

Thousands flee Turkey’s attack in Syria

At least 23 Kurdish fighters and eight civilians were killed, and over 60,000 people were displaced

REUTERS
ISTANBUL/ANKARA

Turkey pressed its military offensive against 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 Turkish-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.

Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan told members of his AK Party in Ankara that 109 militants had been killed so far in the two days of fighting, while Kurds said they were resisting the assault.

According to a senior Turkish security official, armed forces struck weapons and ammunition depots, gun and sniper positions, tunnels and military bases.

Jets conducted operations up to 30 km into Syria, and a Reuters witness saw shells exploding just outside the town of Tel Abyad.

“The operation is currently continuing with the involvement of all our units... 109 terrorists have been killed so far,” Mr. Erdogan said in a speech to members of his AK Party in Ankara.

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.

Kurds under attack

Turkey on Wednesday launched a long-planned military operation in northeast Syria, targeting the Kurdish militia group, People’s Protection Units (YPG)

Why is Turkey attacking Kurds?

• Turkey sees the YPG, the Syrian Kurdish militia, as an offshoot of the PKK, the Kurdish militia on the Turkish side, and therefore as a threat to the Turkish state

• It wants to create a buffer between the YPG-guarded Syrian Kurdistan and the Turkish border

• Turkey also plans to resettle some of the 3 million Syrian refugees it hosts in this buffer zone

What’s the U.S. stand?
The YPG was the U.S.’s ally in the war on the Islamic State. But it was Donald Trump’s decision to pull back U.S. troops from Syria that allowed Turkey to launch the invasion



Civilians fleeing Turkish bombardment on Syria’s northeastern town of Ras al-Ain, along the Turkish border, on Wednesday. ■ AP

Source: Graphic News

Mr. Erdogan sought to assuage those concerns, saying that militants from the jihadist group would not be allowed to rebuild a presence in the region.

‘Dishonest’ opposition

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

He threatened to permit Syrian refugees in Turkey to move to Europe if EU countries described his forces’ move as an occupation. Turkey is hosting around 3.6 million people who have fled the conflict in Syria.

“They are not honest, they just make up words,” Mr. Erdogan said in a combative speech, singling out Saudi Arabia and Egypt. “We,

however, take action and that is the difference between us.”

The Turkish operation began days after a pullback by U.S. forces from the border, and senior members of U.S. President Donald Trump’s own Republican Party condemned him for making way for the incursion.

The decision has been widely criticised as an abandonment of Syrian Kurds.

Ankara brands the Syrian Kurdish YPG militia as terrorists because of their ties to militants who have waged an insurgency in Turkey. But many members of Congress, and U.S. officials, credit the Kurds with fighting alongside American troops to defeat Islamic State militants.

‘Bad idea’

The Kurdish-led authority in northern Syria said a prison struck by Turkish shelling holds “the most dangerous criminals from more than 60 nationalities” and Turkey’s attacks on its prisons risked “a catastrophe”.

The Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) holds thousands of IS fighters and tens of thousands of their relatives in detention.

There was no immediate comment on the situation in the prisons from Turkey.

Mr. Trump called the Turkish assault a “bad idea” and said he did not endorse it. He said he expected Turkey to protect civilians and religious minorities and prevent a humanitarian crisis - as Turkey has said it would.

Republican Senator Lindsey Graham, usually a vocal Trump ally, has criticised his decision to withdraw U.S. troops from northeastern Syria and unveiled a framework for sanctions on Turkey with Democratic Senator Chris Van Hollen.

Their proposed sanctions would target the assets of senior officials including Erdogan, mandate sanctions over Turkey’s purchase of a Russian S-400 missile defense system and impose visa restrictions.

They also would sanction anyone who conducted military transactions with Turkey or supported energy production for use by its armed forces, bar U.S. military assistance to Turkey and require a report on Erdogan’s net worth and assets.

Two businessmen linked to Trump-Ukraine scandal held

The duo ‘funnelled foreign money to political candidates’

REUTERS
WASHINGTON/NEW YORK

Two foreign-born Florida businessmen, who have been helping President Donald Trump’s personal lawyer investigate political rival Joe Biden, have been arrested on charges of funneling foreign money to U.S. political candidates and a pro-Trump election panel, officials said on Thursday.

The arrests were the latest dramatic development in a political saga that threatens Mr. Trump’s presidency. They come as the Democratic-led U.S. House of Representatives conducts an impeachment inquiry into Mr. Trump centred on the Republican President’s request in a July telephone call for Ukraine’s President to investigate Mr. Biden.

The businessmen, Lev Parnas and Igor Fruman, were arrested in connection with a New York federal case involving campaign finance laws, the U.S. Attorney’s Office in Manhattan said. The two men were donors to a pro-Trump fundraising committee and the President’s personal lawyer, Rudy Giuliani, has said they helped him as he sought to investigate former Vice-President Biden, a leading Democratic contender in the 2020 poll.

Mr. Parnas is a Ukrainian businessman. Mr. Fruman is a real estate investor who was born in Belarus. Both, according to various media accounts, helped introduce Mr. Giuliani into top Ukrainian political circles. They were planning to fly to Vienna on Wednesday night, according to a source.

Mr. Parnas and Mr. Fruman conspired to “funnel foreign money to candidates for federal and state office,” according to a federal court filing in New York.



A Facebook screenshot shows, from left, Donald Trump Jr., Tommy Hicks Jr., Lev Parnas and Igor Fruman. ■ AP

Biden for impeachment

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

Democratic White House hopeful Joe Biden called on Wednesday for Donald Trump’s impeachment, saying the President “betrayed” the U.S.

“To preserve our Constitution, our

democracy, our basic integrity, he should be impeached,” Mr. Biden told supporters at a rally in New Hampshire.

Mr. Trump, however, responded by predicting that the constitutional crisis would end up “being a big Supreme Court case.”

There are just days left to strike a deal. The agreement must be signed off at an October 17-18 EU summit and European officials want the negotiations to conclude in advance.

The key sticking point is the future arrangements on the currently invisible land

border between the U.K. province of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, a EU member.

Both leaders said they had “detailed and constructive” talks. “They agreed to reflect further on their discussions and that officials would continue to engage intensively on them [customs and consent].”

U.K., Irish PMs see ‘pathway’ to a deal

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BIRKENHEAD

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and his Irish counterpart Leo Varadkar said they could see a route towards striking a possible Brexit divorce deal, following a crunch meeting on Thursday.

“Both continue to believe a deal is in everybody’s interest. They agreed that they

could see a pathway to a possible deal,” the pair said in a joint statement.

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ELSEWHERE



Arrest warrant against Nobel laureate Yunus

DHAKA
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 on Thursday. ■ AFP

U.S. blacklists Gupatas of South Africa over graft

WASHINGTON
The U.S. Treasury announced sanctions on Thursday on South Africa’s Gupta family, friends of ex-President Jacob Zuma, calling them a “corruption network” that misappropriated millions in state funds. ■ AFP

Apple removes app used by Hong Kong protesters

Google drops a game from its store

REUTERS
HONG KONG

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 U.S. tech giant by a Chinese state newspaper for allowing the software.

Apple’s decision to bar the HKmap.live app, which crowdsources 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 U.S. and Hong Kong businesses.

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

Meanwhile, 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 protesters.

Apple also removed BackupHK, a separate app that served as a mirror of the HKmap.live app.

U.S. analyst arrested for leaking info

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

A counter-terrorism analyst at the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency was arrested on Wednesday for allegedly leaking top secret information to journalists.

Henry Kyle Frese, 30, faces two counts of revealing classified defence information, they said. “Frese was caught red-handed disclosing sensitive national security information for personal gain,” Assistant Attorney General John Demers told reporters.

The Justice Department did not reveal the content of the information other than to say that it concerned a “foreign country’s weapons systems”.

Saudi Arabia now allows women to join armed forces

The kingdom is pushing reforms to improve image, woo tourists

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
RIYADH

Saudi Arabia has announced it will allow women in the ultra-conservative kingdom to serve in the armed forces as it embarks on a broad programme of economic and social reforms.

The move is the latest in a series of measures aimed at increasing the rights of women in the kingdom, even as rights groups accuse Riyadh of cracking down on women activists.

“Another step to empowerment,” the Foreign Ministry wrote on Twitter, adding that women would be able to serve as private first



A Saudi woman buying the kingdom’s national flag in Riyadh. ■ REUTERS

class, corporal or sergeant.

Last year, Saudi Arabia authorised women to join its security forces.

Iran women watch soccer, a first in decades

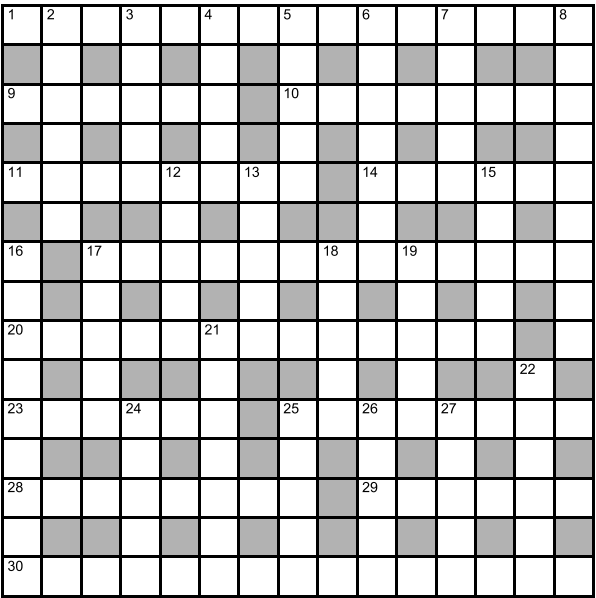
ASSOCIATED PRESS
TEHRAN

Flag-draped Iranian women watched a FIFA soccer match from a Tehran stadium on Thursday, the first time they’ve been freely allowed into a stadium in decades.

The 2022 World Cup qualifier between Team Melli and Cambodia at Tehran’s Azadi Stadium marks a decades-long push by Iranian women to be able to watch matches, something hard-liners in Iran’s Shiite theocracy oppose to this day.

Iran allocated only 4,000 tickets for women in a stadium that seats about 80,000 people, keeping them separated from men.

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12752



■ ACROSS

- This load should be placed on floor after finishing work early at the beginning of day (9,6)
- Humorous temperament of Doc, JNU mistook (6)
- For/against India gutting cattle in region? (8)
- Cops finally pull out illegal passenger (8)

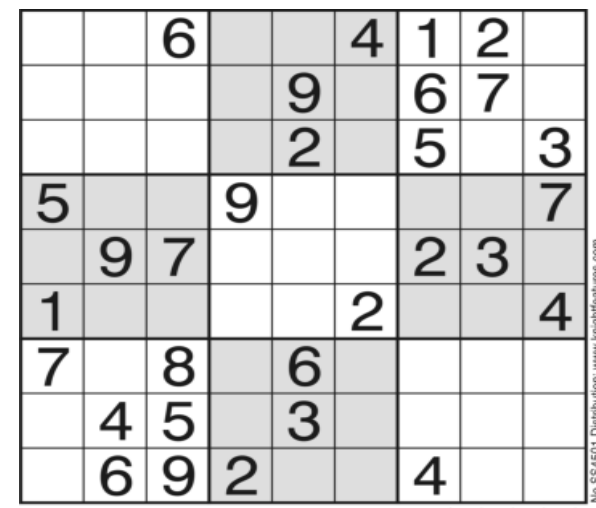
- Side is equal? Lacks substance to match (6)
- Shed tears going over account receivables, struggle in crossing losses at the end leading to taking over to future years (13)
- Organized reunions; come without uniform in casual (13)
- Add former lover in network (6)
- Parts of chair found in an empty room’s excess (seconds) (8)
- Bread, half cake and some yoghurt distributed at dawn (8)
- Bird’s chant cut short, to continue later (6)
- Chemical Engineer’s thesis is essentially on oriental food product (9,6)

■ DOWN

- Resting places at one corner of Rajkot have nothing, nothing on street on Sunday (6)
- Indian woman reduces figure by one third weight... (5)
- ...one who lost her husband at the start of World War (vow taken in the middle) (5)
- Reimburse agent? Yes but not fully (5)
- Inventor is person of Indian origin, born

- at Raichur primarily (7)
- Publish last letter first on European country (5)
- Peter loses power, new leader is egregious, heartless – causes to last forever (9)
- Frame is excellent, right? Base stronger at the end (5)
- Sailor yearns at the shores, miles from depth (5)
- Organism that is the source of very injurious, rabid unhealthy strain (5)
- US President is against journalist; you hear pressure is contrived (7-2)
- Order to evacuate city college left educator at the gate (5)
- Maybe landlord is new or misrepresented (5)
- One who courts women holding glasses with beer (half of it) (5)
- Each street has debris, even on festivals (7)
- School gates fixed leading to steps (6)
- Vessel is deluxe, becarpeted inside (5)
- Joint held by bank leased (5)
- After dark, investigators counter doctor (5)
- Arouse lady, feed love, okay? (5)

SUDOKU



Solution to puzzle 12751

EXCESS SCOLDING
CANDID O O O O A
SANDPAPER GODON
T A I P O I T
ALDR URSAMINOR
T I L G E O E Y
C N D
B O A M R I S M
O O O E A O N A
BEING SAMARITAN
A S U T Y S E U
B Y T H E B Y E S T R E A M

Solution to yesterday’s Sudoku

9 5 4 8 2 7 6 3 1
6 2 7 9 1 3 5 4 8
1 8 3 6 5 4 2 7 9
3 4 9 2 6 5 1 8 7
8 6 1 7 4 9 3 5 2
2 7 5 3 8 1 9 6 4
4 3 8 5 9 2 7 1 6
5 9 6 1 7 8 4 2 3
7 1 2 4 3 6 8 9 5

FAITH

Double joy

Purusha Suktam says that the Supreme One has 1000 heads, and as many eyes and feet. One might be tempted to ask a question. If a person has thousand heads, then does it not logically follow that he will have two thousand eyes and two thousand feet? In Sanskrit, sahasra means not only thousand, but also infinity. So the ‘sahasra’ used in the Purusha suktam, with reference to the Supreme One’s heads, eyes and feet, actually means infinity. We should not take the word sahasra literally and interpret it as referring to one thousand. Rather, we should take it to mean infinite, for infinity is a characteristic of the Supreme Being, explained V.S. Karunakarachariar in a discourse.

The Supreme One, with infinite auspicious qualities, incarnates to guide us towards Him. In Kali yuga also He came down as Lord Srinivasa, to fulfil His promise to Vedavati. Vedavati was the daughter of sage Kusadhwaaja. Sage Kusadhwaaja and his wife were killed by an asura, when the sage refused to give his daughter in marriage to the asura. Upon her father’s death, Vedavati undertook penance to attain Lord Narayana as her husband, but that did not happen. So, the Lord came down to Tirumala as Srinivasa to marry Vedavati, who had taken the avatara of Padmavati.

Tirumala is already the abode of Varaha. Srinivasa asks Varaha for some space to do penance. Varaha says He can do so in Tirumala, but upon one condition. Devotees who come to Tirumala must first worship Varaha and only later should they worship Srinivasa. Srinivasa agrees to the condition. That is why even today, a Tirumala yatra is considered incomplete, if it does not begin with worship of Varaha. Of course, both Srinivasa and Varaha are none but Lord Vishnu. In Tirumala we have the double joy of worshipping both.