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Heart of Asia

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Taliban 'could have used drone' in Kunduz attack

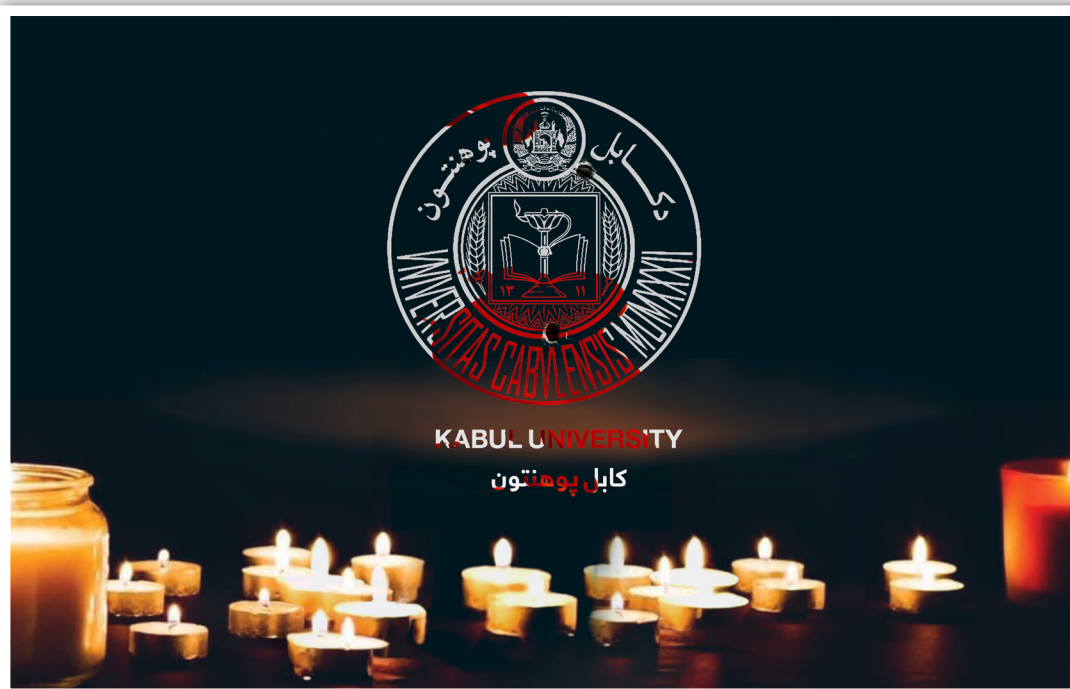
In what could be a "new method of attack", an explosion in the Kunduz governor's compound on Sunday could have been carried out by a drone, the New York Times reported Monday. Local officials told the Times that the strike targeted the governor's compound where bodyguards were playing volleyball. At least four security officers were killed and eight others wounded. "When the Kunduz governor bodyguards were playing volleyball in the governor's guesthouse, the explosion took place among them," said Ghulam Rabbani Rabbani, a member of Kunduz's provincial council. "It is not clear that it was an explosion or a missile or drone attack," he said. ... **P2**



MGIUF: Current War in Afghanistan is Illegal

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) said the Global Islamic Unity Forum (GIUF) in Malaysia has joined global Islamic organisations that condemned the ongoing war in Afghanistan and called for a ceasefire. GIUF, a renowned Malaysian organisation that promoted unity, peace and trade between Islamic nations, shared its message with the Afghan Embassy in Kuala Lumpur on Oct. 28. Condemning the escalation of violence, they appealed to all warring parties to end hostilities and avail themselves of the "historic opportunity" to advance an Afghan-owned and Afghan-led peace process in line with the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) 2018 Makkah Declaration. "Keeping unity and resolving the problems and conflicts through dialogue and negotiation is the only right way to achieve peace and stability in Afghanistan," the GIUF said. This comes after Afghan religious scholars and Bangladeshi Ulama also issued fatwas denouncing the war and calling it against Sharia.

At least 20 students killed in attack on Kabul University



At least 20 students were killed and six were wounded during an armed attack on Kabul University's campus after three gunmen stormed the building in the Afghan capital on Monday morning, the Afghan government and a security official said. An Afghan soldier on the scene also told The National that while the

campus had been evacuated, many of those wounded remained inside as police faced off the assailants and eventually killed them all. The Afghan health ministry said at least six people were injured, including a professor and a student although that number is likely to go up. Blasts continue to be heard

sporadically as attackers and security forces faced off more than five hours since the attack began. Students posted accounts of the attack on social media as police surrounded the sprawling campus. "Please God give me patience. My classmates died or were injured before my eyes," one of the students posted on his Facebook page. "We

have also been taken as hostages. No security has arrived." The Interior Ministry said there was an explosion before shots were fired. Kabul University had been receiving threats for nearly three years, the injured professor told The National on condition of anonymity. "About three years ago, we were told to be very cautious because the Taliban were trying to attack the university," he said. The university buildings are fitted with heavy metal doors and windows for such situations and staff and students had been locked in by security forces, the professor said. However, other witnesses reported that the assailants had managed to enter the law faculty building. In a Tweet, Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said the group was not behind the university attack. Video posted on Twitter by the Afghanistan's largest broadcaster, Tolo news, showed students fleeing as gunshots are heard in the background. Tolo quoted sources saying ... **P3**

Pak-Afghan Youth Forum Organises First Media Workshop

The Pak-Afghan Youth Forum organised a three-day media workshop in Islamabad to bring together youth of both countries and enhance contacts between professionals across the border. The first of its kind Pak-Afghan Youth Media Workshop, saw the participation of renowned journalists and media people, academic circle and students of both countries as they worked out ways to address issues in public diplomacy, lobbying and media ventures. ... **P3**



Egyptian firm willing to invest in Afghanistan

The Presidential Palace said on Monday that an Egyptian firm was willing to invest in infrastructure and energy projects in Afghanistan. A statement from the Presidential Palace to media said Hassan Allam Holding Egyptian company officials expressed their interest to make investment in the presence of the Egyptian Ambassador to Afghanistan. The statement said the two sides discussed and spoke about investment opportunities in Afghanistan. The above firm has invested \$5 billion in various countries and now it is interested to make investment in Afghanistan in infrastructure and energy spheres. President Ghani said Afghanistan



has many opportunities for foreign investment in various sectors and the doors were open for foreign companies to take advantage of these opportunities. The Egyptian ambassador in Kabul and officials of the

mentioned company, while referring to investment opportunities in Afghanistan, said they would share their international experience in mining, energy and infrastructure areas with Afghans through long-term programs and partnerships.

Taliban 'could...

Fazal Karim Aimaq, a member of parliament from Kunduz said on his Facebook page that the episode represented "a new method of attack" but did not say if a drone had carried it out.

The New York Times states a Taliban spokesman did not respond to a request for comment.

The Taliban's use of small drones has been limited in recent years to filming attacks for propaganda and reconnaissance. But, according to US officials, there have been previous unreported instances of the remote-controlled devices being used to drop munitions, a practice made popular by the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria in the past, the Times reported.

In May, a similar strike occurred on the Kunduz governor's compound, killing one person. At the time, the governor's spokesman said a missile had hit a farewell party hosted by the governor. But later local officials said they believed a drone may have carried out the attack because of its precise nature.

According to the Times, if the strike on Sunday was indeed carried out by an armed drone, it would show the proliferation of a method of attack that could have wide-ranging and dire consequences for Afghan, United States and NATO forces. Officials in Kunduz said that small Taliban drones used for surveillance were frequently seen in the skies there. In March, Afghan forces claimed to have shot down one of the drones.

By James B. Cunningham, Earl Anthony Wayne

Don't Abandon Peace for Afghanistan

U.S. President Donald J. Trump's October 7 tweet saying that all U.S. troops will return from Afghanistan by Christmas threatens the prospects for success in the first serious Afghan to Afghan peace negotiations in forty years, now taking place in Doha, Qatar. If confirmed, a premature U.S. withdrawal would tip the balance toward the Taliban, who are still waging war across Afghanistan. It would undermine our Afghan partners and have a terrible impact on Afghan women.

U.S. national security would be undermined leaving the United States with less leverage to assure that the Taliban will keep commitments—especially their promise to prevent Al-Qaeda and other international terrorists from using Afghanistan to attack the United States.

The surprise presidential tweet undercuts the credibility of the United States with partners and allies. It appears to have been made without prior consultation with allies fighting with us, suggesting that the United States would abandon agreements made abroad for short-term domestic political calculations. It would badly damage the international support which the United States has worked so hard to build around a sustainable Afghan peace process.

Consistent with the South Asia Strategy enunciated by President Trump himself in August 2017, the U.S. agreement with the Taliban is supposed to be conditions-based. Specifically, through repeated public statements by the Secretaries of State, of Defense, and Special Representative Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad, the U.S. administration has

underscored that we will not withdraw from Afghanistan until the Taliban has demonstrated its good faith by abiding by the terms of the agreement in a manner that protects U.S. and allied security equities in Afghanistan. Administration officials have admitted in Congressional testimony that the Taliban is not yet fully compliant with its counterterrorism commitments. Yet, remarkably, the president's tweet seems to have the United States rushing to withdraw troops without achieving its stated goals and well ahead of the final May 2021 deadline. An accelerated withdrawal will effectively mean abandoning the fruits of two years of determined U.S. diplomacy with the Taliban, Afghan partners in Kabul, our allies, and regional and international partners to get the Afghan parties to the negotiating table. The U.S. diplomatic effort has orchestrated an opening which many thought highly unlikely, and which will need much nurturing and tending as the parties try to bridge major differences.

Important in this context are the words of Pakistan's prime minister, whose country has long sheltered the Taliban. In a September 26 Washington Post op-ed he said: "All those who have invested in the Afghan peace process should resist the temptation for setting unrealistic timelines. A hasty international withdrawal from Afghanistan would be unwise."

In spite of President Trump's persistent interest in quickly pulling out of Afghanistan, many in and out of the U.S. government have worked to persuade him to stay the course and assure a sustainable peace. Still the impact in Afghanistan of this surprise

tweet should not be doubted. As one Afghan official wrote privately to one of us: "people were talking about waking up to a tweet like this ... How serious is this? Is it a decision or not? How was the decision made? Was there any consultation? It does undermine the conditionality and will impact the dynamics in Doha..."

Many in the United States and around the world have similar questions. Speeding withdrawal is highly irresponsible while the Afghan negotiations in Doha are still grappling with initial issues and have not gotten to the real substance of negotiations. After decades of fighting, it is not realistic to believe that these issues will be resolved quickly or without the ability of the United States and other partners to exert leverage in Afghanistan.

A key element of the U.S.-Taliban agreement is a commitment to reduce violence as a means to create favorable conditions for the ongoing peace talks. Lamentably, the Taliban has so far ignored this commitment and in the past several months has actually heightened the tempo and intensity of its military campaign against the Afghan security forces. At present, there is no indication of a serious Taliban interest in implementing a ceasefire. Indeed, if the United States accelerates its departure, the Taliban will be even more tempted to just wait, by stalling the talks until the United States completes its withdrawal. Once the United States and its allies have departed, the Taliban is likely to further intensify its military campaign and potentially seek a military victory. In addition to undermining U.S. security, those who will pay the biggest

price for a premature U.S. withdrawal and effective abandonment of the nascent peace process are the women of Afghanistan and the millions of younger Afghans who have grown up over the last nineteen years. They are the ones who will suffer terribly with a Taliban victory.

Recall that the Taliban are effective combatants, but they are not popular in Afghanistan, as evidenced every year by the Survey of the Afghan people. What is popular is achieving peace.

The United States has done a great service by getting the Afghan parties to the negotiating table. Now, the United States must support that peace process including by remaining effectively present in Afghanistan, as the Afghan parties work through very tough issues about the future structures, rules, and processes of an Afghan government.

We all agree that U.S. troops should be out of harms way as soon as possible. Already, however, Afghan government forces are on the front lines of the fighting. The United States should not undermine the important progress that the combination of U.S. diplomacy and military steadfastness, working with allies and friends, has yielded in getting Afghans to the negotiating table and putting the Taliban on the spot to become a more responsible actor against terrorism.

We urge that U.S. troops not be withdrawn by Christmas or until conditions on the ground assure that U.S. security objectives in Afghanistan are guaranteed through a political settlement and a sustainable peace—a peace that honors the sacrifice of America's brave men and women.

By SHUBHANGI PANDEY

Ending, or losing, an 'endless war' in Afghanistan?

Many analysts describe US President Donald Trump's foreign policies as "transactional" in nature: resulting in multilateral equations based on personal diplomacy, rather than forward-looking geostrategic imperatives. It is noteworthy, therefore, that Trump's stated policy objectives vis-à-vis South Asia have been characterised by continuity rather than change, when compared with previous US administrations. Still, while the larger strategic objectives may be holding up a mirror to past US discourses in South Asia, the tools employed to achieve them have been different and disruptive in many ways.

The earliest and most visible manifestation of the US' rigorous appraisal of regional dynamics was perhaps Trump's South Asia Strategy that focused on ending the war in Afghanistan, while staying cognisant of the potentially dire consequences of a hasty

exit amidst emboldened militancy. The new approach provided for increased devolution of decision-making powers to the military, in order to more efficiently tackle terror groups operating in the region. It also made troop withdrawal contingent upon the fulfilment of certain conditions on the ground, instead of being a time-bound exercise, in an effort to compel the insurgents to agree to engage in negotiations to end the conflict.

Against this background, the historic US-Taliban deal and initiation of intra-Afghan talks, after much contention over the issue of prisoner release, marked a clear success for Trump. At the same time, the deal raised serious concerns within the Afghan government, vis-à-vis the possibility of the Taliban regaining political power, and a potentially compromised republic in the future. Moreover, the deal compelled a recalibration of strategic postures amongst

key regional stakeholders, particularly in the immediate neighbourhood.

Given Pakistan's geographically strategic location and influence over the Taliban, the country's importance in US efforts to stabilise Afghanistan, was not lost on anyone in Washington, even before Trump came to office. Arguably, it is for that reason that Trump's predecessors chose to overlook Pakistan's disruptive role in Afghanistan, in favour of using Pakistani territory to supply reinforcements to the US troops in Afghanistan. Trump, on the other hand, departed from convention by imposing military aid cuts on Pakistan, citing the lack of action by Islamabad in dismantling terror camps within its territory. However, even Trump proved incapable of wishing away the importance of Pakistan in the US' strategic calculus; soon after revoking significant aid to Pakistan, he began to ... **P3**

Kabul University Attack Condemned as Inhuman



The complex attack by three gunmen on Kabul University on Monday morning was widely condemned by Afghan leaders and foreign diplomats who called it horrific, inhuman and a "terror act."

Presidential spokesman Sediq Sediqqi said they condemn "terrorist attack" on Kabul University and that "terrorists" are attacking academic centers after they were "defeated in Helmand."

First Vice President Amrullah Saleh called the attack an intelligence failure and a human tragedy.

"One day we will correct our intelligence failures. But the Talibs, their likeminded satanic allies in the next door won't be ever able to wash their conscience of this

stinking and non-justifiable attack on Kabul University," he said in a tweet.

Abdullah Abdullah, head of the reconciliation council, condemned the attack called it "a heinous crime" and said, "students have the right to study in peace and security."

Former president Hamid Karzai in a statement condemned the attack and called it an unforgivable crime by the enemies of peace in Afghanistan.

He called on Afghan sides to make efforts for peace to end the bloodshed in the country. NATO Senior Civilian Representative Stefano Pontecorvo said this is the second attack on educational institutions in Kabul in 10 days and that "Afghan children and youth need to feel safe going to school." ... **P3**

Some Decisions by Govt Council Remain Unimplemented: Investors

The Union of Construction Companies claims that some decisions by the High Economic Council—led by President Ashraf Ghani—remain unimplemented, limiting private companies' access to government projects and pushing them towards collapse.

According to the union, one of these companies is the Tadbir Cobblestone Company in Chahar Asiab area on the outskirts of the city of Kabul that was established with an initial investment of \$1 million, but its operations are stopped as it has not been awarded a project despite a decision by the High Economic Council two years ago.

Over 200 workers have been left unemployed as the company has halted its operations, the union officials said.

"The decisions are not implemented properly as they should be. No broad-based assessment is carried out. This adds to the problems faced by construction firms," said Bashir Atashban, head of the Union of Construction Companies.

"If someone has any complaint, he can submit it to the Administrative Office of the President," said Dawa Khan Menapal, a presidential spokesman.

Documents provided by officials of Tadbir Cobblestone Company show that the High Economic Council in its



14th session three years ago approved in principle projects for pavement of subways, historical sites and sidewalks and directed the Kabul Municipality and the Urban Development Ministry to design required plans for the projects and hand it to Tadbir Cobblestone for implementation. But officials of the company said they haven't received any project from any government institutions so far.

The company officials said they have implemented a pavement project in Kart-e-Se area in the west of Kabul two years ago.

"If our work had continued, we would have been able to pay five to six million Afghanis to the government annually," said Mohammad Shekib, owner, Tadbir

Cobblestone Company.

"The project is suspended for the last three years due to lack of budget and lack of required facilities," said Mohammad Zaheer, the deputy head of Tadbir Cobblestone Company.

A pavement project encompassing 3,000 square meters of area in Darulaman Palace has been implemented by Operation and Support Office of the President for National Development (OSOPND) with the help of some companies. But the project has not been implemented with required quality, according to experts.

However, Fahim Safi, the head of Darulaman Palace project, defended his work, saying that the "tried our best

to do the pavement like its original."

According to Kabul Municipality, projects for pavement of 15 kilometers of roads are under procurement process following recent decisions by the High Economic Council.

The municipality's spokesperson Samira Rasa said 31 kilometers of roads have been identified for pavement projects.

"The remaining seven kilometers will be under procurement process in the near future," Rasa said.

Based on the statistics, each kilometer of pavement with seven meters wide costs more than 19 million Afghanis while the cost of 1 kilometer of asphalted road is estimated 17 million Afghanis.

Exchange Rates

76.8	\$	76.9
89.1	€	89.2
98.2	£	98.3
475	Rp.	476
20.75	دولار	20.85
1030	₹	1040

Contact Numbers

Kabul Police -119

Kabul Ambulance - 112

Wazir Akbar Khan Hospital

0202301360

Ata Turk Hospital

0202500312

Corona call center - 166

At least 20...

the attack began as Afghan and Iranian officials were inaugurating a book exhibition at the university. Kabul University's Vice-Chancellor for Students Affairs Faisal Amin has said that all students have been evacuated since.

This is Kabul's second attack on Monday. A bomb blast in the Khwaja Sabz Posh district wounded a member of the security forces and a civilian. Kabul police said the explosion was caused by a magnetic roadside bomb that detonated at about 7.35am.

Last year, a bomb outside of the Kabul University campus gates killed eight people. In 2016, gunmen attacked the American University in Kabul, killing 13.

Last month, ISIS sent a suicide bomber into an education centre in the capital's predominantly Shiite neighbourhood of Dasht-e-Barchi, killing 24 students.

Pak-Afghan Youth...

It involved activities like interactive lectures, talks, exposure visits and other various hands-on exercises, enabling the youth of both nations to interact with each other physically rather than virtually.

The participants also went on a hike and made a documentary as a part of the workshop to emphasise the importance of peace between Afghanistan, Pakistan and the region.

Ending, or losing...

India, looking for ways to combat Pakistan's efforts at sabotaging Indian presence in Afghanistan, welcomed Trump's invitation to deepen engagement with Afghanistan.

While strategic ties between India and the US have progressively strengthened since, economic relations have remained strained, as divergent economic priorities have often threatened to undermine strategic convergences. However, despite underwhelming economic ties and Trump's unwelcome propositions to mediate on Kashmir, New Delhi has remained firm on its commitment to its strategic partnership with the US – a relationship that continues to be central to the US' strategic objectives in South Asia as well.

Kabul University...

EU mission in Afghanistan said the attack "is an atrocious act and breach of humanitarian law.

Iranian embassy in Kabul condemns Kabul University Attack and says the repeat of such "inhuman acts by terrorist groups" against education institutions in Afghanistan is concerning and requires condemnation by the international community.

"Pakistan strongly condemns the mindless attack at Kabul University today, resulting in loss of so many precious lives and injuries to many more. This act of terrorism is particularly despicable as it targeted an institution of learning," Pakistan's special envoy Mohammad Sadiq said.

"Educational institutions should never be targeted for attack; civilians should never be targeted," says Patricia Gossman, Associate Asia director for Human Rights Watch.

Kabul University is the country's biggest education institution that has more than 22,000 students.

Attack Ends After Six Hours
The attack on Kabul University,

one of the biggest higher education institutions in the country, ended after six hours when all three attackers were killed, the Interior Affairs Ministry said.

The attack started at around 11:00 am on Monday morning when three attackers entered the university compound and moved towards a training center at Law Faculty that was apparently their main target as security sources put it. The Law Faculty is near the eastern gate of the university from where the attackers entered the compound.

The Interior Affairs Ministry's spokesman Tariq Arian said the attack left 19 dead and 22 others wounded.

This was the second attack on education institutions in the last 10 days. A week ago, a suicide bombing near a tutoring center killed over 30 people, most of them students.

Some eyewitnesses said the attackers entered classrooms and opened fire at students and professors at the training center of the Law Faculty.

Sources also said that five attackers were involved in the attack.

Hundreds of students as well

as professors were at the university when the attack happened. Many students escaped the university through its surrounding walls.

"What we saw there was horrific. They were shooting at everyone they faced," an eyewitness said. "All my classmates were stained in blood. They were wounded. I was hidden somewhere in the classroom. I survived but 14 of our classmates might be either killed or wounded," an eyewitness said.

Videos on social media and those captured by TOLONews journalists showed students screaming and fleeing the compound for the search of safety. Photos on social media showed students killed and wounded in their classes.

The attack was widely condemned by the Afghan leaders and foreign diplomats as horrific and inhuman.

Many parents were waiting outside the university shortly after the attack to know about the fate of their loved ones.

"I am trying to contact him, but I couldn't reach him. He has sent me a message and has said that he has hidden somewhere," said Mohibullah, relative of a student.

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U.S. not qualified to preach human rights to China

China adheres to the concept of people-centered human rights, and the U.S. has no right or qualification to preach human rights, said Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin during Monday's regular press conference.

Wang made the remarks in response to the U.S. State Department's new human rights web page that accuses China of disrespecting human rights in Xinjiang, Tibet and Hong Kong. One should have a comprehensive and objective understanding of the human rights situation in a country or region before discussing its related issues, Wang said.

The spokesperson stressed that China was elected as a member of the Human Rights Council for the term 2021-2023, and China

has taken the strictest and most thorough measures to prevent and control the spread of COVID-19.

Meanwhile, the improvements in various aspects of Chinese people's daily life have proved that the country has made great achievements in the development of human rights, Wang said.

However, the U.S. side ignores all the facts and interferes in the internal affairs of other countries under the banner of human rights, Wang said, adding China firmly opposes such behavior and calls on the U.S. to correct its own problems with human rights issues such as racial discrimination, violent law enforcement, the abuse of prisoners and the sanctions and wars in other countries.



A look at the world

Wanted Kenyan lawyer surrenders to ICC

A wanted Kenyan lawyer, who was on the run since 2015, surrendered to the International Criminal Court (ICC) on Monday to face charges of influencing witnesses.

The ICC had issued an arrest warrant for Paul Gicheru for allegedly influencing witnesses in the court. The witnesses were to testify in a post-election violence case that claimed over 1,000 lives.

"Today, 2 November 2020, Mr Paul Gicheru surrendered to the authorities of The Netherlands pursuant to an arrest



warrant issued by Pre-Trial Chamber II of the International Criminal Court [...] Mr Gicheru, a lawyer formerly based in Kenya, is suspected of offences against the administration of justice consisting in corruptly influencing witnesses of the Court," the ICC said in a statement.

Warrants for Gicheru and another absconder, Philip Kipkoech Bett, issued under a seal on March 10, 2015, were unsealed on Sept. 10, 2015. Bett is not in the ICC custody.

Kenyan leader Uhuru Kenyatta became the first head of state to appear before the ICC after being charged with crimes against humanity during the 2007-08 post-election violence.

Shortly after Mwai Kibaki was announced as the president in 2007 after closely beating opposition leader Raila Odinga, tribal conflicts erupted across the country. Kenyatta was among others accused of orchestrating the post-election violence that claimed more than 1,000 lives and left more than half-a-million others internally displaced after being evicted in tribal wars that plagued communities.

UK's Brexit Party applies for name change



Britain's Eurosceptic Brexit Party has applied to the country's Electoral Committee to change its name to Reform UK in a bid to play a central role in the anti-lockdown movement.

Led by Nigel Farage, former leader of the UK Independence Party (UKIP) – a political movement, which campaigned to leave the EU before the 2016 referendum – the party announced the plan for the change in an article that he co-penned with chairman Richard Tice on Sunday. It is "time to redirect our energies", the party leaders said.

Farage said in a statement: "As promised, we continue to keep a very close eye on the government's trade negotiations with the EU, to ensure a proper Brexit.

"Further reform in many other areas is also vital for our nations' future."

"The need for major reform in the UK is clearer now than ever. A new approach is essential, so that government works for the people, not for itself," Tice said.

He said that a new strategy would enable to "learn to live with" the virus, "not hide in fear of it".

The latest move came after an announcement by Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Saturday that England would go into a second national lockdown until Dec. 2.

MPs will vote on the second lockdown this week amidst experts' warnings that the daily death toll could reach as high as 4,000 by Christmas if no action is taken.

Many citizens, as well as a substantial number of Tory MPs are opposing a new lockdown as it would destroy British economy in the wake of the end of the Brexit transition period end of this year.

The Brexit Party has no sitting MPs in the parliament.

Snowden and his wife seek to be Russian-US dual nationals

Former U.S. security contractor Edward Snowden said Monday that he and his wife intend to apply for Russian citizenship without renouncing their U.S. citizenship.

Snowden, a former contractor with the U.S. National Security Agency, has been living in Russia since 2013 to escape prosecution in the U.S. after leaking classified documents detailing government surveillance programs. He was granted permanent residency last month, his Russian lawyer said.

Snowden's wife Lindsay Mills, an American who has been living with him in Russia, announced last week that the couple are expecting a child. According to Snowden's lawyer, Anatoly Kucherena, the child, a



boy, will be born in December and will have Russian citizenship.

"After years of separation from our parents, my wife and I have no desire to be separated from our son. That's why, in this era of pandemics and closed borders, we're applying for dual U.S.-Russian citizenship," Snowden said in a tweet Monday.

Kucherena told the Interfax news agency that the process of preparing the necessary paperwork for getting Snowden a Russian passport will start soon.

He will be able to get a Russian passport without renouncing his U.S. nationality after Russia earlier this year relaxed its strict citizenship laws. Previously the law required foreigners to renounce other nationalities in order to get Russian citizenship.

Snowden added in another tweet that the couple plans to be "raising our son with all the values of the America we love – including the freedom to speak his mind" and that he looked forward to the day he can return to the U.S., "so the whole family can be reunited."

Snowden, who has kept a low profile in Russia and occasionally criticized Russian government policies on social media, said last year that he was willing to return to the U.S. if he's guaranteed a fair trial.



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