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What's News

World-Wide

The Taliban pressed their rapid advance across Afghanistan with the capture of Kandahar, the nation's second-largest city and the Islamist movement's birthplace, and next threatened Kabul. **A1, A7**

◆ **The CDC recommended** administering additional messenger RNA Covid vaccine doses to certain immunocompromised people. **A6**

◆ **Classrooms that have** reopened for the fall are seeing a growing number of Covid-19 outbreaks just days into the semester, causing some schools to temporarily shut down buildings or send students home to quarantine. **A6**

◆ **A federal judge allowed** the Biden administration's new eviction moratorium to remain in place, saying she didn't have authority to block it despite her misgivings about the ban's legality. **A3**

◆ **A group of centrist House Democrats threatened** to block a vote on the budget framework approved by the Senate until a bipartisan infrastructure bill is passed. **A4**

◆ **The New York State Assembly said it would** suspend its impeachment investigation of Gov. Cuomo. **A4**

◆ **More than 1,000 Boko Haram members and** their hostages surrendered to the Nigerian government. **A8**

Business & Finance

◆ **Small-business confidence** dropped in August to its lowest level since early spring, as the rise in Covid-19 cases due to the Delta variant put a damper on expectations and turned entrepreneurs more cautious. **A1**

◆ **The hacker or hackers** that plundered over \$600 million of cryptocurrency assets from Poly Network finished returning almost all the money Friday. **A1**

◆ **Chime raised \$750 million** in its latest funding round, in a move that values the fintech startup at about \$25 billion and sets it up for an IPO as early as next year. **B1**

◆ **Boeing said it would** return its Starliner spacecraft to a factory for "deeper-level troubleshooting" to fix stuck valves. **B3**

◆ **Major U.S. stock indexes** posted small gains, with the S&P 500 and Dow closing the session at records. **B11**

◆ **A senior Apple executive** defended the company's new software to fight child pornography after the plans raised concerns about an erosion of privacy on the iPhone. **B3**

◆ **Sonos netted a legal victory** in a dispute with Google, as a U.S. trade judge ruled that some Pixel smartphones and Nest audio speakers infringe on Sonos's technology. **B3**

NOONAN Covid Anxiety And Fear Of the Base **A13**

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Aminuddin Amini, 28, holding his daughter, waits in a makeshift camp in Kabul on Friday after fleeing fighting in Kunduz.

Taliban Press Swift Advance As U.S. Mobilizes to Evacuate

Insurgents threaten
Kabul, after seizure of
Kandahar, prompting
urgent Western exit

By YAROSLAV TROFIMOV

KABUL—The Taliban pressed their rapid advance across Afghanistan with the capture of Kandahar, the nation's second-largest city and the Islamist movement's birthplace, and next threatened Kabul, prompting the U.S. to send thousands of troops for a diplomatic evacuation.

After 20 years of war, much of what the U.S. sought to accomplish in Afghanistan crumbled in just one week. The insurgent movement controlled

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◆ **Afghans despair over long visa process**.....A7



Diversity Rises Fastest in the Midwest

Indiana hometown of Cummins and Mike Pence embodies the new immigrant melting pot

By JOHN MCCORMICK
AND PAUL OVERBERG

One in seven residents in Columbus, Ind., a city of about 50,000, was born outside the United States. Public school students collectively speak more than 50 languages and dialects at home. Roughly three dozen foreign companies operate in the area.

A 45-minute drive south of Indianapolis,

the manufacturing and transportation hub set in the middle of sprawling farmland is emblematic of how the nation's growing ethnic and racial diversity, building for decades in coastal cities and other immigration hubs, is gaining in new areas across the U.S.

The first detailed data released from the 2020 Census on Thursday showed that the non-Hispanic white population

declined for the first time in the nation's history as growing numbers of Hispanics and Asians pushed the share of residents who identify as a minority to roughly four out of every 10 people. Those changes are most apparent in pockets of the Midwest and northern Great Plains, which diversified at a faster rate than the rest of the nation during the past decade, a Wall Street

Please turn to page A10

Boston Flips Out Over Losing A Landmark With a Lagoon

For Kowloon, a restaurant beloved
by locals, the end is coming; 'It's time'

By GEOFFREY ROGOW

SAUGUS, Mass.—Drive north of Boston along Route 1 for about 15 minutes and you can't miss Kowloon. It's the colossal restaurant with a 30-foot Tiki god statue out front.

Inside, there's a brightly lit bar serving Mai-tais and chicken wings. On the second level, there's a show-room stage where Jerry Seinfeld, Frankie Avalon and Phyllis Diller have performed. Walk a



Last call?

little further inside, and the host will show you to your seat at the 1,200-seat pan-Asian restaurant. You can sit next to a lagoon, inside booths shaped like Tiki huts, or on the deck of a fake ship, complete with a mast, sails and emergency rafts.

Bobby Wong's family spent the past 70 years turning Kowloon into a spot where locals, sports heroes and professional wrestlers mingle.

But the end is coming. The Wong family says it is planning

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EXCHANGE



DOUBLE LIFE
Some remote workers have a secret: They're quietly holding down two jobs. **B1**

\$600 Million Returned From Crypto Hacking

By ANNA HIRTENSTEIN

The hacker or hackers who plundered more than \$600 million of cryptocurrency assets from a decentralized finance platform finished returning almost all the money Friday, marking a surprise conclusion to a heist that rattled the crypto industry.

The assets were transferred back to blockchain addresses controlled by Poly Network on Friday, according to an emailed statement from the company. All that remains outstanding are \$33 million of tether tokens, frozen by cryptocurrency company Tether in an effort to recover the stolen goods.

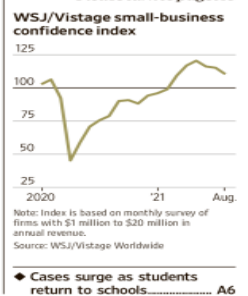
Poly Network is also still

waiting for the hacker to provide access, known as the final key, to the wallet containing the returned crypto, the company said.

The incident highlights the risks of crypto markets and decentralized finance, or DeFi. Securities and Exchange Commission Chairman Gary Gensler said recently that the area is rife with "fraud, scams and abuse" and in need of investor protections.

"When I look at DeFi projects, this stuff is not tried and tested," said Halsey Huth, head of growth at MoonPay, a cryptocurrency payments platform. "Everyone interacting with this stuff knows there's

Please turn to page A2



Learning to live with global warming

Lessons from LA

BIG READ

Taliban surrounds Kabul and seizes Afghanistan's second city

◆ Nato powers convene ◆ 14 provincial capitals in Islamists' hands ◆ Fresh al-Qaeda fears

BENJAMIN PARKIN AND AMY KAZMIN
NEW DELHI

The Taliban stepped up its offensive in Afghanistan yesterday, encircling capital Kabul and capturing second-largest city Kandahar, prompting Nato allies to meet as US troops withdraw.

The Islamist militia, which also captured Lashkar Gah in Helmand province, controls at least 14 of the country's 34 provincial capitals. Four more cities had either fallen or were on the brink of being captured amid fierce fighting.

The Taliban has seized much of north, south and west Afghanistan and is closing in on Kabul in an effort to topple President Ashraf Ghani's government.

Inside
◆ Lightning advance of Taliban starts clock ticking for Kabul — PAGE 3
◆ Biden's credibility has been shredded in Afghanistan — GIDEON RACHMAN, PAGE 9

Jens Stoltenberg, Nato secretary-general, said members of the transatlantic alliance were "deeply concerned about the high levels of violence caused by the Taliban's offensive, including attacks on civilians, targeted killings and reports of other serious human rights abuses". Nato wanted a "political solution to the conflict".

Ben Wallace, the UK defence secretary, separately warned that Afghanistan could again become a haven for international terrorists such as al-Qaeda, whose presence in the country prompted the US-led invasion to oust the Taliban from power almost 20 years



A mother, who lost her husband in fighting, with her children in a camp in Kabul — Photo by Reuters/Gerry

ago. "I'm absolutely worried that failed states are breeding grounds for those types of people," he said.

Wallace criticised Washington's decision to withdraw remaining troops by the end of the month, saying: "I felt this was not the right time or decision to make because, of course, al-Qaeda will probably come back."

The US and UK are sending troops to Kabul to evacuate embassy staff as fears mount that the capital could come under attack if a political settlement is not reached. The Taliban has shown little appetite for a deal.

After storming across Afghanistan's countryside in recent months, the Taliban has in a week toppled a succession of provincial capitals — including Kandahar, Herat and Lashkar Gah — altering the balance of power in the country.

Mazar-i-Sharif, a northern stronghold of local anti-Taliban warlords, and Jalalabad, to the south of Kabul, are the last big towns resisting the Islamists outside the capital.

Even as the Islamist militants pressed their offensive, Taliban representatives were in Qatar for talks with governments including the US, UK, Pakistan, China and India. Doha said the participants in the talks had agreed on the need to "accelerate efforts to reach a political settlement and comprehensive ceasefire as quickly as possible".

Zalmay Khalilzad, the US special representative for Afghanistan, demanded "an immediate end to attacks against cities" and warned that "a government imposed by force will be a pariah state".

Pfizer boss **Albert Bourla** has Lunch with the FT
LIFE & ARTS



Second home
Second thoughts?
HOUSE & HOME



Lionel Messi
Person in the News
OPINION



Love in the time of Covid
How couples stayed together
LIFE & ARTS



Fashion risks falling victim to rush for recycled plastic

Japanese designer Tono Kotzum's 2022 collection includes voluminous dresses incorporating recycled plastic. But sustainable fashion is not confined to the catwalk. Big brands also rely on plastic waste for green credentials, resulting in an explosion of ranges said to contain recycled synthetics. The snag is cost. There is competition for recycled plastic from the packaging sector and, because of woeful global recycling capacity, supply is tight.

Hidden price tag — PAGE 12

Hobbits embark on epic journey as Amazon switches production to UK

JAMIE SMYTH — SYDNEY
ALISTAIR GRAY
AND SEBASTIAN PAYNE — LONDON

Amazon Studios is moving production of its *Lord of the Rings* series from New Zealand to the UK in a blow to the Pacific nation's two-decade relationship with the film franchise.

The US film and TV group said yesterday that shifting production of the flagship series fitted its strategy of investing in studio space in the UK. The decision is the latest coup for the British film industry, which has become a favoured location for producers rushing to meet surging demand for streamed video content.

The loss of the series has caused bitter disappointment in New Zealand, which has built a lucrative film and tourism industry on the success of Peter Jackson's original *Lord of the Rings* trilogy.

Stuart Nash, New Zealand's economic development minister, said Wellington would withdraw some of the tax breaks it had offered to secure the production.

More than 2,000 people worked on filming and producing the first season of the Amazon series, which is due to premier in September 2022. Production on the second series will switch to the UK next June.

British government insiders said the UK had not sought to undercut New Zealand, but had "natural advantages".

Amazon's announcement came after Jacinda Ardern, New Zealand prime minister, said this week that the country's borders would remain closed until at least the end of the year. Adrian Woolton, head of the British Film Commission, said he suspected that such restrictions were a factor in Amazon's decision. "New Zealand is a fantastic location... But it's still, relatively speaking, a small country with a small amount of resource in terms of studio space, skilled talent and other infrastructure."

An official from the UK's Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport said Britain had "done a lot to be accommodating and help filming continue".

Despite coronavirus disruption, several forthcoming releases are being filmed in the UK, including the latest instalment of the *Mission: Impossible* franchise and a new Indiana Jones film.

UK film industry officials said Amazon had considered filming the first *Lord of the Rings* series in Scotland but chose New Zealand instead.

The original Hobbiton movie set from Jackson's trilogy is one of the nation's most popular tourist attractions and Air New Zealand emblazoned its planes with dwarfs and wizards from the films.

World Markets

STOCK MARKETS					CURRENCIES					INTEREST RATES				
	Aug 13	prev	%chg			Aug 13	prev	%chg			price	yield	chg	
S&P 500	4464.16	4450.83	0.07	\$ per £	1.179	1.173	E per \$	0.722	0.723	US Gov 10 yr	148.89	1.31	-0.05	
Nasdaq Composite	14810.14	14816.26	-0.04	\$ per €	1.385	1.384	E per £	1.175	1.180	UK Gov 10 yr		0.57	-0.03	
Dow Jones Ind	35537.73	35489.85	0.11	E per €	0.851	0.848	£ per \$	1.294	1.294	Ger Gov 10 yr		-0.47	-0.01	
FTSEurofirst 300	1676.10	1671.22	0.21	¥ per \$	109.985	110.355	E index	82.422	82.562	Jpn Gov 10 yr	117.26	0.02	0.00	
Euro Stoxx 50	4229.50	4226.33	0.08	¥ per €	152.209	152.871	\$ per £	1.289	1.276	US Gov 30 yr	114.73	1.95	-0.06	
FTSE 100	7218.71	7162.23	0.35	₹ per €	1.080	1.083	£ per \$	0.848	0.853	Ger Gov 2 yr	109.85	-0.74	0.02	
FTSE All-Share	4144.67	4131.76	0.31											
CAC 40	6896.04	6892.47	0.20											
Xetra Dax	15977.44	15937.51	0.25											
Nikkei	27877.15	28015.82	-0.48											
Hang Seng	26391.82	26517.82	-0.48											
MSCI World	3115.24	3108.97	0.19	Oil WTI \$	68.53	68.69	-0.01			Fed Funds Eff	0.10	0.08	0.02	
MSCI EM	1290.91	1297.58	-0.51	Oil Brent \$	79.69	71.31	-0.87			US 3m Bill	0.06	0.05	0.01	
MSCI ACWI	734.75	734.01	0.10	Gold \$	1747.40	1743.60	0.22			Euro Libor 3m	-0.56	-0.56	0.00	
										UK 3m	0.07	0.07	0.00	

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People stranded on the Afghanistan-Pakistan border waited to cross on Friday at Chaman, Pakistan, after a closure of several days.

Census Allows For Diversity, And It Shows

This article is by **Sabrina Tavernise, Tariq Mezeawa and Giulia Heyward.**

WASHINGTON — The Census Bureau released a surprising finding this week: The number of non-Hispanic Americans who identify as multiracial had jumped by 127 percent over the decade. For people who identified as Hispanic, the increase was even higher.

The spike sent demographers scrambling. Was the reason simply that more multiracial babies were being born? Or that Americans were rethinking their identities? Or had a design change in this year's census form caused the sudden, unexpected shift?

The answer, it seems, is all of the above.

Multiracial Americans are still a relatively small part of the population — just 4 percent — but the increase over the decade was substantial and, the data shows, often surprising in its geography. The number of Americans who identified as non-Hispanic and more than one race jumped to 13.5 million from 6 million. The largest increase in non-Hispanic Americans of two or more races was in Oklahoma, followed by Alaska and Arkansas.

Americans who were mixed race recorded a wide range of identities. People who identified themselves as both white and Asian made up about 18 percent of the total number of non-Hispanic multiracial Americans in 2020. Those who reported their race as both white and Black accounted for 20.5 percent. Americans who were both white and Native American were 26 percent of the total.

Continued on Page A16

G.O.P. Shifts on Climate, but Not on Fossil Fuels

By **LISA FRIEDMAN and CORAL DAVENPORT**

WASHINGTON — After a decade of disputing the existence of climate change, many leading Republicans are shifting their posture amid deadly heat waves, devastating drought and ferocious wildfires that have bludgeoned their districts and unnerved their constituents back home.

Members of Congress who long insisted that the climate is changing because of natural cycles have notably adjusted that view, with many now acknowledging the solid science that emissions from burning oil, gas and coal have raised Earth's temperature.

But their growing acceptance of the reality of climate change has

Extreme Weather Leads the Party to Change, Ever So Slightly

not translated into support for the one strategy that scientists said in a major United Nations report this week is imperative to avert an even more harrowing future: stop burning fossil fuels.

Instead, Republicans want to spend billions to prepare communities to cope with extreme weather, but are trying to block efforts by Democrats to cut the emissions that are fueling the disasters in the first place.

Dozens of Republicans in the House and Senate said in recent interviews that quickly switching to wind, solar and other clean energy will damage an economy that has been underpinned by fossil fuels for more than a century.

"I'm not doing anything to raise the cost of living for American families," said Senator Rick Scott of Florida, where climate-fueled disasters have cost the state more than \$100 billion over the past decade, according to estimates from the federal government.

Mr. Scott said he wants to address climate change, but "you can't do it where you're killing jobs."

It's a message supported by polling that shows Republican

Continued on Page A14



Pacific Northwest Buckles in the Heat

Michael Silva, a firefighter in Portland, Ore., assisted a homeless woman on Thursday. Page A15.

In Rural America, Killings by Police Are Often Met With Silence

By **ALYSIA SANTO and R.G. DUNLOP**

PIPPA PASSES, Ky. — The man known all his life as Doughboy had been running from the state police for months, scrambling down a creek bed, flooring it out of a gas station, visiting his children at 2 a.m. when he thought troopers wouldn't be lurking.

Christopher Jacobs, 28, had

been charged with manufacturing methamphetamine. He couldn't bear to go back to jail, he told his family, but he also feared the police would shoot him — even though he had been childhood friends with officers now patrolling this remote stretch of eastern Kentucky.

So when a state trooper and a sheriff's deputy — brothers — pulled into the Jacobs' driveway on Hemp Patch Road on Nov. 1,

Rarely Prosecuted and Rarely Protested

2017, Mr. Jacobs' first move was to crawl under a mobile home and hide, police records show.

His second was to start yelling, "Don't kill me!" He jumped into his Chevrolet Impala and tried to flee. There was a scuffle, and the

officers fired Tasers as he struggled to start the car. Then he rammed an empty police cruiser.

Leo Slone, a trooper who had grown up with Mr. Jacobs and once helped save his life after a drug overdose, shot him three times. Mr. Jacobs died at the scene.

As police shootings have become a flash point in U.S. cities, The Marshall Project and the Ken-

Continued on Page A13

OVER 15 CITIES SLIP OUT OF THE GRASP OF AFGHAN FORCES

America's Credibility Sustains a Blow

By **STEVEN ERLANGER**

BRUSSELS — Afghanistan's rapid unraveling is already raising grumblings about American credibility, compounding the wounds of the Trump years and reinforcing the idea that America's backing for its allies is not unlimited.

The Taliban's lightning advance comes at a moment when many in Europe and Asia had hoped that President Biden would reestablish America's firm presence in international affairs, especially as China and Russia angle to extend their influence. Now, America's retreat is bound to sow doubts.

"When Biden says 'America is back,' many people will say, 'Yes, America is back home,'" said François Heitsbourg, a French defense analyst.

"Few will gang up on the U.S. for finally stopping a failed enterprise," he said. "Most people would say it should have happened a long time ago." But in the longer term, he added, "the notion that you cannot count on the Americans will strike deeper roots because of Afghanistan."

The United States has been pulling back from military engagements abroad since President Obama, he noted, and under President Trump, "we had to prepare for a U.S. no longer willing to assume the burden of unlimited liability alliances."

That hesitation will now be felt all the more strongly among countries in play in the world, like Taiwan, Ukraine, the Philippines and Indonesia, which can only please China and Russia, analysts suggest.

"What made the U.S. strong, powerful and rich was that from 1918 through 1991 and beyond, everybody knew we could depend on the U.S. to defend and stand up for the free world," said Tomugendat, chairman of the British Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee.

The sudden withdrawal from Afghanistan after 20 years and so much investment in lives and effort will send allies and potential allies around the world wondering whether they have to decide be-

Continued on Page A7

Quick Collapse After U.S. Spent Billions

This article is by **Thomas Gibbons-Neff, Fahim Abed and Sharif Hassan.**

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan — The surrenders seem to be happening as fast as the Taliban can travel.

In the past several days, the Afghan security forces have collapsed in more than 15 cities under the pressure of a Taliban advance that began in May. On Friday, officials confirmed that those included two of the country's most important provincial capitals: Kandahar and Herat.

The swift offensive has resulted in mass surrenders, captured helicopters and millions of dollars of American-supplied equipment paraded by the Taliban on grainy cellphone videos. In some cities, heavy fighting had been underway for weeks on their outskirts, but the Taliban ultimately overtook their defensive lines and then walked in with little or no resistance.

This implosion comes despite the United States having poured more than \$83 billion in weapons, equipment and training into the country's security forces over two decades.

Building the Afghan security apparatus was one of the key parts of the Obama administration's strategy as it sought to find a way to hand over security and leave nearly a decade ago. These efforts produced an army modeled in the image of the United States' military, an Afghan institution that was supposed to outlast the American war.

But it will likely be gone before the United States is.

While the future of Afghanistan seems more and more uncertain, one thing is becoming increasingly clear: The United States' 20-year endeavor to rebuild Afghanistan's military into a robust and independent fighting force has failed, and that failure is now playing out in real time as the country slips into Taliban control.

How the Afghan military came to disintegrate first became apparent not last week but months ago in an accumulation of losses that started even before President

Continued on Page A6

Swapping Friday Night Lights For Potential Saturday Riches

By **JERE LONGMAN and ALANIS THAMES**

Quarterback Quinn Ewers of Southlake, Texas, was expected to lead his city's storied high school team this fall in its quest for another state championship as the nation's top football prospect.

Instead, on Aug. 2, Ewers announced that he would graduate early, skip his senior season at Carroll High School and enroll at Ohio State to pursue the starting quarterback job there and potentially hundreds of thousands of dollars in endorsement deals that N.C.A.A. athletes are now free to negotiate.

Ewers, 18, said on Twitter that he was motivated, in part, by frustration over a new Texas law that prevents high school athletes from signing similar agreements.

Another high school athlete, Mikey Williams, a 17-year-old basketball star in North Carolina with more than three million followers on Instagram, signed in July with a management and marketing company to secure endorsement deals. He plans to play this season for an independent team that is



Quinn Ewers is starting college early to cash in on his renown.

not bound by rules governing high school sports in North Carolina. Excel Sports Management, which represents Williams, told ESPN that it expects the business arrangement will earn millions of dollars for the teenager, who is not eligible for the N.B.A. draft until 2024.

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NATIONAL A10-16, 20

Starry Nights Turn Smoky

Spectacular views of the night sky in the Mountain View are being spoiled by fires hundreds of miles away. PAGE A15

No Impeachment for Cuomo

The leader of the New York State Assembly said its inquiry of Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo would cease. PAGE A11

INTERNATIONAL A4-9

An Omen From Sicily

The town of Florida may have hit 124 degrees Fahrenheit this week, offering Italy and the entire Mediterranean a preview of things to come. PAGE A4

It's a Novel, and 'It's All Me'

Lale Gul's account of a young woman breaking with her conservative Muslim culture is a best seller in the Netherlands. The Saturday Profile. PAGE A9

Doubts Over Saudi Reforms

The kingdom, which announced changes, still sentenced a teenager to death for a robbery and killing, despite claims of a forced confession. PAGE A8

BUSINESS B1-5

A Terrible Time for Savers

In an upside-down world of financial markets, expected returns after inflation are at record lows. The choice for those saving for the future is stark. PAGE B1

Paying More for a Cup of Joe

Climate shocks in Brazil and shipping bottlenecks have pushed the price of coffee beans sharply higher. PAGE B1

OBITUARIES A17

Grammy-Winning Folk Artist

In a career that spanned five decades, Nanci Griffith, 68, was praised for her thoughtful narrative songs. PAGE A17



SPORTS B6-8

A Sequel of Sorts

A "Field of Dreams" game in Iowa was full of nostalgia. And the meeting between the Yankees and the White Sox created memories of its own. PAGE B6

OPINION A18-19

Jamelle Bouie

PAGE A18

ARTS C1-6

Hunter Biden's Art Up for Sale

Works by the president's son are being offered for as much as \$500,000 each; his art dealer said they would follow ethics guidelines that the Biden administration developed. PAGE C1

A Rapper's New Lust for Life

Bobby Shriver, released after nearly seven years in prison on conspiracy charges, is carefully yet energetically plotting a comeback. PAGE C1



LAUSD requires shots for teachers

The order to get vaccinated by Oct. 15 extends to volunteers, staff and contractors.

By Howard Blume and Melissa Gomez

All employees in the Los Angeles Unified School District must be vaccinated against COVID-19 by Oct. 15, interim Supt. Megan Reilly announced Friday — an order that puts it at the forefront of school systems across the country that are mandating strict coronavirus safety measures for employees and students.

The order is intended to provide more defense against the surging Delta variant as anxiety runs high among many parents and employees over bringing some 465,000 students in kindergarten through 12th grade and more than 75,000 staff back to campus on Monday for the new academic year.

The L.A. Unified requirement — endorsed by the teachers union — is sweeping in its impact, applying to outside contractors and parent volunteers as well as employees.

"As part of the Los Angeles Unified School District's efforts to provide the safest possible environment in which to learn and work, all district employees will be required to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 by Oct. 15," [See LAUSD, A7]

Parents object to school mask rules
Protests come as virus cases rise. CALIFORNIA, B1



SOLDIERS CHECK Afghan nationals at a crossing point in Chaman, Pakistan, on Friday. President Biden's decision to end the two-decade U.S. campaign in Afghanistan has allowed the Taliban to reassert its power. AP/Getty Images

Will leaving Afghanistan hurt Biden politically?

Most Americans back withdrawal, but the exit is proving ugly

By Eli Stokols, Tracy Wilkinson and Janet Hook

WASHINGTON — As Afghanistan's provincial capitals fell in astonishingly rapid order to the Taliban this week, President Biden made it clear he has no regrets for withdrawing American forces from the country after two decades. A politician known for his deep reserve of

empathy, Biden has offered surprisingly little solace to the Afghan people: "They've got to fight for themselves," he said Tuesday.

There is no doubt that Biden's decision is rooted in deep personal conviction — and a calculation that Americans no longer see a rationale for continuing "the forever war" to stabilize Afghanistan's fledgling democracy. Nevertheless, ending the two-decade U.S.

campaign has allowed the Taliban to reassert its power with an onslaught far more swift than what Biden predicted just last month — a devastating denouement that could put the president in political peril.

"This is not going to end well," said Chuck Hagel, a former Republican senator and a Defense secretary under President Obama. He praised Biden's "courage" for making a firm decision,

calling it "the right thing to do," but predicted there would be political consequences.

"Very likely Kabul will fall and he will be seen, moving right into the next election, as the president who wasted 20 years, pulled Americans out and lost Afghanistan," Hagel said.

Biden has long argued for bringing the conflict to an end, an exit that eluded his [See Biden, A4]

AS THE TALIBAN STORMS, ECHOES OF IRAQ

The return of U.S. troops to Afghanistan recalls ongoing fight against Islamic State.

By Tracy Wilkinson and Nabih Bulos

WASHINGTON — As the Afghan capital, Kabul, teetered in the face of a relentless onslaught by Taliban forces, the first contingents of U.S. Marines tasked with rescuing Americans and others were set to arrive in Afghanistan over the weekend, administration officials said Friday.

The urgency of the new mission was underlined by fierce Taliban advances that have startled the world as diplomats face rising regional instability and a widening humanitarian crisis.

By Friday, Taliban fighters, who are seizing U.S.-aided military equipment as they roll, seemingly unchallenged, across the landscape, had captured Afghanistan's second- and third-largest cities and most national territory.

The arrival of 3,000 troops will more than double the number of U.S. forces in the battered country, after the long-promised withdrawal to end America's longest war was scheduled to conclude by September.

Analysts said it was possible the Taliban will wait to attack Kabul — in part because of the U.S. presence, and because the Islamic extremists can probably lay siege to, isolate and starve the city by cutting off most of its land exit routes. Unlike other Afghan cities, Kabul has an enormous population, some 6 million people, and has swollen in recent days with those fleeing other parts of the country.

"We have noted with great concern the speed with which they have been moving and the lack of resistance they have faced," Pentagon spokesman John Kirby said Friday. He said Kabul was not in an "imminent threat environment," but the Taliban is "clearly" trying to isolate the city.

Pentagon and State Department officials continue to insist that the U.S. Embassy is not shutting down completely, despite the fact that most employees are likely to depart, leaving only [See Redeployment, A4]

In Kandahar, history repeats
Taliban retakes the city in full-circle moment. A3



LOS ANGELES Archbishop José H. Gómez is the public face of a campaign that could deny the Eucharist to politicians who back abortion rights. PATRICK T. FALLON For The Times

L.A. archbishop's Biden stance opens a rift in the church

Some oppose effort to deny Communion to the nation's second Catholic president.

By Marisa Gerber

"Brothers," Los Angeles Archbishop José H. Gómez addressed his colleagues, "before we come to the end of our meeting, I have an announcement to make."

It was the middle of November, two weeks after Joe Biden was elected president, marking only the second time that a Roman Catholic was headed to the White House. And the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops had gathered virtually for a meeting amid a growing push by conservative bish-

ops to withhold one of Christianity's holiest rites from the man about to occupy the Oval Office.

"This presents certain opportunities," Gómez, in his usual soft tone, said of Biden's election, "but also certain challenges."

Gómez, the group's leader, told the bishops at the November meeting that Biden had given them reason to believe he'd support what the archbishop characterized as "good policies" on immigration reform and climate change, and against racism and the death penalty.

But the incoming president also had voiced support for what Gómez has described as "certain policies that would advance moral evils," chief among [See Gómez, A12]

COVID hospitalization rates for kids less dire in California

U.S. boom in pediatric patients is driven by states such as Florida, Texas and Georgia.

By Emily Alpert Reyes and Rong-Gong Lin II

Children are being newly hospitalized for COVID-19 at a record rate in the United States, with numbers surging since the beginning of July as the Delta variant has overtaken the nation.

But that national boom has been driven largely by a few states, such as Florida, Texas and Georgia, and the numbers in California have been less dire.

While there has been a rebound in recent weeks in California, rates of new hospitalizations for COVID-19 among kids and teens age 17 and younger have not reached the heights as in the hardest-hit parts of the country. Nor have those rates surged as high as last winter.

That's a major difference

from Florida and Texas, where daily rates of youth hospitalization for COVID-19 surpassed their wintertime peak.

California is now reporting 18 new hospitalizations a day among children and teens, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. That is 10 times worse than just two months ago but still below winter levels, when there were 29 children a day being newly hospitalized with COVID-19. [See Children, A8]

Councilman is accused of ballot fraud

Isaac Galvan, who won a Compton City Council seat by just one vote, is among six people facing conspiracy counts. CALIFORNIA, B1

Cuomo inquiry won't proceed

New York Assembly says it will suspend impeachment probe once the governor resigns. NATION, A6

Weather
Mostly sunny.
L.A. Basin: 86/68, B8

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MEL MELCON Los Angeles Times

ON THE GROUND IN GREENVILLE

Times photographer Mel Melcon documents the Dixie fire's aftermath in a Northern California town where the odor of ash hangs thick. PERSPECTIVES, A2

Audio has new details of Ghaisar pursuit

Officers were told before fatal chase that he wasn't suspect in hit-and-run

BY TOM JACKMAN

U.S. Park Police Officers Lucas Vinyard and Alejandro Amaya were working their overnight shift covering the George Washington Memorial Parkway when the call came over the radio. "Car 212," the dispatcher said shortly after 7:30 p.m., "southbound GW Parkway at Slaters Lane, I got a motor vehicle hit-and-run. ... The striking vehicle is a black Jeep that has rear-end damage."

Moments later, at 7:34 p.m. on Nov. 17, 2017, the officers spotted the Jeep with the vanity license plate "BLIAN." But the dispatcher had new information. "Correction on all of this," she told Vinyard and Amaya. "The black Jeep left the scene, but he is not the striking vehicle. The red Toyota on the scene is the striking vehicle."

One of the officers acknowledged the correction and repeated the "BLIAN" license plate they were now following. "All right, 10-4," the dispatcher said, then reminded, "That's the vehicle that left the scene, that was struck."

"Copy," one of the officers said. "He's not stopping."

And so the soon-to-be-fatal pursuit of Bijan Ghaisar, the 25-year-old driver of the Jeep Grand Cherokee, was launched in Alexandria, Va. Twice, facing the officers' guns, Ghaisar stopped and then drove off. Then, during a third stop in a Fairfax County neighborhood, both officers fired their weapons. Ghaisar's Jeep as it slowly moved away from them, a Fairfax police video shows. He was killed.

The newly released recording, which for the first time reveals that officers were told at the outset that Ghaisar's Jeep had been

SEE GHASISAR ON A22

Sweeping Taliban closing in on Kabul



People stranded at the Pakistani-Afghan border wait to cross at Chaman, Pakistan, where authorities reopened the border after several days of closures. At the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, diplomats began destroying classified documents on orders from embassy leadership.

AKHTER GULFAM/EPA-EFE/SHUTTERSTOCK

Citizens reckon with life under extremist rule once again

BY ALEX HORTON AND EZZATULLAH MEHRDAD

MAZAR-E SHARIF, AFGHANISTAN — The Taliban's eyes and ears are everywhere, the teachers learned last month.

One woman lifted her burqa and bared her face for just a moment, said Mah Jan, an educator in the northern Balkh province. Soon after, another colleague glanced at her phone.

Then came a message from the Taliban, delivered through a local elder. If they committed the

same infractions again, the militants warned, "we will take you away and nobody can save you," recalled Mah Jan, who declined to provide a last name out of fear of retribution.

As the Taliban captures city after city at a remarkable pace, Afghan forces are surrendering en masse, heightening fears of a government collapse and leaving citizens to reckon with the militants' harsh and violent will. In interviews with more than a dozen Afghans in northern provinces

SEE TALIBAN ON A10

Specter of Saigon haunts Biden's withdrawal plans

BY ANNE GEARAN AND KAREN DEYOUNG

Last month, President Biden vowed that his decision to pull American forces out of Afghanistan would never end in a repeat of the infamous helicopter evacuation from the U.S. Embassy in Saigon at the ignominious close of the Vietnam War.

"There's going to be no circumstance when you're going to see people being lifted off the roof," he said. But the drama in Afghanistan is now closer to that scenario

than Biden might have envisioned, as the president found himself ordering thousands of troops back into Kabul to help evacuate American diplomats from the bunkered U.S. Embassy.

The country edged toward collapse Friday as senior Afghan officials and hundreds of government troops surrendered to the Taliban. The militants overran three key cities and partly encircled the capital, Kabul, where the U.S.-backed government appeared tenuous.

SEE BIDEN ON A13

MASS SURRENDERS IN GOVERNMENT

Militants control half of provincial capitals

BY SUSANNAH GEORGE, EZZATULLAH MEHRDAD, RACHEL PANNETT AND JOHN HUDSON

KABUL — Senior Afghan officials and hundreds of Afghan government forces in the country's west and south surrendered to the Taliban on Friday after the militants overran three key cities, inching the country closer to collapse in the final days of the U.S. withdrawal.

The recent advances by the militant group, largely achieved with little resistance from Afghan government forces despite years of U.S. training and support, are isolating the Afghan capital with stunning speed, increasingly weakening the administration of President Ashraf Ghani, and further hastening efforts by the United States and its allies to enhance security while foreign governments work to extract embassy staff and local Afghans who have assisted the U.S.-led coalition.

In the western city of Herat, an entire Afghan army corps crumbled, with hundreds of troops handing over their weapons to the Taliban and others fleeing, according to local officials. The surrender deal was brokered, they said, by a group of Taliban leaders who met with Afghan government and security forces at the military base where they were holed up after the city was overrun Thursday.

The province's governor, intelligence chief, chief of police and a prominent anti-Taliban militia leader also resigned their posts in exchange for Taliban protection, SEE AFGHANISTAN ON A11

Education: Female teens are "ready to fight" for their future. **A8**

'For what?': Veterans of the conflict voice frustration. **A9**

Allies: A scramble to rescue those who have assisted the U.S. **A13**

Moms, single parents hit hardest by disruptions to schools, day cares

Delta variant uncertainty makes many rethink their return to the office

BY HEATHER LONG

Sarah Mordecai just got the phone call that no parent wants: Her son was exposed to the coronavirus at day care. She had to pick up her two children immediately and prepare to quarantine.

Mordecai and her husband scrambled to swiftly rearrange their schedules to be home with their two kids, ages 1 and 3. They worry the entire rest of the year could be a series of emergencies like this where the kids get exposed and the whole family is back on lockdown.

"We were starting to breathe a sigh of relief. Now we're back to panicking," said Mordecai, who works for a health insurer in Little Rock. "Given the low vaccination rate in our area, I can't see

how it doesn't happen again."

Panic is setting in among America's 46 million parents of children under 12 as plans for in-person day care and schooling are getting disrupted yet again from the rise of the highly transmissible delta variant of the coronavirus. While children do not tend to face the worst complications from the virus, they do get sick and spread the virus, which can close down camps, school and day care for weeks. All of this is happening just as many employers are demanding workers return to the office.

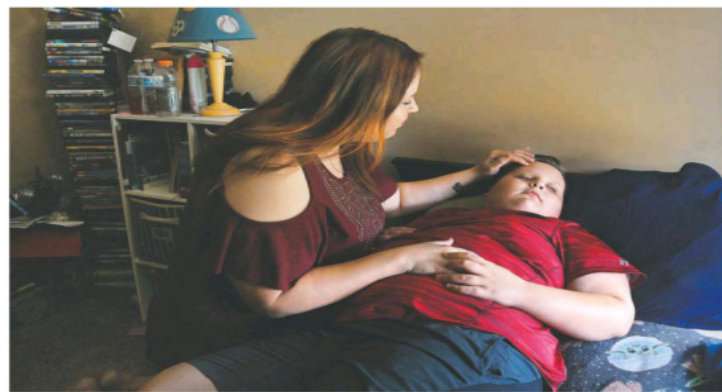
When children have to stay home, the burden typically falls on moms. Some economists are warning the United States may be on the verge of a massive second wave of women dropping out of the labor force if the delta variant of the coronavirus is not stopped.

"I really do worry this will lead to a second wave of women leaving the labor force," said economist Alicia Sasser Modestino, an associate professor at Northeastern University. "For the

SEE WORKING MOMS ON A17

Fear and hope in an Arkansas pediatric ICU

As delta surges, some experts fear the most dangerous moment for children has arrived



MICHAEL S. WILLIAMSON/THE WASHINGTON POST

Sarah Wilson comforts her 10-year-old son, Paxton, as he rests in his bed battling covid-19 in Conway, Ark., on Aug. 6. The entire family of four has covid, and Paxton's brother was hospitalized.

BY ARIANA EUNJUNG CHA

LITTLE ROCK — It had started on July 1 when she could no longer smell her uncle's cologne. Caia Alex Morris, 13, had been sitting on the couch texting friends, and as other family members joked about the overpowering scent, it hit her that she had no idea what they were talking about. She had no other symptoms at the time. But two days later, she was diagnosed with covid-19 and on a ventilator, and has been in intensive care ever since.

"Thirty-four days," her mother Angela Morris reflected last week while at Caia's bedside at Arkansas Children's Hospital, 816 hours, 48,960 minutes. And counting. "This is a nightmare."

Outside Room No. 5 on the third floor, where Caia lay with a stuffed frog in one hand and a stuffed seal in the other, a crowd

SEE CHILDREN ON A4

Boosters: CDC backs third doses for the immunocompromised. **A6**

IN SUNDAY'S POST



«A new 'Our Town' in New Hampshire, the latest version of the Thornton Wilder classic is outdoors, in the heart of downtown — the diverse Petersborough Players' choice for returning to the stage after covid-19 forced it to scrub the 2020 season. **Arts & Style**

On a break: The magazine is off this week. It will return.



SELINA KOK

It's a mud, mud world The Netherlands' Wadden Sea is a UNESCO World Heritage site as well as a playground for worms, flatfish, shellfish and dozens of species of birds. It's also muddy. **Travel**

DeJoy's bonds questioned The postmaster general bought from a firm whose partner chairs the USPS governing board. **A15**

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REAL ESTATE
Renovation reflections Delays related to the pandemic have given homeowners time to refine their choices.

THE ECONOMY
DeJoy's bonds questioned The postmaster general bought from a firm whose partner chairs the USPS governing board. **A15**

THE NATION
Budget resistance Nine House Democrats say they won't vote for a budget until a key infrastructure bill clears. **A2**

THE DISTRICT
Review alleges racial bias Black and Hispanic instructors received lower average scores than White colleagues, a study says. **B1**

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\$218 SUNDAY'S COUPONS

espectáculos
Con Madres,
el musical regresa
a la escena comercial

Lo protagonizan Florencia Otero, Viviana Puerta, Paula Kohan y Sabrina Garcíarena.



Florencia Otero

Sabrina Garcíarena

QUINCE LIBROS PARA
PEQUEÑOS LECTORES
DE TODAS LAS EDADES

—cultura

Propuestas para regalar en el Día del Niño, que van del cómic y el libro ilustrado a la poesía y novela, con precios que no superan el de un videojuego. **Página 32**

DÍA ESPECIAL PARA
MESSI: LO PRESENTAN
EN EL ESTADIO DEL PSG

—deportes

Se vendieron ya cerca de un millón de camisetas con el número 30; el crack, que no jugará, estará hoy en la cancha para su primera gran ovación. **Página 2**

LA NACION

SÁBADO 14 DE AGOSTO DE 2021 | LANACION.COM.AR

Fernández responsabilizó a su pareja por el festejo y hay una fuerte convulsión interna

PANDEMIA. “Lamento que haya ocurrido”, dijo el Presidente; malestar en el kirchnerismo

Golpeado y después de dos días de silencio en los que se intentó negar el escándalo, el presidente Alberto Fernández responsabilizó a Fabiola Yáñez por el festejo de cumpleaños junto con nueve amigos el 14 de julio de 2020, cuando regía en el país el aislamiento obligatorio por el avance del coronavirus y las reuniones privadas estaban prohibidas.

“Nunca ocultamos nada, hicimos público quiénes fueron a Olivos. Y el 14 de julio, día del cumpleaños de mi querida Fabiola, ella convocó a una reunión, un brindis con amigos que no debió haberse hecho. Lamento que haya ocurrido”, argumentó el Presidente en un acto en la ciudad de Olavarría.

Antes de su explicación, el jefe de Gabinete, Santiago Cafiero, reconoció “el descuido” y fue el primer funcionario en validar la imagen del cumpleaños de la primera dama en plena cuarentena. La escalada del escándalo abrió un nuevo foco de conflicto en el oficialismo. El kirchnerismo cuestionó “a los que están al lado del Presidente” y dejó la defensa oficial en manos de los hombres de más confianza de Fernández. **Página 18**

El kirchnerismo lo dejó caer en soledad

Damián Nabot
Página 18

De la negación a aceptar el “error” y el “descuido”

Santiago Dapelo
Página 20



“El 14 de julio, día del cumpleaños de mi querida Fabiola, ella convocó a una reunión, un brindis con amigos que no debió haberse hecho”

CAPTURA DE VIDEO

Otro cepo oficial al dólar volvió a empujar el blue

CAMBIO. Subió \$2,5 y cerró a \$182; parte del mercado se paralizó tras la nueva restricción

Un nuevo cepo al dólar, esta vez sobre el financiero, volvió a generar desconcierto entre inversores, paralizó parte de la operatoria en el mercado e impulsó la cotización del blue, que subió \$2,5 y se vendió ayer a \$182.

El Banco Central (BCRA) anunció anteayer nuevas medidas defensivas para ralentizar la venta de dólares a través del contado con liquidación (CCL) de cara a las elecciones. La iniciativa paralizó la operatoria de las sociedades de bolsa. La incertidumbre, en tanto, produjo un recalentamiento del paralelo luego de semanas de calma. **Página 26**

Imparable avance de los talibanes en Afganistán

OFENSIVA. KABUL (AFP).— Los talibanes casi habían llegado a las puertas de Kabul ayer, el objetivo final de su imparable avance en Afganistán, de donde numerosos países, como Estados Unidos, evacuarán a sus diplomáticos y ciudadanos. En cuestión de días, el gobierno afgano perdió el control de la mayoría del país y los insurgentes controlan casi la mitad de las capitales de provincia, la mayor parte tomadas en tan solo una semana. **Página 16**

Denuncian que la zona rural de Pergamino es tierra de nadie

DELITO. Productores dicen que crecen los robos de cables y los ataques a las casas de los campos. **Página 28**

Clima extremo. Julio fue el mes más cálido registrado hasta hoy en el mundo

WASHINGTON (AP).— Incendios imparables en Grecia, California y hasta en Siberia. Si quedaba alguna duda de que julio fue un mes de fenómenos climáticos extremos, la despejó la Administración

Oceánica y Atmosférica de Estados Unidos (NOAA): el mes pasado fue el más caluroso en la Tierra desde que existen registros. “Julio es habitualmente el mes

más caluroso del año, pero julio de 2021 fue el mes más caluroso jamás registrado”, dijo el director de la NOAA, Rick Spinrad, en un comunicado de prensa donde se dio a conocer el informe. **Página 14**

ADN DEL CRIMEN

Walter Bento, el juez de los millones

Gustavo Carabajal
Página 40



Jueces revisaron uno a uno los documentos presentados como evidencia

Tribunal tuvo que rehacer los cálculos para condenar a OGD

● Fue a causa del trabajo displicente de los fiscales

- Varias de las pruebas arrimadas estaban duplicadas

● **Fiscal del caso dice que siempre hay algo que mejorar**

PÁGINAS 6, 50 y 51



Hace 11 años ÚH y Telefuturo desnudaron el esquema de corrupción del clan González Daher



Abdo posiciona a Hugo Velázquez e insinúa que sería su sucesor

PÁGINA 7

El papa Francisco dio su bendición apostólica para los paraguayos

PÁGINA 20

**Más de 1 millón
ya recibieron las
dos dosis de la
vacuna anti-Covid**

PÁGINA 3

CON ESTA
EDICIÓN

SEMPRE DELLA V
52MM 12



**COMPRA
OPCIONAL 1**

NEUROSCIENZA E
PSICOLOGIA 24

**COMPRA
OPCIONAL 2**

LA FRAMMIA PARA
ADULTOS LEVADOS



Impide la llegada de los insumos necesarios para la siembra El paro de los camioneros amenaza inicio de campaña sojera 2021-2022

PÁGINAS 12 y 13

Estudio del Celag sobre panorama político y social en Paraguay
Informe dice que 76% de las personas cree en el origen corrupto de riquezas

PÁGINA 8

TU EQUIPO IDEAL

DE

TRABAJO



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LE FIGARO

« Sans la liberté de blâmer, il n'est point d'éloge flatteur » Beaumarchais

L'ÉTÉ
DU FIGAROOUVERT LA NUIT
LE SOMMEIL
DU PANTHÉON,
BERCE PAR LA LITANIE
DE « CEUX DE 14 » PAGE 20ASSOMPTION
CARDINAL SARAH: « NUL
N'EST EN TROP DANS
L'ÉGLISE DE DIEU » PAGE 21QUESTIONS
DE TIMINGCYRIL LIGNAC,
TEMPS
DE CUISSONPAGE 15
CAFÉS
D'INTELLECTUELS
EN EUROPECAFÉ GUON,
À MADRID,
SANCTUAIRE
DES« TERTULIAS »
PAGE 22CE QUE LES SÉRIES
NOUS APPRENNENT
SUR L'ÉCONOMIE« UN
ENTRETIEN »,
OU LE MONDE
DU TRAVAIL
VU PAR UN
DRH NÉVROSÉ
PAGE 27JEUX D'ÉTÉ
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face à la persistance
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le soleil de Marseille
PAGE 14EMPLOI
Un dispositif pour
lutter contre le
chômage de longue
durée PAGES 24 ET 25CHAMPS
LIBRES• La chronique
de Mathieu
Bock-Côté

PAGE 21

FIGARO OUI
FIGARO NONRéponses à la question
de vendredi:
Êtes-vous favorable
à l'abandon des véhicules
à moteur thermique
au profit des voitures
électriques ?

OUI 27% NON 73%

TOTAL DE VOTANTS : 183 265

Votez aujourd'hui
sur lefigaro.frEmmanuel Macron a-t-il
eu raison de suspendre
le contrôle technique
obligatoire pour
les deux-roues ?PASCAL LEMAITRE - CMN -
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Aux portes de Kaboul, les talibans défient l'Amérique

Galvanisés par la reconquête de leur fief de Kandahar, les « étudiants en religion » poursuivaient vendredi leur progression implacable en Afghanistan et se trouvaient à 50 km de la capitale.

Après avoir repris Kandahar, les talibans poursuivaient, vendredi, leur implacable progression en Afghanistan, d'où les États-Unis et le Royaume-Uni vont évacuer en catastrophe leurs ressortissants et diplomates. Les in-

surgés se sont emparés vendredi de la ville de Pul-e Alam, capitale de la province du Logar, située à seulement 50 kilomètres au sud de Kaboul, et contrôlent désormais près de la moitié des capitales provinciales

afghanes, toutes tombées en seulement huit jours. Ils avaient pris auparavant Lachkargah, capitale de la province du Helmand, dans le sud du pays, quelques heures après avoir fait tomber Kandahar, la deuxième ville

d'Afghanistan, située 150 km plus à l'est. Les États-Unis ont dû se résoudre à l'envoi de renforts à l'aéroport de Kaboul pour protéger les opérations d'évacuation, encore qualifiées de partielles, de leur ambassade.

→ L'AMÉRIQUE SIDÉRÉE PAR L'AMPLEUR DE SA DÉFAITE EN AFGHANISTAN

→ UN CRÈVE-CŒUR POUR LA BUNDESWEHR ET UN ÉCHEC COLLECTIF POUR L'ALLEMAGNE PAGES 6, 7 ET L'EDITORIAL

L'hommage et le recueillement aux obsèques du père Olivier Maire



Près de 800 personnes se sont réunies dans la basilique Saint Louis-Marie Grignon de Montfort pour dire adieu au prêtre tué lundi dernier. PAGES 2, 3 ET 21

Comment le président tunisien tente de marginaliser le parti islamiste

Trois semaines après son coup de force, Kaïs Saïed semble solidement installé aux commandes du pays avec le soutien de la police, de l'armée, de l'administration et de la population. En s'emparant du pouvoir, le chef de l'État a mis sur la touche le parti Ennahdha de Rached Ghannouchi, qui pilotait depuis dix ans une révolution qu'il incarnait. PAGES 8 ET 9

ÉDITORIAL par Patrick Saint-Paul psaintpaul@lefigaro.fr

Déshonneur

Joe Biden avait le choix entre « la guerre et le déshonneur ». Il a choisi le déshonneur et il aura la défaite ! Car l'issue de cette guerre ne fait aucun doute, face à la foudroyante avancée des talibans. Munich, 1938, Saïgon, 1975... L'histoire ne manque pas de leçons que l'Occident avait juré de retenir. Et pourtant, vingt ans après les attentats du 11 septembre 2001 - déclencheurs de la guerre des États-Unis et de ses alliés en Afghanistan -, le monde sera revenu au point zéro dans le « royaume de l'insolence » lorsqu'il commémorera ce triste anniversaire.

Le choix d'abandonner l'Afghanistan aux mains des sinistres « étudiants en religion » était celui de Donald Trump. L'ex-président voulait porter à son crédit d'avoir mis un terme à la plus longue guerre des États-Unis, qui a coûté la vie à 2 450 soldats américains, et d'avoir ramené les « boys » à la maison. S'il avait écouté Churchill, Biden serait revenu sur ce choix, en maintenant - à minima - une composante aérienne pour appuyer les forces afghanes. Au lieu de cela, il les a abandonnées en rase campagne. Toute honte bue, il appelle au secours Pékin

et Moscou pour raisonner les talibans. Galvanisés par la reconquête de Kandahar, fief du mollah Omar, ces derniers ont déjà lancé l'assaut sur Kaboul.

Se présentant comme le « champion de la démocratie », annonçant le retour de l'Amérique, Biden avait promis d'enrayer la montée en puissance du modèle autoritaire chinois. La débâcle a commencé à Kaboul, prise de panique et où Biden laisse s'éteindre les dernières lueurs de liberté. Sa présidence sera hantée par la valeur de cet exemple. Les femmes retourneront

sans nul doute à leur condition moyenâgeuse. En dépit de leurs promesses, déjà trahies en partie, rien ne garantit que le pays des talibans ne redeviendra pas un havre pour le terrorisme international. Vingt ans de guerre se solderont par une double défaite géostratégique. Partout dans le monde les djihadistes seront enflammés par l'aveu de faiblesse américaine. Et la Chine comme la Russie ne manqueront pas de s'engouffrer dans ce vide laissé par l'Amérique. ■

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Police gave gun licence back to killer last month

Vikram Dodd
Jamie Grierson
Steven Morris

A gunman who killed his mother and four passersby, including a three-year-old girl, had his firearms licence revoked in December, but police reinstated it last month after he attended an anger management course.

Police will face an investigation over their dealings with Jake Davison, 22, who expressed sympathy for the "incel" movement and a keen interest in mass shootings. One resident from Plymouth, where the killing spree took place, said Davison's family had sought treatment for his mental health issues.

Detectives are also facing questions over the decision to treat the attack - which was Britain's worst mass shooting in over a decade - as a domestic incident rather than a terror attack. Yesterday evening sources said the main motives under investigation were a hatred of women and mental health issues.

As well as his mother, Maxine, 51, Davison's victims were named yesterday as Lee Martyn, 43, and his three-year-old daughter Sophie Martyn, whom he is believed to have adopted, and Stephen Washington, 59, and Kate Shepherd, 66.

Devon and Cornwall police suspended Davison's firearms licence in December last year over concerns about his



Inside Profile of a killer [Page 4](#)

Victims of the shooting [Page 5](#)

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Gun control: what are the rules? [Page 7](#)

▲ Lee Martyn and daughter Sophie were killed. Left, Davison's mother, Maxine, was also a victim

PHOTOGRAPH: FACEBOOK



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