prime minister was awarded more than a quarter of a million dollars in damages yesterday after winning defamation suits against a news website editor and writer, the latest libel cases brought by the leader. Critics say such lawsuits are among a range of tactics employed by the tightly regulated city-state to silence dissent. Terry Xu, chief editor of the Online Citizen Asia, and a writer for the site were accused of defaming Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong in two separate lawsuits. The writer, Rubaashini Shunmuganathan, had penned an article in 2019 about a bitter feud that has rocked the premier's family.

Pollution likely to cut 9 years of life expectancy of 40% of Indians

Air pollution is likely to reduce the life expectancy of about 40% of Indians by more than nine years, according to a report released by a US research group yesterday. More than 480 million people living in the vast swathes of central, eastern and northern India, including the capital, New Delhi, endure significantly high pollution levels, said the report prepared by the Energy Policy Institute at the University of Chicago (EPI). Launching India's National Clean Air Program (NCAP), launched in 2019 to rein in dangerous pollution levels, the EPI report said "achieving and sustaining" the NCAP goals would raise the country's overall life expectancy by 1.7 years and that of New Delhi 3.1 years.

Number of female journo in Kabul has plunged: watchdog

The number of female journalists working in Kabul has dwindled to below 100 since the Taliban took power, compared with 700 before, a media watchdog said yesterday. Reporters Without Borders said that as Taliban forces took over Kabul, women journalists were increasingly told to stay home, harassed, prevented from going on reporting assignments, or even beaten. Last year, RSF said it had counted 108 media operating in the Afghan capital, employing 700 female journalists.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Additional Chief Engineer, RHD  
Barishal Zone, Barishal  
Phone & Fax No. 64651/2175022  
Email: acebar@rhd.gov.bd

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Dated: 29/8/2021

Tender Notice

e-Tender Notice [One Stage Two Envelope Tendering Method (OSTETM)]

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the following works mentioned in the table below:

Tender ID	Package No.	Name of work	Last selling date & time for tender/ proposal	Tender closing date & time	Tender/ proposal opening date and time
600933	02/e-GP/PMP-Road Major/BZ/Pir/ 2021-2022	Maintenance work by (i) Aggregate Base type-1 with DBS-Wearing Course From Ch 22+313 (Kunlary Sawrukathi) to 42+155 (Naikathi) (Kunlary km of Goriarpur-Baranipara-Sarsinha-Sawrukathi-Naikathi Road (Z-8053)) (ii) DBS - Wearing Course from Ch. 39+460m (Mohishpura) to 42+802m (C.O Office Mor) km of Noapara-Bagherat-Pirojpur Regional Highways (R-770) (Pirojpur Portion) and (iii) Aggregate Base type-1 with DBS Wearing Course Ch: 8+587 (Shealkhaki) to 10+670 (Naton Bazar) km & Ch. 12+900 (Kumirmara) to 14+650 (Ranipur Mor of Rajapur-Naikati-Bekuti-Pirojpur Road (Z-8702)) (Pirojpur Portion) under Pirojpur Road Division, during the year 2021-2022.	28-Sep-2021 at 17:00	29-Sep-2021 at 13:15	29-Sep-2021 at 13:15

0 This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline hard copies will be accepted.  
0 To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.  
0 The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank branch.  
0 Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

Abu Hena Md. Tareq Iqbal  
ID No. 001500  
Additional Chief Engineer (C.C), RHD  
Barishal Zone, Barishal

GD-1561

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