

NEWS TRACKER

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AFGHANISTAN

- The United States' 20-year campaign in Afghanistan ended in tragedies and Washington achieved nothing, Russian President Vladimir Putin has said, adding that the US army's attempt to ingrain their norms in Afghanistan was futile. he said: "American troops were present on that territory (of Afghanistan) for 20 years, and over those 20 years they were trying – this can be said without offending anyone – to civilise the local people, but in fact, to impose their norms and standards of life in the broadest sense of this word, including the political organisation of society.
<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/9/1/putin-says-us-achieved-zero-in-afghanistan>
- From executions of rivals to restrictions on women's rights, the new Taliban look a lot like the old Taliban. After seizing Kabul, the Taliban made initial displays of tolerance, pledging that Afghans have nothing to fear. But the country's new rulers are already showing signs that they are unwilling to tolerate cultural or political expressions that conflict with their fundamentalist beliefs.
<https://www.wsj.com/articles/talibans-promises-of-tolerance-in-afghanistan-often-dont-match-reality-11630506729>
- Researchers are among those who are now especially vulnerable. The United States has been their main source of funding and collaborations, and that puts them at increased risk of persecution by the new rulers. Most institutions remain closed, and many staff and students — women and men — are in hiding.
<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-021-02340-w>
- US President Joe Biden has defended his decision to withdraw US troops from Afghanistan - a move which led to Taliban militants returning to power. He praised troops for organising an airlift of more than 120,000 people wishing to flee the Taliban regime.
<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-58403735>
- "We are very worried about the status of women and children," Henrietta Fore, executive director of UNICEF. he executive director of UNICEF, Henrietta Fore, has told CNBC that the agency's "deepest concern" following the withdrawal of U.S. and allied troops from Afghanistan is the impact on children's and women's rights and education.
<https://www.cnbc.com/2021/08/31/afghanistan-unicef-worried-about-the-future-for-women-and-children-.html>

- Heavy fighting erupted in pockets of northern Afghanistan in what may be some of the final clashes between Taliban and resistance fighters as the Islamist group tries to consolidate its hold on the country. An official with the Panjshir Valley-based resistance movement said at least 17 of its fighters were killed but that more than twice that many Taliban fighters also died in the fighting. A Taliban official, however, told The Washington Post that at least one district has already fallen and that the last remaining resistance would soon be quashed.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2021/09/01/afghanistan-kabul-taliban-live-updates/>
- Arifa Ahmadi* started her first day under full Taliban control by burning her jeans and any other clothes that the Taliban would be likely to disapprove of as the nation woke up to a new era after the last American troops left the country overnight. Ahmadi is a part of the generation that has grown up during the past 20 years and enjoyed freedom, education and employment under a government backed by the west – but lost her job after the Taliban took over the country. The US secretary of state, Antony Blinken, said on Monday “a new chapter has begun “for Afghanistan with the Nato military operation over.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/aug/31/people-are-broken-afghans-describe-first-day-under-full-taliban-control>
- The Taliban has been showcasing military hardware it captured in its takeover of Afghanistan, during a parade in the southern province of Kandahar.

<https://news.sky.com/story/afghanistan-taliban-parade-in-kandahar-as-it-showcases-military-hardware-seized-during-takeover-12396749>
- The Taliban showed off dozens of American-made armoured vehicles along with newly seized weapons at victory celebrations in the southern Afghan city of Kandahar. the Taliban paraded hardware left behind by both Afghan and US forces after the withdrawal of the last American troops left Afghanistan in the grip of the militant group.

<https://edition.cnn.com/2021/09/01/asia/taliban-kandahar-captured-weapons-intl/index.html>
- On the day the Taliban took control of Afghanistan's capital Kabul, advertising posters outside beauty parlours showing women in bridalwear were painted over. Salons around the city were closed down too. While some businesses have vowed to return to full service soon, others fear for their futures. Afsoon (not her real name), a make-up artist in hiding, describes how much the beauty industry has meant to Afghan women.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/stories-58388333>

Pakistan

- Afghanistan could descend into another civil war if the West fails to "engage" with the Taliban, Pakistan's foreign minister has told Sky News. Shah Mahmood Qureshi warned of potential "anarchy" and a resurgent threat of terrorism as he criticised the West's exit strategy, saying there was a failure to listen to Pakistan's concerns about ending the war in Afghanistan and as a result the withdrawal was not "responsible or orderly".
<https://news.sky.com/story/afghanistan-west-must-engage-with-taliban-or-risk-new-civil-war-warns-pakistans-foreign-minister-12396487>
- Pakistan Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid has admitted that Islamabad has long been the 'custodian' of the Taliban and have given shelter to the insurgent group which would be now again ruling war-torn Afghanistan after 20 years. Sheikh Rashid said that Pakistan is a "custodian" of Taliban leaders and it has "taken care of them for long".
<https://www.timesnownews.com/international/article/islamabad-has-long-been-custodian-of-taliban-provided-them-shelter-pakistan-minister-sheikh-rashid/806671>
- Balochistan on Tuesday demanded the withdrawal of Frontier Corps and armed forces from the district after three levies personnel were killed in a roadside explosion.
<https://www.aninews.in/news/world/asia/pakistan-balochistan-demands-withdrawal-of-armed-forces-from-district-after-3-levies-personnel-killed20210901204059/>
- The Bengali community, whose strength in Karachi is estimated to be around two million, has been facing violence and oppression in the city. Sania Arif, in an opinion piece in The Pakistan Daily, informed of a gruesome August 5 incident where a tortured body of a labourer was found hanging from a tree in Karachi's Machar Colony. The labourer had gone missing two weeks before his body was found.
<https://www.aninews.in/news/world/asia/marginalised-bengali-community-faces-violence-oppression-in-pakistans-karachi20210901164955/>