

TOP OF THE WORLD



Khan had said Donald Trump asked him to mediate with Iran to defuse tensions in the Middle East. AP

PAKISTAN

Imran to visit Tehran, Riyadh

Islamabad: Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan is likely to visit Iran and Saudi Arabia later this month as part of Islamabad's efforts to defuse the increasing tensions in the Middle East, according to a media report. Quoting Foreign Office sources, *The Express Tribune* reported that Khan is likely to visit Tehran and Riyadh later this month to mediate between Iran and Saudi. However, the dates are yet to be finalised.

MALAYSIA

2 leaders held for 'LTTE ties'

Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian police on Thursday arrested seven people, including two politicians, suspected of having links to the now-defunct Sri Lankan Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) separatist group. Malaysia has listed the LTTE as a terrorist organisation since 2014 amid reports of attempts to revive the group from abroad. Authorities arrested seven people on suspicion of "supporting, promoting, recruiting, fundraising for and possessing items linked to LTTE militants". Malaysian police counter-terrorism chief Ayob Khan Mydin Pitchay told reporters, Ayob did not name the suspects but the Democratic Action Party, a member of Malaysia's ruling coalition, confirmed in a statement that two of its assemblymen were arrested.

ECUADOR

At least one killed in unrest

Lima: At least one indigenous protester was killed in unrest in Ecuador's capital Quito during a national strike against President Lenin Moreno's austerity measures, the ombudsman's office said on Thursday. The state institution that monitors conflicts said the protester died from brain trauma on Wednesday. It was also investigating reports by indigenous group Conaie that other protesters died during a police crackdown on the massive demonstrations. **AGENCIES**

Turkey presses offensive in northeast Syria, Erdogan hits out at critics

DAREN BUTLER & ORHAN COSKUN
ISTANBUL, ANKARA, OCTOBER 10

TURKEY PRESSED its military offensive against U.S.-allied Kurdish fighters in northeast Syria on Thursday, shelling towns and bombing targets from the air in an operation that has forced thousands of people to flee their homes.

At least 23 fighters with the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and eight civilians, two them SDF administrators, have been killed, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

The SDF has not given a casualty toll, while six fighters with Turkey-backed rebel groups have also been killed.

More than 60,000 people have fled since the offensive began, the Observatory added. The towns of Ras al-Ain and Darbasiya, some 60 km to the east, have been largely deserted as a result of the attack.

Jets conducted operations up to 30 km (18 miles) into Syria, and a Reuters witness saw shells exploding just outside the town



The town of Ras al-Ain has been largely deserted as a result of the attack. AP

of Tel Abyad. "The operation is currently continuing with the involvement of all our units... 109 terrorists have been killed so far," Turkey president Tayyip Erdogan said in a speech to members of his AK Party in Ankara.

Meanwhile, six people, including a 9-month-old baby, were killed during mortar and rocket fire from Syria into Turkish border towns.

NATO member Turkey has

said it intends to create a "safe zone" for the return of millions of refugees to Syria.

But world powers fear the operation could intensify Syria's eight-year-old conflict, and runs the risk of Islamic State prisoners escaping from camps amid the chaos. Erdogan sought to assuage those concerns, saying that militants from the jihadist group would not be allowed to rebuild a presence in the region.

Taking aim at the European Union and Arab powers Saudi Arabia and Egypt, which have voiced opposition to the operation, Erdogan said those objecting to Turkey's actions were dishonest.

"They are not honest, they just make up words," Erdogan said in blistering speech in which he hit back at critics. "We, however, create action and that is our difference."

Referring to Saudi Arabia, Erdogan said, "Look in the mirror first. Who brought Yemen to this state?" he asked. "Did tens of thousands of people not die in Yemen?"

"Hey, European Union, pull yourself together. If you try to label this operation as an occupation... we will open the gates and send 3.6 million refugees your way," he said.

Erdogan said that once Turkey takes control in northeast Syria, Islamic State "will not be able to establish a presence in the region. I want to give this guarantee to the world".

Syria's deputy foreign minister Faisal Maqdad attacked Kurdish-led forces, saying they had betrayed their country and accused them of a separatist agenda that gave Turkey a pretext to violate his country's sovereignty. **REUTERS**

EXPLAINED



May impact economy, ties

TURKEY'S RECOVERY from recession faces the threat of US sanctions that could hit the lira and harden Turkish distrust of Western allies. Its plan to create a safe zone is also likely to face resistance from its European allies, who may not want to pay for any new humanitarian crisis on their doorstep. The threat of any new militancy in Syria may also further complicate Ankara's chances of joining the EU and threaten a migration deal between Brussels and Ankara.

For first time, Biden calls for Trump's impeachment

LALIT K JHA
WASHINGTON, OCTOBER 10

FOR THE first time, former vice president and Democratic presidential frontrunner Joe Biden has called for President Donald Trump's impeachment, saying the White House occupant is a "threat to American democracy" and has "violated" his oath of office.

Speaking at an election rally in New Hampshire on Wednesday, Biden, 76, said, "No President in American history ever dared engage in such unimaginable behaviour. With his words and with his actions, President Trump has indicted himself. By obstructing justice and refusing to comply with the congressional inquiry, he has already convicted himself."

"To preserve our Constitution, our democracy, and our basic integrity, he should be impeached," said Biden.

Trump was quick to slam Biden. "He's falling like a rock. We have him on tape with corruption. He's getting the prosecutor... saying we're not going to give you the USD 2 billion... And then he goes, lo and behold, the prosecutor was gone," he said. **PTI**



Joe Biden, Donald Trump

No blackmail, says Ukraine president

Kyiv: Ukraine president Volodymyr Zelenskyy insisted Thursday that he faced "no blackmail" from Donald Trump in their phone call that helped spark an impeachment inquiry, trying to claw back his credibility. Zelenskyy said for the first time that his country will "happily" investigate the conspiracy theory pushed by Trump that it was Ukrainians, not Russians, who interfered in the 2016 US presidential election. **AP**

US sanctions Gupta family over 'corruption network'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
WASHINGTON, OCTOBER 10

THE US on Thursday announced sanctions against South Africa's high-profile Indian-origin Gupta family for running a "significant corruption network" that leveraged its political connections to engage in bribery, capture government contracts and misappropriate state assets.

Among those specifically named in the US Treasury Department's designation include Ajay Gupta, Atul Gupta, Rajesh Gupta, and their associate Salim Essa for their involvement

in corruption in South Africa.

The Gupta family has relocated to Dubai amid corruption charges against them in South Africa.

Ajay is the family patriarch who formulated the family's corrupt business strategies and controlled its finances. Atul is widely known to have overseen the Gupta family's outreach to corrupt government official, and Rajesh cultivated important relationships with the sons of powerful South African politicians and led efforts to pursue business and relationships in a South African province where corruption was rampant, the Treasury said.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
DHAKA, OCTOBER 10

BANGLADESHI ECONOMIST and Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus has been issued with an arrest warrant after failing to appear at a hearing over the sacking of workers at a company he heads, officials said Thursday.

A judge at a court in Dhaka issued the order Wednesday as sacked workers from Grameen Communications (GC) lodged a complaint saying they were fired because they set up a trade union, court clerk M. Nuruzzaman said.

Yunus, who is chairman of GC, did not attend the hearing as he was abroad. The chief executive officer and a senior manager at the company appeared at the court and secured bail, Nuruzzaman said.

"He (Yunus) left Bangladesh



PM Sheikh Hasina has accused the economist of 'sucking blood' of the poor

before receiving any summons for appearing before the court. As soon as he returns, an appropriate legal step shall be taken," Yunus's lawyer Kazi Ershadul Alam said.

The 79-year-old former economics professor who founded the pioneering poverty-busting micro lender Grameen Bank, has

been at odds with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina since 2007 when he made a brief foray into the country's highly polarised politics.

In 2011, he was sacked as the head of Grameen Bank, in a move widely believed to have been orchestrated by Hasina. He challenged his sacking in the highest court, but lost.

Yunus set up the Bank, which co-won the Nobel with him in 2006, in 1983 to make collateral-free micro loans to millions of rural entrepreneurs. The bank is now run by managers appointed by Hasina.

Hasina has accused him of "sucking blood" of the poor amid allegations the bank charges interest rates of more than 20 per cent, and suggested he was responsible for the World Bank pulling a \$1.2 billion loan for a mega bridge project.



GERMANY SEEKS TO REASSURE JEWS

Germans need to stand together against extremist violence and protect Jewish life, President Frank-Walter Steinmeier said on Thursday after visiting a synagogue where a gunman killed two people in attack on Yom Kippur — Judaism's holiest day. Chancellor Angela Merkel vowed there would be "zero tolerance" for hate in Germany, as top officials headed to the scene of the attack in Halle, seeking to reassure an unsettled Jewish community. **Reuters**

Bangladesh arrest warrant for Nobel laureate Yunus



Wiranto was attacked during his visit to Pandeglang, in Banten province. Antara Foto/Reuters

Indonesia security minister stabbed by IS suspect

JIM GOMEZ
JAKARTA, OCTOBER 10

A KNIFE-WIELDING man suspected of belonging to a radical Islamic group wounded Indonesia's security minister, a local police chief and another person in an attack in western Indonesia on Thursday, officials said.

President Joko Widodo called the suspect a terrorist and urged people to help combat radicalism following the stabbing of security minister Wiranto in Banten province, where authorities say Muslim militants have a presence.

The attack came just over a week before Widodo's inauguration for his second five-year term in office.

"He is now being treated and undergoing surgery," Widodo said after visiting Wiranto, a former armed forces chief. Police said he was in stable condition and conscious after the attack.

National police spokesman Dedi Prasetyo said Wiranto was stabbed in the abdomen. Local news reports cited a hospital doctor as saying he was stabbed at least twice.

Wiranto, 72, who uses one name, was airlifted to the capital, Jakarta. Videos showed him being carried on a stretcher; the left side of his abdomen covered

Protests in Dhaka after killing of student who slammed India deals

ASSOCIATED PRESS
DHAKA, OCTOBER 10

POLICE IN Bangladesh were investigating the killing of a student at a university dormitory allegedly by student activists loyal to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina after he criticized a water-sharing deal with India.

Last weekend's killing has sparked protests at the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology in Dhaka. Police have arrested at least 11 students for their alleged involvement, said police spokesman Masudur Rahman.

Hasina has promised justice to the family of Abrar Fahad, a second-year student of the country's leading technology institute.

On Wednesday, hundreds of students and teachers took part in a silent procession on the campus to demand justice.

Friends say Fahad was targeted after he criticised in a Facebook post the deal signed during Hasina's recent visit to New Delhi. He also questioned another deal signed during the same visit for exporting petroleum gas



A protest against the killing of Abrar Fahad, in Dhaka. Reuters

to India from Bangladesh. The deals, signed during Hasina's trip this month, were seen by many in Bangladesh as going against the country's interests.

Hasina ordered police to strictly probe the case because the suspects are tied to the Bangladesh Chhatra League, an influential student body of her ruling party.

Hasina's student organisation has faced criticism for its alleged involvement with various crises. Last month, she was furious with two top student leaders after complaints from another public university's vice chancellor that they had demanded ransom from the university. **REUTERS**

After China criticism, Apple pulls app protesters used to track Hong Kong cops

STEPHEN NELLIS & JOHN RUWITCH
SAN FRANCISCO, HONG KONG, OCTOBER 10

APPLE INC has removed an app that helped Hong Kong protesters track police movements, saying it was used to ambush law enforcement, following sharp criticism of the US tech giant by a Chinese state newspaper for allowing the software.

Apple's decision to bar the HKmap.live app, which crowd-sources the locations of both police and protesters, from its App Store

plunges the company into the increasingly fraught political tension between China and the protesters that has also ensnared other US and Hong Kong businesses.

Apple had only just last week approved the app after rejecting it earlier this month.

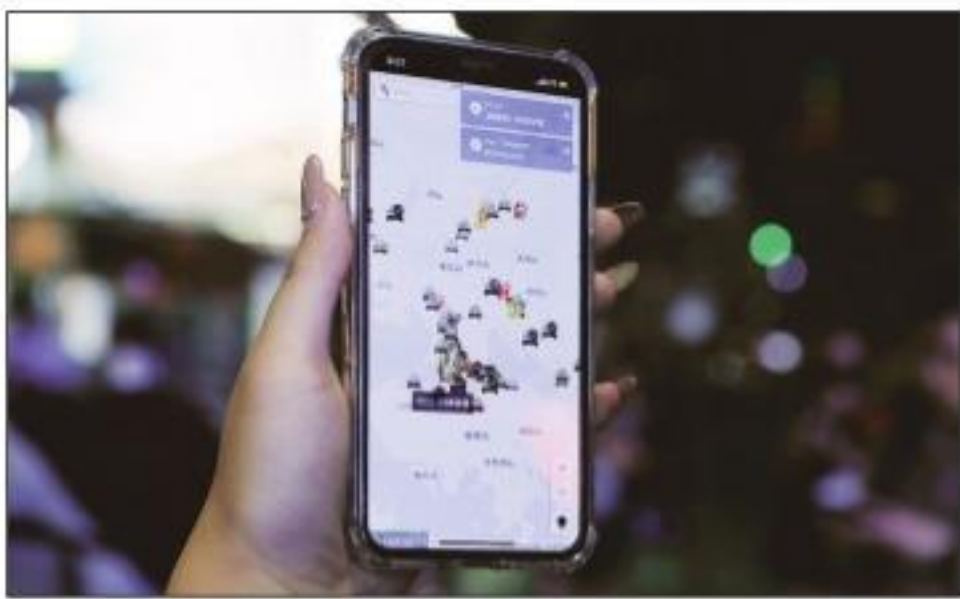
Alphabet Inc's Google on Thursday said it had dropped a game from its app store that allowed players to pretend they were Hong Kong protesters, saying its policies forbid capitalising on sensitive events.

The Chinese Communist Party's official newspaper on Tuesday called the tracking app

"poisonous" and decried what it said was Apple's complicity in helping the Hong Kong protesters.

Apple said in a statement on Wednesday it had begun an immediate investigation after "many concerned customers in Hong Kong" contacted it about the app and Apple found it had endangered law enforcement and residents.

"The app displays police locations and we have verified with the Hong Kong Cybersecurity and Technology Crime Bureau that the app has been used to target and ambush police, threaten public safety, and criminals have used it to victimize residents in areas



Apple had last week approved the app called HKmap.live AP

where they know there is no law enforcement," it said.

Apple did not comment beyond its statement. The company also removed BackupHK, a separate app that served as a mirror of the HKmap.live app.

Maya Wang, a senior China researcher with Human Rights Watch, said there could be legitimate concerns of misuse of apps but that the statement from Apple was "disingenuous" because it did not make any reference to pressure from Beijing in the People's Daily commentary.

"Given the context of how (Apple) has over the years re-

moved apps and removed access to news particularly inside mainland China that the Chinese government doesn't want, I think that the removal of this particular app strikes me as another shameful incident in which a multinational company bends to Chinese government pressure," she said.

Apple did not respond to a request for comment on Wang's remarks.

On Twitter, an account believed to be owned by the HKmap.live app's developer said it disagreed with Apple's decision and that there was no evidence to support the Hong Kong police's

claims that the app had been used in ambushes.

"The majority of user review(s) in App Store ... suggest HKmap IMPROVED public safety, not the opposite," it said.

The app consolidates content from public posts on social networks and moderators delete content that solicits criminal activity and would ban repeated attempts to post such content in the app, it added.

Neither China's foreign ministry nor the information office of the State Council had an immediate comment when asked about the app removal. **REUTERS**