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Inside C2

Southern DAILY

Make Today Different

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World wary of Taliban government, Afghans urge action on rights and economy

Sept 8 (Reuters) - Foreign countries greeted the makeup of the new government in Afghanistan with caution and dismay on Wednesday after the Taliban appointed hardline veteran figures to top positions, including several with a U.S. bounty on their head.

As the newly appointed ministers and their deputies set to work after they were named late on Tuesday, acting premier Mohammad Hasan Akhund urged former officials who fled Afghanistan to return, saying their safety would be guaranteed.

“We have suffered heavy losses for this historic moment and the era of bloodshed in Afghanistan is over,” he told Al Jazeera.

Tens of thousands of people left after the Taliban seized power in mid-August following a lightning military campaign, many of them professionals fearing reprisals because of their association with the Western-backed government.

In Kabul, dozens of women took to the streets again to demand representation in the new administration and for their rights to be protected.

More broadly, people urged the leadership to revive the Afghan economy, which faces steep inflation, food shortages exacerbated by drought and the prospect of international aid being slashed as countries distance themselves from the Taliban.

The Islamist militant movement swept to power in a victory hastened by the withdrawal of U.S. military support to Afghan government forces.

On Tuesday it finally announced a new government, and the appointment of hardline veterans has been widely seen as a signal that the Taliban were not looking to broaden their base and present a more tolerant face to the world.

The group has promised to respect people's rights and not seek vendettas, but it has been criticised for its heavy-handed response to protests and its part in a chaotic evacuation of thousands of people from Kabul airport.

“We're assessing the announcement, but despite professing that a new government would be inclusive, the announced list of names consists exclusively of individuals



who are members of the Taliban or their close associates, and no women,” U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said.

Washington was “concerned by the affiliations and track records of some of those individuals,” added Blinken, who was visiting a U.S. air base in Germany that has been a transit point for evacuees from Afghanistan.

The European Union voiced its disapproval at the appointments, but said it was ready to continue humanitarian assistance. Longer term aid would depend on the Taliban upholding basic freedoms.

The new acting cabinet includes former detainees of the U.S. military prison at Guantanamo Bay, while the interior minister, Sirajuddin Haqqani, is wanted by the United States on terrorism charges and carries a reward of \$10 million.

His uncle, with a bounty of \$5 million, is the minister for refugees and repatriation.

The Taliban's victory has presented the rest of the world with a dilemma.

They want to keep aid flowing and to help those with the appropriate paperwork who want to leave, but they may have to engage with a movement that, until a few weeks ago, was an insurgency

blamed for thousands of civilian deaths.

MORE PROTESTS

The last time the Taliban ruled Afghanistan, from 1996 to 2001, women were banned from work and girls from school. The group carried out public executions and its religious police enforced a strict interpretation of Islamic law.

Taliban leaders have vowed to respect people's rights, including those of women, in accordance with sharia, but those who have won greater freedoms over the last two decades are worried about losing them.

In an interview with Australia's SBS News, a senior Taliban official said women would not be allowed to play cricket - a popular sport in Afghanistan - and possibly any other because it was “not necessary” and their bodies might be exposed.

In Kabul, a group of women bearing signs reading “A cabinet without women is a failure” held another protest in the Pul-e Surkh

area of the city. Larger demonstrations on Tuesday were broken up when Taliban gunmen fired warning shots into the air.

“The cabinet was announced and there were no women in the cabinet. And some journalists who came to cover the protest were all arrested and taken to the police station,” said a woman in a video shared on social media.

Zaki Daryabi, head of the daily newspaper Etilaatroz, said some of his reporters had been beaten while covering Tuesday's protests.

A statement from the new Taliban interior ministry said that in order to avoid disturbances and security problems, anyone holding a demonstration should apply for clearance 24 hours beforehand.

For many Afghans, more pressing than the composition of the cabinet was the economic fallout of the chaos triggered by the Taliban's conquest.

Shukrullah Khan, manager of a restaurant at Qargha Lake, a popular local resort near Kabul, said business had slumped to next to nothing.



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WEA LEE'S GLOBAL NOTES

CORONAVIRUS DIARY

09/07/2021



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Autumn Leaves And Future Crises



On Labor Day morning, I looked at my backyard with the red leaves hanging on the trees. This is the season of Autumn now and I felt kind of a deep sadness.

In the last two years the world has become more divided than ever. When COVID -19 first hit, vaccines were the global issue. President Trump's Operation Warp Speed was the most successful one, but it was defined by the vaccine needs of the United States and not the whole

world. Billions of people now will be forced to wait to get vaccinated until 2023 to receive just their first shot.

President Biden declared that, "America is back," but what is returning? Just like recent events in Afghanistan, we are in total withdrawal and to clear the deck as far as the United States is concerned, the top agenda has to be the growing competition with China.

When we review the last two

years, global institutions like the United Nations, the World Health Organization and the International Monetary Fund could not work together during the crisis time especially without America getting involved.

It is very sad when I think about my dear friend Steve Levine passing away from COVID-19 without being vaccinated.

This is the season approaching Autumn again when I see so many colorful leaves that are changing color. This is the time we need to remember that whatever mistakes we may have made in the past that we too, can change.

We all hope that America is really back and that we can help the many suffering people around the world.



Southern DAILY Make Today Different

Editor's Choice



A person participates in a protest against the use of Bitcoin as legal tender, in San Salvador, El Salvador. REUTERS/Jose Cabezas



A member of the Taliban forces points his gun at protesters, as Afghan demonstrators shout slogans during an anti-Pakistan protest, near the Pakistan embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan. REUTERS/Stringer



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 attends a news conference with Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak and Britain's Health Secretary Sajid Javid (not pictured) in Downing Street, in London. REUTERS/Toby Melville/Pool



Dancers perform during the Morenada dance national day in La Paz, Bolivia. REUTERS/Manuel Claure



Migrants rescued from the English Channel arrive on a Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) boat at Dungeness, Britain. REUTERS/Peter Nicholls

BUSINESS

How COVID-19 Is Affecting The Globe And The Future

COVID-19: Coronavirus
Pandemic Review



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

Confirmed cases of COVID-19 have passed 208.6 million globally, according to Johns Hopkins University. The number of confirmed deaths stands at more than 4.38 million. More than 4.76 billion vaccination doses have been administered globally, according to Our World in Data. **Sydney** residents must brace for more deaths, authorities said on Wednesday, as the city continued to break records for new daily infections despite a nearly two-month lockdown. The state of New South Wales reported its biggest daily rise of 633 new cases, including 545 in Sydney. **New Zealand** has returned to life in lockdown for the first time in six months in a bid to halt any spread of the infectious Delta variant of the coronavirus. The number of COVID-19 cases had risen to 10 on Wednesday, but modelling suggested numbers could rise to 50-100. **Japan** on Tuesday extended its state of emergency in Tokyo and other regions and announced new measures covering seven more prefectures to counter a spike in COVID-19 infections that is threatening the medical system.

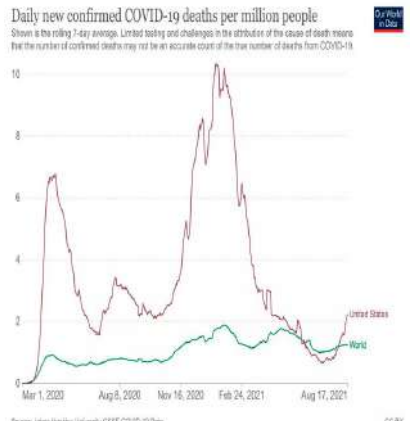


Cuba has turned to the military to provide oxygen after its main oxygen plant broke down. The country is in the midst of a Delta variant-driven coronavirus surge that has resulted in record numbers of cases and deaths, swamping some provincial health systems. **South-East Asian** countries need more help securing COVID-19 vaccines, as the region struggles to contain record infections and deaths driven by the Delta variant, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies said. **Botswana** needs to budget an extra 1.13 billion pula (\$100 million) to help secure COVID-19 vaccines and equipment as the southern African country battles a third wave of infections, Finance Minister Peggy Serame told parliament on Tuesday. **British** inflation fell to the Bank of England's 2% target last month in an unexpectedly sharp slowdown that economists said was most likely a blip as the reopening of the economy after lockdown drives prices higher.



The U.S. records more than 1,000 COVID-19 deaths in 24 hours

The **United States** reported more than 1,000 COVID-19 deaths on Tuesday, equating to around 42 fatalities an hour, according to a Reuters tally, as the Delta variant continues to ravage parts of the country with low vaccination rates. Coronavirus-related deaths have spiked in the US over the past month and are averaging 769 per day, the highest since mid-April, according to the Reuters tally. President Joe Biden's administration confirmed on Tuesday evening it planned to extend requirements for travellers to wear masks on planes, trains and buses and at airports and train stations until mid-January.



COVID-19 deaths in the US are rising.

Image: Our World in Data

As in many other countries, the Delta variant has presented a major challenge. The Reuters tally from state data on Tuesday showed 1,017 deaths, taking the US death toll from the pandemic to just under 623,000 people, the highest number of deaths officially reported by any country in the world. The last time the US recorded more than 1,000 deaths on a daily basis was in March. **3. Pope Francis: Get vaccinated as a 'gesture of love'** Pope Francis issued an appeal on Wednesday urging people to get inoculated against COVID-19, saying the vaccines could bring an end to the pandemic, but needed to be taken by everyone. "Thanks to God's grace and to the work of many, we now have vaccines to protect us from COVID-19," the pope said in a video message made on

behalf of the non-profit US group the Ad Council and public health coalition COVID Collaborative. "They grant us the hope of ending the pandemic, but only if they are available to all and if we work together." Vaccines are widely available in mainly wealthier nations, but mistrust and hesitancy over the newly developed shots have meant that many people are refusing to take them, leaving them especially vulnerable as the Delta variant spreads.

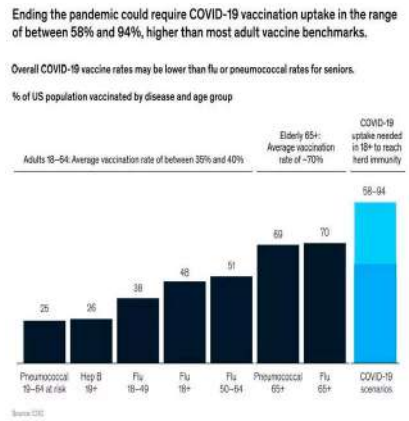


By contrast, poorer nations still do not have access to large-scale vaccine supplies. Medical experts have warned that ever-more dangerous variants might develop if the virus is allowed to circulate in large pools of non-vaccinated people. Pope Francis was himself vaccinated in March, saying at the time that it was an ethical obligation. "Vaccination is a simple but profound way of promoting the common good and caring for each other, especially the most vulnerable. I pray to God that everyone may contribute their own small grain of sand, their own small gesture of love," the pope said in his latest video message. (Courtesy weforum.org)

Related
Has COVID-19 Pandemic Created An "Immunization Renaissance?"

Key Points
The COVID-19 vaccine effort has been remarkable – and it may have a lasting legacy for the way in which vaccines are developed and deployed in future. The response to the pandemic has triggered remarkable innovations. The development of COVID-19 vaccines was the fastest in history; and its rollout is the largest public health effort ever in peacetime. However, it's also true that, despite multiple warnings, including other epidemics, the world was largely ill-prepared for COVID-19. These three factors – the lack of preparation for the pandemic, speedy vaccine development, and a global deploy-

ment effort (albeit with varied success) – could be the foundation for an "immunization renaissance." **Applying novel vaccine technologies to other diseases** The effort against COVID-19 resulted in the largest and most diverse vaccine pipeline for any disease in history. As of early August 2021, there were 21 vaccines in use around the world and 294 candidates in research and development. Moreover, new technology platforms have been validated, such as mRNA and viral-vectors, enabling new immunological approaches and demonstrating unprecedented speed and scalability: the first mRNA drug product was available 42 days after the SARS-CoV2 sequence was published. These technologies could be used to develop treatments against other intractable diseases such as HIV, tuberculosis, malaria, and cancer while also making vaccines more easily deployable, for example by being effective at room temperature. Other platforms in development could provide additional options, particularly if public and private investment in R&D is reinvigorated.



Public attitudes towards health interventions have been a huge challenge historically and have often taken decades to change, be it polio vaccination or campaigns against smoking or for seat-belts. So the current trend towards more positive public attitudes on vaccination is a significant gain. The public is also more engaged than ever: discussions on vaccine efficacy have moved from scientific conference podiums to household dinner tables. This is a unique moment to foster continued engagement on the broader benefits of vaccinations to increase awareness and vaccination rates against other diseases. (Courtesy weforum)

COMMUNITY

These States Are Seeing A
Huge Rise In Delta
Hospitalizations



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

COVID-19 hospitalizations have hit 100,000 for the first time since January. Doctors are staging walkouts. Nurses are exhausted. Look past the headlines and you will see more and more Americans dying or hospitalized due to severe disease caused by the Delta variant of the coronavirus. If you felt invincible last year, please reconsider. "I think most of us thought once we got through the winter or people started getting vaccinated, we said, Okay, the worst is behind us. We're not going to deal with this again," virus expert Ashish Jha told Good Morning America. That didn't happen because "we never expected that a third of Americans would opt not to get vaccinated." As a result, the following 5 states have hospitals overflowing; one is even begging tourists not to come.

1. Oregon



"Every day we see just the body boxes roll out one after the other and then

as soon as we clean the room we get somebody back in there... It's the worst we've ever seen." That's what ICU nurse Clarissa Carson told CBS News' Janet Shamlian Wednesday at Asante Rogue Regional Medical Center in Medford, Oregon, where COVID-19 patients have filled the hospital," reports CBS News. "Shamlian reported constant turnover in the hospital's intensive care unit, but not because patients are getting better." "We have patients waiting to get onto life support," ICU Dr. Somnath Ghosh said. "The turnaround is so rapid, it's pretty sad."

2. Illinois



"Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker has reinstated a mask mandate for the state, requiring masks indoors for residents as he says the state is 'running out of time as our hospitals run out of beds,'" reports 5 Chicago. "The new indoor mask mandate, similar to mandates already handed down in Cook County and Chicago,

will begin Monday and require facial coverings in indoor settings, regardless of COVID vaccination status." "Illinois will join several other states that have reinstituted statewide indoor mask requirements, regardless of vaccination status, effective on Monday," Pritzker said. "Masks work. Period."

3. Florida



Florida has the most people hospitalized at more than 17,000. "South Florida COVID patients are filling ICU beds at rates not seen before. A new dashboard released by Palm Beach County Thursday reveals that only 4% of ICU beds in its 17 hospitals are available. In Broward County, only 3% of ICU beds at its 16 hospitals are available, its dashboard shows," reports the Sun Sentinel. "Across the state, the situation is just as bleak. With COVID patients getting sicker and many on ventilators, only 5% of intensive care beds are open to new patients, according to the U.S. Health and Human Services data."

4. Texas



Texas has 14,000-plus people hospitalized with COVID. "As the highly contagious delta variant of COVID-19 spreads and sends unvaccinated Tex-

ans to the hospital with serious illness, hospitals are under enormous pressure to make room for growing numbers of patients," reports the Texas Tribune. "Hospital staff has never been in shorter supply, which deepens the strain on all departments, including emergency rooms, respiratory therapy and even labor and delivery. Without the capacity to

take on new patients — and equally thin resources elsewhere to transfer them to — doctors fear they'll have to start making heartbreaking decisions about care in order to save the most lives possible."

5. New Mexico



"New Mexico's Democratic Governor Michelle Grisham has announced a temporary indoor mask mandate following a 90 percent increase in statewide COVID-19 hospitalizations over the

last two weeks," reports Newsweek. "In addition to the mandate, Grisham announced mandatory vaccinations for all personnel working in care settings and schools." "We can't continue our economic recovery and our positive economic journey if we have out of control COVID cases in the state of New Mexico," Grisham said. "We're gonna use masks and vaccines to blunt the spread of COVID and see if we can't rebalance where we are as a state, particularly given the Delta variant."

Stay Safe Out There!



No matter where you live, follow the public health fundamentals and help end this pandemic, no matter where you live—get vaccinated ASAP; if you live in an area with low vaccination rates, wear an N95 face mask, don't travel, social distance, avoid large crowds, don't go indoors with people you're not shel-

tering with (especially in bars), practice good hand hygiene, and protect your life and the lives of others. COVID. (Courtesy eatthis.com)