



#POST 9/11 ATTACK TO TALIBAN TAKEOVER: BRIEF HISTORY

- **Afghanistan, the mountainous landlocked country** at the crossroads of Central and South Asia, is seeing a disastrous Taliban takeover.
- **The Government of Afghanistan** collapsed on August 15, 2021, as **President Ashraf Ghani** left the country after the Taliban sealed a nationwide military victory.
- **After the withdrawal of the troops by the United States from Afghanistan**, the country witnessed a spike in violence as the Taliban intensified its efforts to gain control over the entire region in the wake of withdrawal.
- The final straw came when the **militant group captured the capital city (Kabul)** forcing thousands of people to flee the country along with various other nations worrying about the strong foothold of the Taliban in Afghanistan and how it may impact the international discussion to counter-terrorism.
- But firstly, it is significant to understand how Afghanistan got here.



Phase 1: What happened in Afghanistan in the post 9/11 world?

- **Al-Qaeda Challenged the United States**
- The **events on September 11, 2001**, changed the global political landscape forever. Two planes flew into the famous twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City and turned the **skylines that never sleeps into gloomy, wrapped with smoke and flames.**

- **What unraveled between 2001 and 2021** is still continued. After 9/11, the former President of the United States George W Bush announced that the US army will launch an attack against Al-Qaeda and Taliban targets.
- Since then, the world's one of the mightiest superpowers, in terms of economy as well as weaponry, started hunting for the world's most wanted man Osama Bin Laden. On May 2, 2011, Navy SEALs of US Special Warfare Development Group raided the **Al-Qaeda compound in Pakistan and killed the Al-Qaeda leader, Osama Bin Laden.**
- However, the **fight against the Islamist Militant groups did not end there.** In February 2020, after more than 18 years of war in Afghanistan, former President of the US Donald Trump and the Taliban leadership signed a peace deal to withdraw the US troops.

People of Afghanistan must decide their own future: US President

- To bring the US's longest-running war to a close, the **incumbent US President Joe Biden** announced on April 14, 2021, that the US will withdraw the army forces by September 11.
- To **control the territory, the Islamist Militant group Taliban** increased its violence over the last two weeks and the actions prompted the US and other countries to urge their citizens to leave the country immediately.
- As the Taliban continued its advances in Afghanistan, the spokesperson of the US State Department commented that the US expects to draw down a core diplomatic presence in Afghanistan in the coming weeks.
- Taliban, in its mission of acquiring the region, has claimed to capture Kandhar and other 12 provinces while the Afghan President claimed the worsening situation on the US pullout from Afghanistan.

Afghanistan crisis: How much does it cost the US?

- **Human cost-** In the two-decades-long US combat mission in Afghanistan, the US forces have suffered more than 2,300 deaths.
- **Economic cost-** As per the Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs, to date, the war by the US in Afghanistan has cost the country \$2.261 trillion.
- **What the US planned on achieving in Afghanistan?**
- In 2001, when the United States entered Afghanistan, the country promised Afghans modernity, democracy, sovereignty, social justice and to bridge the ethnic divide.

Who is nurturing the Taliban?

- The **Islamist Fundamentalist Organization (Taliban)** has grown its strength and has survived 20 years of war. Reportedly, Pakistan Army has a history of military support to different **tribal factions within Afghanistan, however,** Pakistan has repeatedly denied any form of military support to Afghanistan.
- In **order to reduce Pakistan's own vulnerability,** the Pakistani army trained Mujahideen had fought against the Soviet intervention during the 1970s and the 1980s.

- Pakistani Army and ISI have provided logistical, financial, military as well as direct combat support to the Taliban.
- **Objective of Taliban-** The **Islamist Militant Group** wants to establish an Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan in accordance with the **Hanafi School of Islamic Jurisprudence** (one of the four traditional major Sunni schools of Islamic Jurisprudence).

What can happen next in Afghanistan?

- **Negotiated settlement-** With the Taliban's latest advances in the country, Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani had said that the country's situation will change in 6 months.
- **The collapse of the Afghanistan Government-** It already happened as President Ghani left the country on August 15 amid the growing violence in Kabul. Also, the Taliban assured that there will be no peace in Afghanistan until Ghani is removed.
- **Taliban Takeover-** Taliban's forces are capable of isolating Afghanistan's capital in 30 days and take it over soon.
- **Refugee Crisis-** The ongoing war between the Taliban and the federal government will force the citizens to flee from the country.
- **Increase in Terrorism-** As the Taliban gains momentum, the possibility of regional and international terrorism will increase.
- **Full-scale civil war-** Even though currently, Afghans will not be able to clean their own mess, the possibility of civil war will continue.

Who will pay the price of the Afghanistan crisis?

- The most vulnerable section and the most impacted one will be the –
 - **Afghan Youths**
 - **Curbs on women's human rights**
 - **Restrictions on freedom of the Press**
 - **Progress made in the fight against global terrorism**

Phase 2: What happened in Afghanistan between 1989 to 2001?

- Taliban had achieved its first success in 1994 under the patronage of Naseerullah Babar and Maulana Fazlur Rahman. When the ultraconservative political and religious factions consolidated their power in Afghanistan, they tried to impose their own versions of the Sharia and indoctrinated people.
- **Taliban in Afghanistan**
- The Taliban, during the five-year period, captured 80% of the areas. Between 1996 to 2001, only **Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and the USE recognized the government which had raised the legitimacy of the Taliban government in Kabul.**

Rise of Taliban in Afghanistan between 1996 to 2001- Key events

- **Burhanuddin Rabbani had served as the President of Afghanistan** from 1992 to 2001. Rabbani was in exile from 1996 to 2001.
- Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan was founded by **Mohammed Omar in 1996**.
- **Mohammed Najibullah became the President of Afghanistan** from 1987 until his resignation in 1992.
- **Sibghatullah Mojaddedi** started serving as the interim President after the fall of Najibullah's government. From 1992 to 2001, **Burhanuddin Rabbani served as the President of Afghanistan**
 - **Curbs on basic civil rights under a fundamentalist regime**
 - **Sports for women were not allowed**
 - **Men were also required to wear a head covering**
 - **Girls were prevented from going to schools**
 - **Women were denied the right to work**
 - **Beard trimming for men was banned**
 - **Ban on TV**
 - **Legal executions took place in public**

Phase 3- War between the Soviet Union and Afghanistan, 1979 to 1989

- On December 24, 1979, the USSR (undivided Russia) entered Afghanistan and after that, nearly 1,00,000 soldiers of the Soviet Union took control of the major cities in the country.
- **Operation Cyclone by the US against Soviets in Afghanistan**
- The **former President of the US Jimmy Carter** started '**Operation Cyclone**'. It was the code name of the CIA Programme to arm and finance the **Afghan Mujahideen in Afghanistan from 1979 to 1989**. The move was against the Soviet Union amid the cold war.
- Thousands of tons of weaponry worth billions of US dollars were delivered to Mujahideen to combat the Soviets. Reportedly, more than \$20 billion in US funds was funneled into Afghanistan to finance Afghan rebels.
- **Soviet Union withdrawal from Afghanistan**
- In 1989, Soviet forces started the withdrawal from Afghanistan after a 9-year conflict. During the fight between the anti-communist Islamic guerrillas and the Afghan communist government, fifteen thousand Soviet soldiers were killed and the war leads to the collapse of the government in 1992.

Phase 4- Afghanistan before the 1979 invasion, its powerful tribes

- In the last 300 years, Pashtun has run Afghanistan. The Pashtun community in Afghanistan is 42% of the Afghan population, Hazara 9%, Tajik 27%, and Uzbek 9%.

- **Saur Revolution: 1978 coup**
- **Hafizullah Amin, Afghan Communist revolutionary, led the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan** had toppled Afghan President Mohammed Daoud Khan's government in the country in April 1978. Hafizullah was recognized as the architect of the Saur Revolution.
- **Daoud Khan was President of Afghanistan from 1973 to 1978.**
- After that, **Nur Muhammad Taraki was a far-left People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan** who had served as the President of the country from 1978 to 1979.

Afghanistan in 40 years

- For a period of over 40 years, during the Cold war era, the fight between the **eastern bloc and the western bloc (Communism vs Capitalism) was head to head.**
- The mountainous landlocked country, even 40 years later, is still in mess and is as divided as ever.
- The Kingdom of Afghanistan was ruled by Mohammed Zahir Shah between 1933-1973, **marking a unique phase for South Asia politics.**
- The next 40 years were very turbulent for Afghanistan. First, during the Soviet withdrawal, the United States took a different position.
- Secondly, after **9/11, the US foreign policy took 360 degrees turn** when former President GW Bush announced the war against terrorism.
- Thirdly, after the announcement of US troops' withdrawal, the future of Afghans remains as uncertain as ever.

What do the people of Afghanistan want?

- **Half of the Afghans prefer the Taliban** and hope that the **Islamist group will take over soon**, while the other half do not want to live under the Taliban rule.
- In **September 1996, when the fundamentalist organisation rose to power, the Taliban government** did not have recognition and support from many countries so it was pushed into the corner. However, this time, China, the US, Turkey, and other global players have different positions.
- **Is it possible to end 40 years of turmoil? Conclusion**
- With Afghanistan being riddled with conflict over the last 4 decades, peace talks are the only way out for the war-torn nation.
- The country requires global forces to come united to announce their rejection of Taliban rule in Afghanistan.

OTHER KEY POINTS

#IMPACT ON INDIA'S KEY PROJECTS IN AFGHANISTAN

- **Taliban Takeover of Afghanistan:** On Sunday, 15th August 2021 – Taliban fighters seized the prize it has long sought by taking complete control of Kabul. With the fall of Kabul, **the militant Islamist group has announced an end to the 20-year war and declared its victory.**
- A hasty retreat by the US forces coupled with the **fleeing of Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani** marked the collapse of the Western-backed government in Afghanistan.
- With Taliban troops taking control of the presidential palace in Kabul after seizing province after province, all in a matter of weeks; India also finds its strategic interests threatened in the war-torn country.



India's role in Rebuilding of Afghanistan

- As the **US launched Operation 'Enduring Freedom' in the post 9/11 world**, India, like much of the world, looked at the country which is popularly known as 'Graveyard of Empires' with hope for a better tomorrow.
- When in 2014, the Operation ended, India extending a friendly hand to the Afghan Government as both, long-term strategic interest and immediate humanitarian effort to support and **safeguard the fragile democratic experiment installed by the West.**
- Over the last two decades, India shared a robust relationship and solid people-to-people contacts with the SAARC nation. India built vital roads, dams, electricity transmission lines and substations, schools and hospitals, etc. India's development assistance is now estimated to be worth well over \$3 billion.
- However, the recent developments have put India's strategic interests at a major risk, be it in terms of infrastructure projects such as **Stor Palace and Salma Dam or the 2011 India-Afghanistan Strategic Partnership Agreement.**

2011 India-Afghanistan Strategic Partnership Agreement

- The first major step by India in helping rebuild Afghanistan after the **US-led war against Taliban came in the form of the 2011 India-Afghanistan Strategic Partnership Agreement.**
- The agreement reiterated India's commitment to helping rebuild Afghanistan's infrastructure and institutions; education and technical assistance for capacity-building in many areas. Furthermore, the agreement also encouraged investment in Afghanistan and provided duty-free access to the Indian market.
- Thanks to this agreement, the bilateral trade between India and Afghanistan is now worth USD 1 billion.

Salma Dam

- One of the **biggest infrastructure projects launched by the Indian effort in Afghanistan** is the 42MW Salma Dam in Herat province.

- Popularly known as the **Afghan-India Friendship Dam**, it is a hydropower and irrigation project which got completed in 2016.
- The province has already seen a violent takeover by Taliban fighters, especially in the area surrounding the dam. Taliban has declared that they have taken control of the area around the project.

Afghan Parliament

- Probably the most significant and noticeable contribution by India to **Afghanistan is in the form of building the Afghan Parliament, which was built for USD 90 million.**
- The Afghan Parliament building was inaugurated by Indian PM Narendra Modi in 2015. In a spirited speech delivered at the inauguration function, PM Modi said the new building was India's tribute to democracy in Afghanistan. A block in the building is named after former PM AB Vajpayee.

Stor Palace

- **Stor Palace was originally built in the late 19th Century** as a tribute to the setting for the 1919 Rawalpindi Agreement by which Afghanistan became an independent country. The **building housed the offices of the Afghan foreign minister and the ministry until 1965.**
- Since then, during the war period, the palace was ravaged during the Soviet invasion and Taliban regime. In 2009, India, Afghanistan, and the **Aga Khan Development Network signed a tripartite agreement for its restoration.**
- The Aga Khan Trust for Culture completed the project between 2013 and 2016. Thereafter, the palace was restored to its former glory by India and inaugurated in 2016 by **Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and Indian Prime Minister Modi.**

Zaranj Delaram Highway

- The most beneficial infrastructure project undertaken by India in Afghanistan would be the **218-Km Zaranj Delaram highway**, which has been built by the **Border Roads Organisation at the cost of USD 150 million.** Over 300 Indian engineers and workers toiled alongside Afghans to build the road.
- The highway runs close to the Afghanistan-Iran border and connects Delaram to the northeast of Zaranj, covering some important strategic locations including Kandahar, Ghazni, Kabul and Mazar-i-Sharif, and Herat.
- The **highway is of strategic importance** for India as it granted an alternative route to Afghanistan via Iran's Chabahar port, as Pakistan denies India access to the landlocked nation.
- **Healthcare Facilities**
- India had built the Indira Gandhi Institute for Child Health in 1972, which was left in shambles during the war years. Following the installation of democracy, India rebuilt and restored the institute and also several Indian Medical Missions throughout the country.
- India has built clinics in the border provinces of Badakhshan, **Balkh, Kandahar, Khost, Kunar, Nangarhar, Nimruz, Nooristan, Paktia and Paktika**, as per reports.

- **Power Infrastructure**
- India has also contributed to building a strong telecom and **power infrastructure in Afghanistan to aid its overall economic growth and development.**
- As part of this, India has built the 220kV DC transmission line from Pul-e-Khumri, the capital of Baghlan province, which supplies electricity to the national capital Kabul.

Transportation Support

- According to the MEA, India gifted 400 buses and 200 mini-buses for urban transportation, 105 utility vehicles for municipalities, 285 military vehicles for **the Afghan National Army, and 10 ambulances for public hospitals in five cities.**
- It also gave three Air India aircraft to Ariana, the Afghan national carrier, when it was restarting operations.

EAM to discuss Afghanistan situation at UNSC meeting

- **External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar** on August 17, 2021, reached New York to preside over two high-level signature events of the United Nations (UN) during **India's presidency of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).**
- During his visit, on August 18, 2021, EAM Jaishankar will chair an open debate on 'Protecting the Protectors: Technology and Peacekeeping' followed by a high-level briefing session on **'Threats to International Peace and Security caused by Terrorist Acts' the next day.**
- Jaishankar will also hold bilateral meetings with the Foreign Minister of other Member States. In a tweet, Jaishankar said that he will discuss the developments in Afghanistan during his engagements at the UN.
- India and the UN are expected to sign an MoU in support of the **'Partnership for Technology in Peacekeeping' initiative during the visit.**

EAM Jaishankar to chair UNSC high-level events: Key highlights

- EAM Jaishankar will preside over two high-level signature events of the United Nations (UN) **during India's presidency of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC)** in New York.
- 'Protecting the Protectors: Technology and Peacekeeping': **First Event**
- The first event is an open debate on **'Protecting the Protectors: Technology and Peacekeeping'** that will be held tomorrow on August 18, 2021.
- The 'Protecting the Protectors: Technology and Peacekeeping' open debate will focus on deliberating the use of modern technological tools to enhance the security and safety of Peacekeepers and to aid Peacekeeping missions.
- India, in collaboration with the UN, will launch a situational awareness programme 'UNITE AWARE Platform' that will aid a **Peacekeeping Operations Centre** to gauge the ground situation in a conflict zone on a real-time basis.

- ‘Threats to International Peace and Security caused by Terrorist Acts’: **Second Event**
- The second event will be a high-level briefing session on ‘**Threats to International Peace and Security caused by Terrorist Acts**’ that will take up the six-monthly report of the UN Secretary-General on the threats by ISIL.

India’s presidency of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC)

- India’s two-year term as a non-permanent member of the UNSC began on January 1, 2021. India’s Presidency of the UNSC in August is the country’s first Presidency in 2021-22. After August, India’s Presidency will next be in December 2022.
- This is **India’s 10th tenure as UNSC Presidency**. Since the establishment of the UNSC in 1945, India has held Presidency of the UNSC for 9 times: June 1950, September 1967, December 1972, October 1977, February 1985, October 1991, December 1992, August 2011, and November 2012.
- As per the UNSC protocol, the Council Presidency rotates among each of the 15 members of the UNSC in alphabetical order.
- For the month of August 2021, India’s Presidency has outlined three high-level meetings on **peacekeeping, counter-terrorism, and maritime security**.
- The monthly programme of India’s Presidency will deliberate on situations in the neighborhood and the world, including **developments in Afghanistan, Syria, Somalia, and the Middle East**.

Afghanistan new ruler from Taliban

- Twenty years after it was driven out, the Taliban has returned to power in **Afghanistan following the capture of Kabul after Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani fled to Tajikistan** on August 16, 2021. The Taliban declared that the war is over after they entered the capital and took hold over the presidential palace.
- **Ashraf Ghani** reiterated in his first appearance since leaving Kabul that he had left in order to spare the country more bloodshed. He said in a recorded message that he had no intention of staying in exile and was in talks to return home.
- While there is an attempt to start negotiations between the Taliban leadership and top Afghan officials, the Taliban is seeking to build a new government and create an Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan like it had done under its rule when it was in power previously from 1996-2001.



Know the Taliban leaders who are likely to be a part of the Afghan government:

- **Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar**: Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar is likely to be the new head of the Taliban government in Afghanistan. He is the number 2 leader of the Taliban movement and in charge of their political wing. He had participated in the first press conference of the new regime earlier this week.
- **Mullah Baradar is the co-founder of the Taliban along with Mullah Muhammad Omar**, the main

founder of the Taliban movement.

- **Maulvi Haibatullah Akhundzada:** Maulvi Haibatullah Akhundzada is the supreme leader of the Taliban since 2016. He, however, may not take up a direct position in the Taliban government. He could though be a likely choice for an Iranian-style Supreme Leader if such a post is made.
- **Mullah Muhammad Yaqoob:** Mullah Muhammad Yaqoob is the 31-year-old son of Mullah Omar, the main founder of the Taliban. Yaqoob is the operational head of the military wing of the Taliban. He is likely to play an important figure in the new government.
- **Mullah Khairullah Khairkhwa:** Mullah Khairullah Khairkhwa was the interior minister in the previous Taliban regime.
- **Mullah Mohammad Fazl:** Mullah Mohammad Fazl was the deputy defence minister in the previous Taliban regime.
- **Both Mullah Khairullah Khairkhwa and Mullah Mohammad Fazl** were among the five Guantanamo Bay detainees who were captured after the Taliban were ousted and were released in May 2014 in exchange for the US soldier Bowe Berghdal, who was captured by the Haqqani network.
- **Sirajuddin Haqqani :** Sirajuddin Haqqani is the son of Jalaluddin Haqqani and leader of Haqqani network. He has played a significant role in the Taliban's recent military push. He could be a part of the new Taliban regime. Sirajuddin Haqqani's father has been a designated terrorist under UNSC resolution 1272 since 2007.
- The Haqqani network is a militant organisation that is reportedly allied with the Taliban. **It is said to have links to the al-Qaeda.**
- **Zabiullah Mujahid:** Zabiullah Mujahid is the chief spokesperson of the Taliban.
- Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanikzai: Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanikzai was one of the chief negotiators on behalf of the Taliban in Doha. He had also led the Taliban's talks with the United States.

#TALIBAN STOPPED TRADE WITH INDIA VIA PAKISTAN ROUTES

- The **Federation of Indian Export Organisation** has informed that the taliban rebels, after their recent takeover in Afghanistan, have stopped all the imports and exports from India through the transit routes of Pakistan.
- The Director-General of the **Federation of Indian Export Organisation (FIEO) Ajay Sahai** said that the terror group has stopped the movement of cargo through transit routes of Pakistan, thereby stopping the imports from Afghanistan.
- Imports from the country come through the transit routes of Pakistan and as of now, **Taliban has stopped the movement of cargo to Pakistan, so virtually imports have also been stopped.**
- He further added that as far as exports are concerned, some of the goods have been exported through the international north-south corridor route which is going fine now. While some other goods go through the Dubai route which is also working fine.



India-Afghanistan trade relations:

- **India has long-standing relations with Afghanistan**, particularly in trade, and also has larger investments in the country.
- India is one of the largest partners of Afghanistan and its exports to Afghanistan are worth around USD 835 million for 2021. **India has also imported goods from the country worth around USD 510 million.**
- Besides trade, India also has a sizeable investment in Afghanistan. **The country has investments of around USD 3 billion**, as well as there, are 400 odd projects of India in Afghanistan, some of which are currently going on.
- In trade, both India and Afghanistan enjoy healthy relations. Currently, the Indian export profile includes pharmaceuticals, sugar, tea, apparel, coffee, transmission tower, and spices.
- Imports have been largely dependent on dry fruits. India also imports little gum and onions from them.

Will new Taliban rule impact India-Afghanistan trade relations?

- The DG of FIEO while talking about the latest development said that despite the fast-evolving situation in Afghanistan, he is optimistic about India's trade relations with it.
- He mentioned that over a period of time Afghanistan will also realize that economic development is the only way to move forward and they will decide to continue with that kind of trade.
- The **new Taliban regime in Afghanistan** will like to have political legitimacy and for that India's role will be significant for them.

Background:

- The latest development in the trade relations between India and Afghanistan has come in the wake of a new militant regime that has taken over the country.
- As **Taliban takes over the political power in Afghanistan and establishes its own rules and laws**, it will be interesting to see how the new economic and social dynamics of Afghanistan will fit with the other countries.

G7 MINISTERS ON TALIBAN ISSUE

- The **Group of Seven (G7) Ministers** stressed that the Taliban must hold on to their commitments to ensure the protection of civilians.
- The leaders also expressed their concerns over reports of violent reprisals in parts of Afghanistan. This was stated by **UK Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab** in a statement on August 19.
- **Dominic Raab** had chaired a call of Foreign and Development Ministers of G7 countries- Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States to discuss the deteriorating situation in



Afghanistan. The High Representative of the European Union was also a part of the call.

G7 Ministers on Afghanistan: Key Highlights

- The **Group of Seven Foreign Ministers** stated that the Afghanistan crisis requires an international response including intensive engagement with most affected Afghans, UNSC, parties to the conflict, G20 international donors and **Afghanistan's regional neighbours** on critical questions facing Afghanistan and the region.
- **UK Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab** stated that the G7 has called for the Taliban to guarantee safe passage to foreign nationals and Afghans who wish to leave the nation.
- The G7 also assured that they are doing everything possible **to evacuate vulnerable persons from Kabul airport**.
- **G7 ministers** also vowed to engage with partners in the coming days to secure an inclusive political settlement that will enable life-saving humanitarian assistance and support in Afghanistan and the region and prevent any further loss of life.

G7 Ministers extend support to UNSC statement

- **UK Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab** said in a statement that the G7 Ministers also spoke about the significant loss of life and internal displacement in Afghanistan over recent days. He stated that the G7 Ministers support statement of UNSC made on August 16. **Dominic Raab further in his capacity as chair of G7** said that the G7 affirm their commitment in particular to urgent need for the cessation of violence, respect for human **rights including for women, children & minorities, inclusive negotiations about the future of Afghanistan**.
- "And affirmed our commitment in particular to urgent need for the cessation of violence, respect for human

- The **UK Foreign Secretary** also discussed the situation in Afghanistan with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and they both agreed on the importance of addressing security concerns, regional stability and addressing the humanitarian crisis.

Background

- **All major blocs across the world are currently holding talks to avert the crisis in Afghanistan** following the Taliban's return to power. Afghanistan's future is currently hanging in balance after the country's government collapsed on August 15, 2021 following the escape of Afghanistan president Ashraf Ghani from Kabul.
- The **Taliban entered the presidential palace in the Afghan capital** and declared its victory over the government. The insurgent group is currently in talks with former Afghan officials to form a new government under its regime.
- Several countries have offered refuge to **Afghans who wish to leave Afghanistan due to terror of the Taliban's brutal past atrocities in the nation**.