

Syrian forces step in to thwart Turkish onslaught

The Kurds struck a deal with Russia-backed Assad government to fend off invasion after U.S. announced troop withdrawal

REUTERS
BEIRUT/ANKARA

Russia-backed Syrian forces wasted no time in taking advantage of an abrupt U.S. retreat from Syria on Monday, deploying deep inside Kurdish-held territory south of the Turkish frontier less than 24 hours after Washington announced a full withdrawal.

Kurdish forces, Washington's former allies, said they invited in the government troops as an "emergency measure" to help fend off an assault by Turkey, launched last week with "a green light" from President Donald Trump that the Kurds describe as a betrayal.

The Syrian government's deployment on Monday is a major victory for President Bashar al-Assad and his ally Russia, who gained a military foothold across the biggest swathe of the country that had been beyond their

grasp. Under their deal with the Kurds, government forces are poised to move into border areas from the town of Manbij in the west to Derik, 400 km to the east.

Syrian state media reported that troops had already entered Tel Tamer, a town on the strategically important M4 Highway that runs east-west around 30 km south of the frontier with Turkey.

State TV later showed residents welcoming Syrian forces into the town of Ain Issa, which lies on another part of the highway, hundreds of km away.

Ain Issa commands the northern approaches to Raqqa, former capital of the Islamic State "caliphate", which Kurdish fighters recaptured from the militants two years ago in one of the biggest victories of a U.S.-led campaign.

Much of the M4 lies on the southern edge of territory



Pushing forward: Syrian troops entering the town of Ein Issa, north of Raqqa, on Monday. •AP

where Turkey aims to set up a "safe zone" inside Syria. Turkey said it had seized part of the highway.

U.S. strategy crumbles
The swift Syrian government deployments came as the strategy the U.S. has pursued in Syria for the past five years crumbled overnight. Wash-

Russia denies U.S. report it bombed 4 Syria hospitals
MOSCOW

Russia's Defence Ministry on Monday rubbished a report in *The New York Times* that claimed its warplanes bombed four hospitals in rebel-held territory in Syria in a span of 12 hours this year. The May strikes — which the newspaper tied to Moscow through Russian radio recordings, logs and witnesses — are part of a pattern of medical facilities targeted by forces supporting Syrian government. •AFP

Syria appreciates Indian position on invasion
NEW DELHI

Countries supporting Turkey's military campaign in northeast Syria are supporting terrorism, said the envoy of Damascus Riad Abbas here on Monday. "On behalf of my government, we welcome the Indian statement on the Turkish invasion of Syria," said Mr. Abbas. India had expressed deep concern at the military assault and termed Turkey's military campaign as 'unilateral.'

Americans abandoned the region and gave the green light for the Turkish attack, we were forced to explore another option, which is talks with Damascus and Moscow to find a way out and thwart these Turkish attacks," senior Kurdish official Badran Jia Kurd said.

Turkish President Tayyip

Erdogan said that the battle would continue until "ultimate victory" is achieved.

Meanwhile, EU countries have threatened to impose sanctions on Turkey over the assault. But they have agreed not to impose an embargo. Member countries would instead consider their own curbs on sales of weapons.

Japan searches for Hagibis survivors as toll rises to 56

Fresh rain threatens to hamper rescue

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
TOKYO

Tens of thousands of rescuers worked into the night on Monday to find survivors of a powerful typhoon in Japan that killed at least 56 people, as fresh rain threatened to hamper their efforts.

Typhoon Hagibis crashed into the country on Saturday night, unleashing high winds and torrential rain across 36 of the country's 47 prefectures, triggering landslides and catastrophic flooding.

National broadcaster NHK said that 56 people had

been killed and 15 were still missing.

"Even now, many people are still unaccounted for in the disaster-hit area," Prime Minister Shinzo Abe told an emergency disaster meeting on Monday.

"Units are trying their best to search for and rescue them, working day and night," Mr. Abe said.

Later in the day, he pledged to "do whatever the country can" for victims and survivors, ordering the Defence Ministry to call up to 1,000 reserve troops to join 31,000 active forces in search operations.

Brexit on Oct. 31 a priority: Queen

Officials are racing to reach a deal on U.K.'s exit terms ahead of the EU summit

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LONDON

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Monday set out his government's priorities at a parliamentary ceremony full of pomp and pageantry attended by the Queen, with Brexit top of the agenda.



Plan of action: Queen Elizabeth II delivering a speech during the State Opening of Parliament in London. •REUTERS

But with time running out for an amicable divorce deal before EU leaders meet later this week, few of the proposals look likely to be enacted, with predictions of a snap election.

Queen Elizabeth II announced in a speech to lawmakers a list of 26 new Bills ranging from implementing a yet-to-be finalised EU di-

vorce agreement to criminal sentencing and the environment.

"My government's priority has always been to secure

the United Kingdom's departure from the European Union on October 31," the 93-year-old monarch said from a gilded throne, delivering

words written by government officials.

"My government intends to work towards a new partnership with the European Union, based on free trade and friendly cooperation."

But this depends on the outcome of closed-door discussions in Brussels, where officials are racing to reach a deal on Britain's exit terms before a summit of EU leaders starting on Thursday.

If he cannot get a deal by Saturday, Mr. Johnson will fall foul of a British law demanding he ask the EU to delay Brexit for a third time rather than risk a potentially disastrous "no deal" exit.

ELSEWHERE



Cyber-bullied K-pop star found dead at her home

SEOUL

A K-pop star who had long been the target of abusive online comments was found dead at her home on Monday. Police said that Sulli, 25, a former member of girl group f(x), suffered from "severe depression". The exact cause of death is under probe. •AFP

Afghan gets 26 years jail for Amsterdam stabbing

THE HAGUE

A Dutch court here sentenced an Afghan man, identified only as Jawed S., to 26 years in jail for stabbing two American tourists at Amsterdam's Central station on August 31, 2018. •AFP

Fake Trump video shows him shooting critics

The clip depicting the President assaulting mediapersons was shown at his resort

MICHAEL S. SCHMIDT
MAGGIE HABERMAN
WASHINGTON

A video depicting a macabre scene of a fake President Donald Trump shooting, stabbing and brutally assaulting members of the news media and his political opponents was shown at a conference for his supporters at his Miami resort last week, according to footage obtained by *The New York Times*.

Several of Mr. Trump's top surrogates — including his son Donald Trump Jr., his former spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders — were scheduled to speak at the three-day conference, which was held by a pro-Trump group, American Priority, at Trump National Doral Miami. Mr. Sanders and a person

close to Mr. Trump's son said on Sunday that they did not see the video at the conference.

The video, which includes the logo for Mr. Trump's 2020 reelection campaign, comprises a series of internet memes. The most violent clip shows Mr. Trump's head superimposed on the body of a man opening fire inside the "Church of Fake News" on parishioners who have the faces of his critics or the logos of media organizations superimposed on their bodies. It appears to be an edited scene of a church massacre from the 2014 dark comedy film *Kingsman: The Secret Service*.

The disclosure that the video was played shows how Mr. Trump's anti-media lan-



Donald Trump

guage has influenced his supporters and bled into their own propaganda.

Mr. Trump has made attacks on the news media a mainstay of his presidency, and he tweeted a similar — but far less violent video — in 2017.

In recent weeks as he has confronted impeachment proceedings, he has ramped

up his attacks on the news media, repeatedly calling it the "enemy of the people."

Parts of the video were posted on YouTube in 2018 by a user with a history of creating pro-Trump mash-ups.

White House response
The White House on Monday said President Trump "strongly condemns" the fake video.

"Re: the video played over the weekend: The @POTUS @realDonaldTrump has not yet seen the video, he will see it shortly, but based upon everything he has heard, he strongly condemns this video," the White House spokeswoman, Stephanie Grisham, said in a tweet. •NY TIMES

Afghan poll results will be ready by month-end: officials

Data of over 1 million voters has been transferred to servers

ASSOCIATED PRESS
KABUL

Afghanistan's delayed presidential election results should be ready later this month, after technical problems with the counting, its Independent Election Commission said on Monday.

Afghans voted in presidential elections earlier last month despite Taliban threats and violence. However, the polling was marred by misconduct and accusations of fraud as well as controversy over what appeared to be low turnout and claims from a lead contender, Abdullah Abdullah, that he had won the vote.

The Commission said that the data of over one million voters has been transferred to servers after technical problems with biometric devices used in the voting process were sorted out.

'Safeguard poll process'
The U.N. Assistance Mission in Afghanistan urged in a statement on Sunday that the electoral commission safeguard and properly complete the election process.

"Afghan citizens braved security threats to cast their votes for a better future. Those voters deserve to be commended for carrying out their civic duty," said the

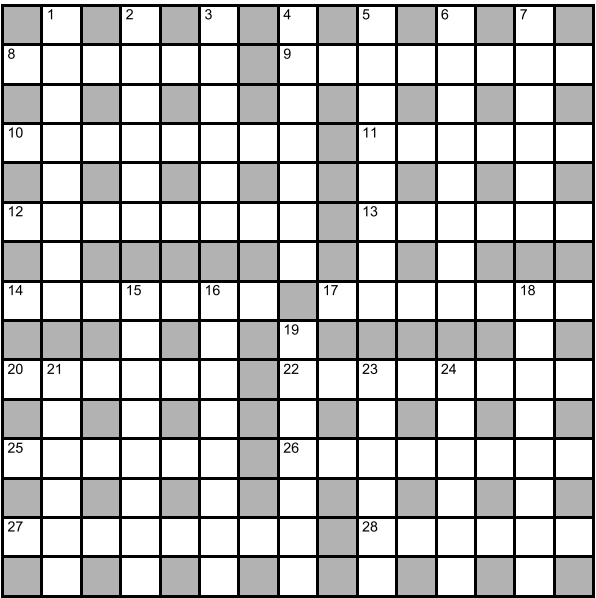
U.N. statement.

The statement called on all Afghan authorities and actors, including the government and the candidates to "protect the integrity of the process, especially with regard to tabulating and announcing the results."

Over the weekend, Asadullah Saadati, the running mate of Mr. Abdullah, alleged systematic fraud in the elections.

Meanwhile in the capital Kabul, a high school principal was shot and killed in front of his home early on Monday by unknown gunmen, according to the city police chief's office.

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12755



The crossword is also available online at crossword.thehindu.com

- **ACROSS**
- 8 Rag student offering prickly plant (6)
- 9 Cost is not subjected to charge (8)
- 10 Program blocks accessing Spooner's cable TV season in the US (8)
- 11 Feel sad for a shift that is inside burial ground (6)

- (set by Hypatia)
- 12 School master taking time pinching one bully (8)
- 13 State once, "Gold remains cash essentially, over the counter" (6)
- 14 Like selection of pronoun "I" for "me" (7)
- 17 Central help in managing lobby (7)
- 20 Direct broadcast channel (6)
- 22 One missing a worker posted envelopes (8)
- 25 Lot of luck, eventually times out (6)
- 26 Woman drinking in large bar turned offensive (8)
- 27 Not odd meeting boy near girl's prayer service (8)
- 28 No way to apply deodorant (4-2)
- **DOWN**
- 1 Possibly snide, or one showing contempt (8)
- 2 Auditors' incline to concur (6)
- 3 Jumble sale discounting clothing from animals and cheap stuff (6)
- 4 Thus separating, the Italian had to get divorce (7)
- 5 Minute bird cuddling on animal (8)
- 6 Director, perhaps away, when spies hacked essential file (8)
- 7 Basil, say goes on vacation (6)
- 15 Bit when taking sides in fight involving people who pick scraps (8)
- 16 Global turnover? (8)
- 18 Forgive and forget (8)
- 19 Rub and a genie manifested dressing (7)
- 21 Steal from short, slender woman (6)
- 23 Gloomy Mexican transiting Spanish borders (6)
- 24 Almost new and advanced (6)

SUDOKU



Solution to puzzle 12754								
E	N	A	B	L	E	A	D	J
A	R	I	F	E	S	O		
A	U	I	G	U	I	L	O	T
M	E	H	T	U	R	S		
A	U	G	S	T	I	X	P	A
F	F	E	A	E	C	I		
O	F	F	S	P	R	I	N	G
U								
F	U	N	D	T	S	E	T	S
L	O	C	A	T	E	F	L	I
P	A	N	O	R	A	M	A	
V	W	V	R	I	E			
P	O	I	N	E	T	T	I	A
U	E	A	S	I	L	E	A	
R	A	R	I	T	I	N	V	A

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

FAITH

Human nature explained

The Puranas help us to understand the workings of the world and also the infinite variety in human nature and tendencies, pointed out Sri Damodhara Dikshitar in a discourse. For instance, Sage Kashyapa is the father of both the asuras and the devas, who are born of his two wives Diti and Aditi respectively. This is symbolic of the good and evil inherent not only in nature and the external world but also within each individual. All beings are bound by Prakriti that is constituted of the three gunas, Satva, Rajas and Tamas.

Once Diti is grief stricken that her sons are killed by Indra during the constant strife between the asuras and the devas. So, she nurtures antagonism towards him. She tells Kashyapa of her desire to beget a son who would destroy Indra. Though the sage appreciates her idea for a worthy son, he is unhappy over her intention. Anyway the sage advises Diti to observe the Pumsavana vrata which she does in earnest. Indra is aware of this and as a matter of self interest, offers to do her service. He hopes that in the course of the vrata, Diti might slip from the austerities that are to be observed. When once this happens, Indra enters her womb and cuts the infant into seven pieces with his Vajrayudha and then each of these pieces is again cut into seven pieces. Indra then seeks her pardon. He also gives life to the forty nine pieces and converts them into devas. This is how Diti becomes the mother of 49 worthy sons who are known as the Maruts. In contrast and in keeping with her good nature, when Aditi, the mother of the devas, is unhappy that her sons are rendered homeless by Bali's might, she too wishes for a son who would protect the devas. But she has no overt intention to destroy anyone.