



Philippine police win battle for the bulge after rule dropped

US says helping investigate Haitian president's killing

Page 6

Page 7

Taleban will not fight inside Afghan cities

Militants warn Turkey against extending its troop presence

KABUL: The Taleban do not want to battle government forces inside Afghanistan's cities and would rather see them surrender, a senior insurgent leader said yesterday, as the militants also warned Turkey against extending its troop presence.

The hardline Islamist group has swept through much of the north as foreign troops complete their withdrawal, and the government now holds little more than a constellation of provincial capitals that must largely be resupplied by air.

Yesterday, the head of a Taleban commission that oversees government forces who surrender urged residents of Afghanistan's cities to reach out to them. "Now that the fighting from mountains and deserts has reached the doors of the cities, Mujahiddin (Taleban) don't want fighting inside the city," Amir Khan Muttaqi said in a message tweeted by a Taleban spokesman.

"It is better... to use any possible channel to get in touch with our invitation and guidance commission," he said, adding this would "prevent their cities from getting damaged".

The strategy is one well-worn by the Taleban — particularly during their first rise to power in the 1990s — cutting off towns and district centres and getting elders to negotiate a surrender. Muttaqi's comments came as the defence ministry said Afghan forces had cleared Qala-i-Naw city after days of fighting.

The Badghis province capital saw sustained street fighting last week in the first assault by the Taleban on a major urban centre since foreign troops commenced their final withdrawal in May.

The call also came the same day as a video emerged that CNN said it had verified showing a group of Afghan commandos being gunned down

by the Taleban in June after surrendering.

Turkey warning

In a separate statement yesterday, the Taleban said Turkey's decision to provide security to Kabul airport when US-led forces leave was "reprehensible".

"We consider stay of foreign forces in our homeland by any country under whatever pretext as occupation," the group said, days after Ankara agreed with Washington to provide security for Kabul airport.

As foreign forces wind up their withdrawal — due to be completed by August 31 — the situation on the ground is changing rapidly.

The top US general in Afghanistan relinquished his command Monday at a ceremony in the capital, the latest symbolic gesture bringing America's longest war nearer to an end.

The pace of the pullout — and multiple offensives launched by the Taleban — have raised fears that Afghanistan's security forces could be swiftly overwhelmed, particularly without vital US air support. Around 650 American service members are expected to remain in Kabul, guarding Washington's sprawling diplomatic compound.

But Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Friday he had agreed with the United States on the "scope" of how to secure Kabul airport.

Peace talks between the insurgents and the government supposedly taking place in Doha have largely fizzled out, and the Taliban now appear set on a complete military victory.

But claims by the hardline group to control 85 percent of the country are impossible to verify



KANDAHAR: Men donate blood for people who got injured during clashes between Taleban and government forces, in Kandahar district on July 12, 2021. — AFP

independently — and strongly disputed by the government.

The insurgents have tried to capture cities in the past, but so far have failed to keep them. They briefly held the northern city of Kunduz in 2015 and 2016 but were pushed out by government forces. In 2018, insurgents seized Ghazni for a few days,

torching its main bazaar and killing scores of civilians. In the latest fighting, local officials said the Taleban had captured two districts in the largely Shiite Hazara province of Bamiyan. During their repressive rule two decades ago, the insurgents drew international outrage by blowing up giant centuries-old statues of Buddha in Bamiyan. — AFP

Cuba blames US for unprecedented anti-govt protests

HAVANA: Havana on Monday blamed a US "policy of economic suffocation" for unprecedented protests against Cuba's communist government, as Washington pointed the finger at "decades of repression" in the one-party state.

The longtime foes traded barbs a day after thousands of Cubans took to the streets chanting: "Down with the dictatorship" in protests dispersed by police who arrested dozens. The anti-government rallies erupted spontaneously in several cities as the country endures its worst economic crisis in 30 years, with chronic shortages of electricity, food and medicine and a recent worsening of the coronavirus epidemic.

The only authorized gatherings in Cuba are usually events of the ruling Communist Party, but according to the data journalism site Inventario, a total of 40 demonstrations took place on Sunday. President Miguel Diaz-Canel blamed the discontent on the United States pursuing a "policy of economic suffocation to provoke social unrest in the country." Cuba has been under US sanctions since 1962. "What do they want? To provoke social unrest" with a view to "regime change," he said in an address broadcast on public television and radio.

'Decades of repression'

In a statement from Washington, US President Joe Biden expressed support for the protesters' demand for relief "from the decades of repression and economic suffering to which they have been subjected by Cuba's authoritarian regime."

Secretary of State Antony Blinken said it would be a "grievous mistake" for Cuba to blame Washington for protests he said could be traced to the communist leadership's "mismanagement" of the economy and COVID-19.

US-Cuba relations have been particularly fraught since then-president Donald Trump reinforced sanctions following an historic but temporary easing of tensions under Barack Obama between 2014 and 2016. The tougher measures, left unchanged by Biden, and the collapse of tourism due to the global pandemic, contributed to Cuba's economy declining 11 percent in 2020.

On Sunday, several hundred protesters marched through the capital Havana chanting: "We want liberty" as police and soldiers kept watch. AFP witnessed officers spraying tear-gas and beating protesters with plastic pipes.

Social media showed scenes of rallies around the country despite the mobile internet-only introduced to the island in 2018 — being mostly offline on Sunday afternoon. It remained so by lunchtime Monday.

The EU and UN on Monday called for Cuba to respect freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. "I would like to call on the government there to allow peaceful demonstrations and to listen to the discontent being expressed by the demonstrators," EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said. — AFP

Malaysia shuts COVID centre after 200 workers infected

KUALA LUMPUR: A Malaysian coronavirus vaccination centre was temporarily closed yesterday after more than 200 workers tested positive for COVID-19, authorities said, as the country's cases set a new daily record. The Southeast Asian nation is battling a serious outbreak driven by highly infectious variants, and has been under a strict lockdown since the start of June.

It has ramped up its jab drive by opening mass vaccination sites, and about 11 percent of the population are so far fully vaccinated while almost 25 percent have received a first dose. But one centre in hard-hit Selangor state was forced to close after 204 staff and volunteers out of 453 there tested positive, said Khairy Jamaluddin, minister in charge of the inoculation drive.

Those infected had low "viral loads" and none had serious symptoms, possibly because most workers at the site in Shah Alam city had been vaccinated, he said. He added that 400 of the workers there had been inoculated, but he did not say which vaccine they had been given. Malaysia is using the Pfizer-BioNTech, AstraZeneca and Sinovac shots.



KUALA LUMPUR: File photo shows single mother Tilda Kalaivani waving a shirt to use as a white flag to call for help, after being affected by COVID-19 in her rental apartment in Kuala Lumpur. — AFP

"This is the first time we've had to shut down a (vaccination centre) because of positive cases, but we acted fast," Khairy said, adding it would not hamper the overall programme.

The centre's closure led to thousands of appointments being rescheduled, but it will re-open Wednesday after sanitisation, with new staff. Despite being under strict curbs for weeks, with only essential businesses allowed to operate, Malaysia's infection rates have remained high. Daily cases hit a new record of 11,079 Tuesday, along

with 125 deaths. Health Minister Adham Baba later told reporters nearly 700 new beds for virus patients had been added at hospitals in the capital, as well as in Selangor and Negeri Sembilan state, taking the total to over 5,000. He also announced an extra 1,200 medical staff would be hired and about 5,000 new volunteers brought in to help in the three hard-hit areas. The country of almost 33 million people has so far reported more than 855,000 virus cases, and nearly 6,400 deaths. — AFP



الكلية الامتدادية في الكويت
Australian College of Kuwait







SCHOOL OF BUSINESS



SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING



SCHOOL OF AVIATION

BE YOUR OWN INSPIRATION

كن مصدر إلهامك





1828225

Apply Now **قدم الآن**

www.ack.edu.kw