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電器

Plumbing Service

專精各種漏水

舊屋水管換新,
屋頂,地下漏水
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Inside C2

Southern DAILY

Make Today Different

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Taliban name new Afghan government, interior minister on U.S. sanctions list

Sept 7 (Reuters) - The Taliban drew from its inner high echelons to fill top posts in Afghanistan's new government on Tuesday, including an associate of the Islamist militant movement's founder as premier and a wanted man on a U.S. terrorism list as interior minister.

World powers have told the Taliban the key to peace and development is an inclusive government that would back up the movement's pledges of a more conciliatory approach, upholding human rights, after a previous 1996-2001 period in power marked by bloody vendettas and oppression of women.

Taliban supreme leader Haibatullah Akhundzada, in his first public statement since the Aug. 15 seizure of the capital Kabul by the Islamist insurgents, said the Taliban were committed to all international laws, treaties and commitments not in conflict with Islamic law.

"In the future, all matters of governance and life in Afghanistan will be regulated by the laws of the Holy Sharia," he said in a statement, in which he also congratulated Afghans on what he called the country's liberation from foreign rule.

The names announced for the new government, three weeks after the Taliban swept to military victory as U.S.-led foreign forces withdrew and the weak Western-backed government collapsed, gave no sign of an olive branch to its opponents.

Afghans who enjoyed major progress in education and civil liberties over the 20 years of U.S.-backed government remain fearful of Taliban intentions and daily protests have continued since the Taliban takeover, challenging the new rulers.

On Tuesday, as the new government was being announced, a group of Afghan women in a Kabul street took cover after Taliban gunmen fired into the air to disperse hundreds of protesters.

The last time the Taliban ruled Afghanistan, girls could not attend school and women were banned from work and education. Religious police would flog anyone breaking the rules and public executions were carried out.



Students across Afghanistan have started returning to university for the first time since the Taliban stormed to power, and in some cases females have been separated from their male peers by curtains or boards down the middle of the classroom

The Taliban has urged Afghans to be patient and vowed to be more tolerant this time - a commitment many Afghans and foreign powers will be scrutinising as a condition for aid and investment desperately needed in Afghanistan.

LATE FOUNDER'S LEGACY IN NEW GOVERNMENT

Mullah Hasan Akhund, named as prime minister, like many in the Taliban leadership derives much of his prestige from his close link to the movement's reclusive late founder Mullah Omar, who presided over its rule two decades ago.

Akhund is longtime chief of the Taliban's powerful decision-making body Rehbari Shura, or leadership council. He was foreign minister and then deputy prime minister when the Taliban were last in power and, like many of the incoming cabinet, is under U.N. sanctions for his role in that government.

Sirajuddin Haqqani, the new interior minister, is the son of the founder of the Haqqani network, classified as a terrorist group by Washington. He is one of the FBI's most wanted men due to his involvement in suicide attacks and ties with Al Qaeda.

Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, head of the movement's political office who was given his nom de guerre "brother", or Baradar, by Mullah Omar, was appointed as Akhund's deputy, main Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid told a news conference in Kabul.

The passing over of Baradar for the top government job came as a surprise to some as he had been responsible for negotiating the U.S. withdrawal at talks in Qatar and presenting the face of the Taliban to the outside world.

Baradar was previously a senior Taliban commander in the long insurgency against U.S. forces. He was arrested and imprisoned in Pakistan in 2010, becoming head of the Taliban's political office in Doha after his release in 2018.

Mullah Mohammad Yaqoob, a son of Mullah Omar, was named as defence minister. All the appointments were in an acting capacity, Mujahid said.

White House spokeswoman Jen Psaki told reporters on Air Force One, as President Joe Biden flew

to New York, that there would be no recognition of the Taliban government soon.

ECONOMIC MELTDOWN

Taliban spokesman Mujahid, speaking against a backdrop of collapsing public services and economic meltdown amidst the chaos of the tumultuous foreign pullout, said an acting cabinet had been formed to respond to the Afghan people's primary needs.

He said some ministries remained to be filled pending a hunt for qualified people.

The United Nations said earlier on Tuesday that basic services were unravelling in Afghanistan and food and other aid were about to run out. More than half a million people have been displaced internally in Afghanistan this year. An international donor conference is scheduled in Geneva on Sept. 13. Western powers say they are prepared to send humanitarian aid, but that broader economic engagement depends on the shape and actions of the Taliban government.

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WEA LEE'S GLOBAL NOTES

CORONAVIRUS DIARY

09/06/2021



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IDA Was One Of The Worst Flooding Catastrophes In The Northeast



Up until last week, IDA's March through the northeast as a tropical storm claimed at least 51 lives in states including New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland and Connecticut.

Since IDA made landfall as a Category 4 hurricane, the storm was responsible for a

total of 60 deaths.

The governor of New Jersey said, "We are not out of the woods yet. We are going to clean up and we are going to stay together, maybe for a long time."

In Texas, Governor Abbott signed into law last Wednesday a measure that would

prohibit abortions in Texas as early as six weeks --before some women even know they are pregnant. This bill also opens a new frontier in the battle over abortion restriction. Abortion rights groups have promised to challenge the new law.

Abbott also signed a new law that bans

homeless encampment on public property in Texas. The law makes it illegal to set up a shelter or store belongings for an extended period of time. The offense is a Class C misdemeanor and punishable by a fine of up to \$500 dollars.

With the hurricane and the abortion law and the homeless encampment law being passed in Texas, it makes for a more difficult life for a lot

poor citizens.

We all agree on clearing the mess on the city streets, but in the meantime, the government has a responsibility to help the homeless find jobs and give them shelters in which to live.

Today we are facing so many challenges in our nation. We need to help each other to overcome so many difficulties, especially in this time of disaster.



Southern DAILY Make Today Different

Editor's Choice



Cpl Preston Dyce, a soldier with the 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team of the 10th Mountain Division, is greeted by his wife Michaela Dyce upon his return home from deployment in Afghanistan, at Fort Drum, New York. REUTERS/Brendan McDermid



Students attend class under new classroom conditions at Avicenna University in Kabul, Afghanistan. Social media/via REUTERS



Workers clean up the site of the Historic Karnofsky Shop, a historic building that collapsed during Hurricane Ida in New Orleans, Louisiana. REUTERS/Kathleen Flynn



Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson visits Westport Care Home in Stepney Green, east London. Paul Edwards/Pool via REUTERS



Demonstrators participate in a symbolic performance during a protest over the Thai government's handling of the coronavirus pandemic and to demand Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha's resignation, in Bangkok, Thailand. REUTERS/Soe Zeya Tun



Men and children from Afghanistan sit atop a van with their belongings after crossing into Pakistan at the Friendship Gate crossing point at the Pakistan-Afghanistan border town of Chaman, Pakistan September 3, 2021. REUTERS/Saeed Ali Achakzai

The U.S. Needs A COVID Goal



Illustration: Eniola Odetunde/

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

A huge reason why the pandemic response — or the lack of one — feels so chaotic right now is that the U.S. doesn't have a well-defined goal, experts recently argued in a pair of op-eds.

Why it matters: Policy decisions and individual behavioral choices should ideally be aligned in pursuit of an agreed-upon outcome, but as of now, we don't have one.

What they're saying: "We think much of the confusion and disagreement among scientists and nonexperts alike comes down to undefined and sometimes conflicting goals in responding to the pandemic," Harvard's Joseph Allen and Boston University's Helen Jenkins wrote yesterday in the New York Times.

State of play: The federal government is pushing ahead with a vaccine booster effort that some experts say is unnecessary, state and local governments are taking a patchwork approach to masking and vaccine policies and individual Americans are all trying to figure out how much risk they're willing to tolerate in everyday life.

•School districts and businesses are trying to figure out how to handle — and are taking very different approaches to — the return to school and work.



•But the U.S. as a country hasn't agreed on a set of outcomes we're trying to achieve, particularly whether we're trying to eliminate the spread of the virus or to greatly reduce the level of hospitalizations and death it causes.

•"If the goal is getting to zero infections and staying at that level before dropping restrictions, one set of policies apply. If the goal is to make this virus like the seasonal flu, a different set of policies follow," Allen and Jenkins write.

Zoom in: The vaccination effort is similarly struggling from an undefined set of goals, NYU's Céline Gounder wrote recently in The Atlantic.

•This ambiguity has become more problematic as more evidence emerges that the vaccines' effectiveness against infection has decreased.

•"The public discussion of the pandemic has become distorted by a presumption that vaccination can and should eliminate COVID-19 entirely," Gounder argues.

•"The goal isn't to eliminate SARS-CoV-2 infections. We can't, no matter how many booster shots the United States gives," she adds.

(Courtesy axios.com)

Related

New 'MU' COVID Variant Now Found In 49 U.S. States

Since being discovered in Colombia in January, the mu variant of COVID-19 has spread to nearly four dozen countries and has made its presence known in Hawaii and Alaska. It has so far been found in 49 states with Nebraska being the only state to not have a mu variant case detected. Health officials believe mu is even more transmissible than the delta variant and has the potential to resist vaccines. In the U.S., the mu variant has been detected in 49 states and the District of Columbia, according to Newsweek. California has reported the highest number of the latest variant with 384. A total of 167 of those cases were found in Los

Angeles County.

"The identification of variants like mu, and the spreading of variants across the globe, highlights the need for L.A. County residents to continue to take measures to protect themselves and others," said Dr. Barbara Ferrer, director of LA County Public Health, in a statement.



"This is what makes getting vaccinated and layering protections so important. These are actions that break the chain of transmission and limits COVID-19 proliferation that allows for the virus to mutate into something that could be more dangerous."

On Aug. 30, the World Health Organization called the mu variant a variant of interest due to its ability to be more transmissible than any of the other strains of COVID-19.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has not yet made similar classifications about mu in the U.S.



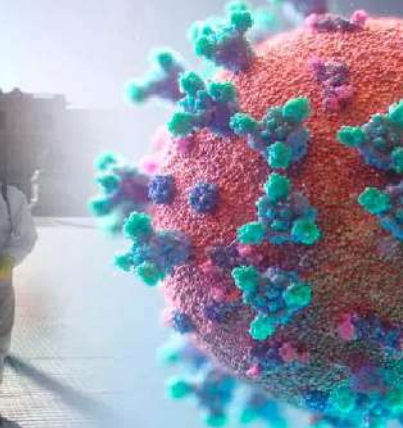
Blood specimen collection tubes are seen in the laboratory of Bellville Medical Center, in Bellville, Texas, September 1, 2021. (FRANCOIS PICARD/AFP via Getty Images)

Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, said that health officials were maintaining a "close eye" on the mu variant despite it being "not at all even close" to becoming the dominant COVID-19 strain in the U.S.

"Even though it has not in essence taken hold to any extent here we always pay attention to at all times variants," Fauci said.

The U.S. saw its peak of mu variant cases in mid-July but case numbers involving that variant have been declining since, signaling either a weakening of the strain or indicating a worrisome future. (Courtesy <https://www.nydailynews.com/news/>)

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Coronavirus Dashboard

Vaccines: Fauci: Pfizer booster likely ready by Sept. 20, Moderna may need longer — AstraZeneca agrees to give EU 200M more vaccine doses, ending legal dispute.

1.Politics: Biden's high-stakes booster tension with Moderna — Wall Street boosts lab companies amid Delta testing surge — Restaurant recovery's screeching halt.

2.States: Kentucky governor says state is in "dire" situation from coronavirus surge — Ousted Tennessee vaccine chief sues state officials for defamation over firing.

3.Cities: New Zealand to lift lockdown outside of Auckland — Florida DOE investigating Hillsborough and Sarasota schools over mask policy.



4.Variant tracker: Where different strains are spreading.

Cases:

1.Global: Total confirmed cases as of 12 p.m. ET on Monday: 220,875,406 — Total deaths: 4,571,188— Total vaccine doses administered: 5,479,375,909

2.U.S.: Total confirmed cases as of 12 p.m. ET on Monday: 39,962,023 — Total deaths: 648,656 (Courtesy axios.com)

Why Are China's Bitcoin Miners Moving To Texas?



Quick Look

China's ban on cryptocurrency mining has forced bitcoin entrepreneurs to flee overseas. Many are heading to Texas, which is quickly becoming the next global cryptocurrency capital.

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

When China announced a crackdown on bitcoin mining and trading in May, Kevin Pan, CEO of Chinese cryptocurrency mining company Poolin, got on a flight the next day to leave the country.

"We decided to move out, once [and] for all. [We'll] never come back again," Mr Pan told the BBC.

Headquartered in Hong Kong, Poolin is the second largest bitcoin mining network in the world, with most of its operations in mainland China. The country was home to around 70% of global bitcoin mining power, until the clampdown sent the price of bitcoin into a tailspin and caught miners off guard.

Now China's "bitcoin refugees" are urgently scrambling to find a new home, whether in neighbouring Kazakhstan, Russia or North America, because for bitcoin miners, time is literally money.



"We had to find a new location for the [bitcoin mining] machines," Poolin's vice-president Alejandro De La Torre

said. "Because every minute that the machine is not on, it's not making money."

In what some call the "Great Mining Migration," the Poolin executives are among the many bitcoin miners who have recently landed in a place reputed as part of America's wild west: Austin, Texas

Bitcoins are a digital currency with no physical form - they exist and are exchanged only online.

They are created when a computer 'mines' the money by solving a complex set of maths problems and that is how bitcoin 'miners' who run the computers earn the currency.

This takes a lot of energy. As a new form of money that transcends national boundaries, there is also much confusion and potential to run afoul of government rules - so two things bitcoin entrepreneurs value are cheap electricity and a relaxed regulatory environment.

The Lone Star State fits the bill to a tee.



New frontier for bitcoin mining

For Mr Pan, Texas felt like home almost instantly. Days after his arrival, he was gifted an AR-15 rifle, which he says he may use to "hunt hogs from a helicopter" one day.

While the shooting ranges and Texas barbecue provide for welcome entertainment, legal protection for business is the major attraction for the bitcoin miners. "What happened to us in China won't happen in the US," Mr De La Torre says.



Kevin Pan (left) and Alejandro De La Torre.

Governor of Texas Greg Abbott has been a vocal supporter for cryptocurrency. "It's happening! Texas will be the crypto leader," he tweeted in June. In the same month, the Lone Star State became the second US state after Wyoming to recognise blockchain and cryptocurrency in its commercial law, paving the way for crypto businesses to operate in the state.

Many Chinese bitcoin companies have looked to Texas for stability and opportunity. Shenzhen-based firm BIT Mining has planned to invest \$26 million to build a data centre in the state, while Beijing-based Bitmain is expanding its facility in Rockdale, Texas. This small town with around 5,600 residents once housed one of the world's largest aluminium plants, and now it's emerging as the next global hub for bitcoin mining.

There might be another underlying connection between the industry and the state, as De La Torre says that bitcoiners and Texans share the same values. "Texans take their freedom and rights very seriously, and so do we bitcoiners."

Experts believe China's bitcoin crackdown was motivated by having greater

control over the financial markets, and it may become a boon for America.

"The migration benefits the US in terms of talent acquisition and furthering the innovation ecosystem," says Kevin Desouza, a business professor at the Queensland University of Technology who has done research on China's digital currency policy. In return, the bitcoin miners get access to a thriving and innovative community, as well as more diverse sources of capital, according to Prof Desouza.



China was once the world's centre of bitcoin mining.

Energy and political risks

Other than a stable regulatory environment, the energy-hungry industry is hunting for cheap electricity in Texas. Texas has some of the cheapest energy prices in the world, due to its deregulated power grid. Consumers enjoy more choices of electricity providers, which encourage providers to lower prices to stay competitive. During peaks of electricity demand, bitcoin farms can even sell unused power back to the grid.

Although El Salvador is set to become the first country to adopt bitcoin as a national currency, bitcoin miners prefer the US because of its well-developed electrical infrastructure, says Mr

De La Torre.

But some analysts warn that the "Great Mining Migration" may lead to serious repercussions, as cities and towns struggle to meet the huge energy appetite.

In February, blackouts following a deadly snowstorm left millions of homes and businesses in Texas without power for days. More than 200 people died. During the power outage, bitcoin farms were compensated to stay offline.



The increased scrutiny of Chinese companies in America may also lead to more attention on these mining newcomers. Texas recently passed a law that prevents "hostile foreign actors" from accessing critical infrastructure, including its power grid. The new law was reportedly prompted by a Chinese billionaire's plan to build a wind farm in southwest Texas. Critics allege that the project could be used to hack into the Texas energy grid and to gather intelligence from a nearby US military base.

Prof Desouza says that while access to electricity grids is unlikely to be an issue for bitcoin miners in the short term, political risk will continue to evolve.

The bitcoin miners do miss something in China - cheap labour cost and speedy construction.

According to Mr Pan, while a new bitcoin farm takes up to five months to build in China, it could take as long as 18 months in Texas. Global shipping prices have also skyrocketed during the pandemic, making it significantly more expensive to ship mining machines from China to the US.

Despite the costly and time-consuming efforts, Mr Pan says his company is committed to settle in Texas, "It's a free land, and a lot of bitcoiners are here," he says, "so we feel: 'whoa, family reunion.'" (<https://www.bbc.com/>)

美南國際電視 15.3 《美南時事通》 美國離開後，阿富汗女性會再次穿上罩袍嗎？

（本報記者黃梅子）美國8月31日完全撤離阿富汗，結束了對阿富汗二十年的保護。塔利班重掌國家大權，這使得無數人擔心會回到過去的壓抑狀態——那時塔利班禁止女性外出工作或是在沒有男性監護人的情況下走出家門，禁止女孩上學，公開鞭答違反該組織道德準則的人。

但塔利班官員正在努力讓女性放心，這次一切都會不一樣。塔利班的新聞發言人說，女性將被允許工作和學習，女性應該參與政府事務，我們保證不會有針對女性的暴力，不會有偏見，但伊斯蘭價值觀仍是我們的框架，女性只可以在伊斯蘭法律範圍內參與社會活動。

1996年至2001年的塔利班統治時期對阿富汗婦女來說是一段慘淡的時期，此後的幾年裡，無論男女都經歷了許多苦難。而女性的待遇被普遍認為是一個重點。

在美國駐軍阿富汗、推翻塔利班政權後的近20年裡，美國投資了超過7.8億美元來促進女性權利。未成年和成年女性加入軍隊和警察部隊、擔任政治職務、參加奧運會、在機器人團隊中攀登工程高峰——這些機會在塔利班統治時期曾被認為是不可想像的。

現在的問題是，塔利班對伊斯蘭法律的解釋是否會像該組織上次掌權時那樣嚴厲。

已經有零星的跡象表明，至少在一些地區，塔利班已經開始重新實施舊秩

序。

在一些省份，女性被告知在沒有男性親屬陪同的情況下不能離開家。有目擊者稱，在阿富汗西部的赫拉特，塔利班武裝分子守衛著大學大門阻止女學生和女教師進入校園。在一些地區，女校從去年11月塔利班奪取控制權以來一直是關閉的。

那裡的婦女說，她們上街時開始穿從頭到腳的罩袍，一部分是出於恐懼，另一部分是預料到塔利班會下令實施限制。

在首都的喀布爾大學，女學生被告知，除非有男性監護人陪同，否則不得離開宿舍。兩名學生說，她們實際上被困住了，因為她們在城裡沒有男性親屬。

在阿富汗北部的馬紮裡沙裡夫，27歲的大學教授阿利亞·卡茲米(Aliya Kazimi)說，在城市的集市上獨自購物的女性被拒之門外，並被告知要帶著男性監護人才能來。

這麼多年的努力和夢想都白費了，而那些人生剛剛起步的小女孩們，等待她們的是怎樣的未來？

聯合國秘書長安東尼奧·古特雷斯在安理會的一次緊急會議上說：「我對阿富汗女性和女童的人權受到日益嚴重的侵犯感到特別關切。」

人們深深懷疑塔利班是否會突然轉變做法。由於擔心與當地塔利班官員發生衝突，許多女性仍閉門不出。最近幾



天，喀布爾居民一直在拆除畫面帶有不戴頭巾的女性的廣告。

在喀布爾，少數幾名女性在總統府附近的一個廣場上勇敢地抗議，在武裝的塔利班戰士面前舉著標語，要求公民、社會和政治自由。

塔利班上一次執政時，宣傳美德和預防罪惡部(Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice)的道德巡邏警察對人們的行為、著裝和行動進行了限制，他們開著皮卡車四處巡邏，公開羞辱和鞭答不遵守規則的女性。據國

際特赦組織(Amnesty International)稱，1996年喀布爾一名女性因塗指甲油而被截斷拇指末端。

被指控通姦的女性被施以石刑。同性戀是一種可判處死刑的罪行。

禁止女童上學迫使女教師在家中為女童開設秘密學校。女警務人員繼續工作，但工作場所嚴格按性別隔離。

對於從小就讀於學校、孕育無拘無束夢想的新一代阿富汗女孩來說，塔利班時代是一段古老的歷史，而命運時光倒流讓人幾乎無法理解。

請看《美南時事通》主持人 Vivian 和全美政治領袖基金會主席李恕信博士談美國離開後，阿富汗女性會再次穿上罩袍嗎？

請關注美南國際電視 15.3 頻道《美南時事通》，也可以通過 iTalkBB 平臺收看。美南新聞網站 scdaily.com，也可以在 youtube 上搜索 Stv15.3 Houston，訂閱美南新聞頻道，隨時收看美南國際電視的節目。



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