

# Iranian missile downed airliner: Trudeau

This may have been unintentional, but Canadians have questions and they deserve answers, says PM

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
OTTAWA

Canada Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said on Thursday “multiple” intelligence sources indicate that Iran shot down a Ukrainian airliner after it took off from Tehran, killing all 176 on board, including 63 Canadians.

Mr. Trudeau’s comments came as video emerged that appeared to show the moment the airliner was hit.

That and other footage posted on social media increasingly pointed to a catastrophic mistake by Tehran’s air defense batteries in bringing down Ukraine International Airlines Flight PS752 early on Wednesday.

The video, which *The New York Times* said it verified, shows a fast-moving object rising at an angle into the sky before a bright flash is seen, which dims and then continues moving forward. Several seconds later an explosion is heard.

Citing information from allies as well as Canada’s own intelligence, Mr. Trudeau said the plane appeared to have been hit by an Iranian surface-to-air (SAM) missile.

“We know this may have been unintentional. Canadians have questions, and they deserve answers,” Mr. Trudeau told reporters.

Mr. Trudeau was backed by other Western leaders, including British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who said mounting evidence pointed to a missile strike.

U.S. President Donald Trump indicated that Washington officials believed that the plane was struck by an Iranian missile. “I have my suspicions,” Mr. Trump said, adding that “somebody could have made a mistake.”

The Netherlands said that its military intelligence also had information indicating that an “Iranian anti-aircraft

missile” probably brought down the plane.

The U.S. National Transportation Safety Board late on Thursday said it had received formal notification of the crash from Iran and would send a representative to join the crash probe.

Iran’s Foreign Ministry earlier invited the U.S. plane maker Boeing to “participate” in the inquiry.

With tensions high between the U.S. and Iran, the disaster unfolded just hours after Tehran launched ballistic missiles towards bases in Iraq housing U.S. troops.

Ukraine called for United Nations support for a broad investigation, and sent 45 crash investigators to Tehran to take part in the inquiry led by Iranian authorities.

**Tehran rebuffs claims**  
But Iran’s civil aviation chief denied on Friday that a missile downed the Ukrainian airliner. “One thing is for certain, this airplane was not hit by a missile,” Iran’s civil aviation chief Ali Abedzadeh said, adding that “any remarks made before the data is extracted (from the plane’s black box flight recorders) ... is not an expert opinion.”

Mr. Abedzadeh said Tehran had invited “Americans, Canadians, the French, Ukrainians and the Swedish” to be present during the investigations, showing that “we are honest in our procedure”. He said the missile theory could not be “scientifically correct” because it was not possible for an airliner to be hit and “continue flying for 60 to 70 seconds”.

And “the debris collected has been in a very limited area. If there was an explosion in the wings it should have been much more scattered,” he added, noting that analysing the black box data “will take time”.



**Paying tribute:** Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau at a candlelight vigil in Ottawa on Thursday for the victims of the plane crash in Tehran. • AP

## U.S. hands over ‘important data’ on crash to Ukraine

Goal is to establish the truth: Zelensky

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
KIEV

U.S. officials have given Kiev “important” information about the crash of a Ukrainian airliner in Iran, President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Friday after phone talks with U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

Mr. Zelensky said on Facebook that the possibility the plane had been shot down by a missile was not ruled out “but it has not yet been confirmed.”

He asked for Ukraine to be given all the information needed to conduct a thorough investigation.

“Our goal is to establish the undeniable truth,” he said. “The value of human life is above all political motives.”

In a phone call with Mr. Pompeo, he thanked Washington for its support.



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky

“We are grateful for the valuable support of the United States in investigating the causes of the crash,” Mr. Zelensky told Mr. Pompeo, according to a statement released by his office.

He said he met charge d’affaires Kristina Kvien and received important information which could help in the investigation.” Mr. Zelensky and Foreign Minister Vadym Prystaiko also met with other U.S. officials including Ms. Kvien, the acting U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine.

## Enough proof missile struck plane: Boris

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
LONDON

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said on Thursday that there was now “a body of information” that the Ukrainian Boeing 747 was brought down by an Iranian missile.

“There is now a body of information that the flight was shot down by an Iranian Surface to Air Missile. This may well have been unintentional,” Mr. Johnson said in a statement on the air disaster in which four British passengers died.

He reiterated the call for “all sides urgently to de-escalate to reduce tensions in the region.” “We are working closely with Canada and our international partners and there now needs to be a full, transparent investigation,” into the plane crash, he added.

# U.S. rejects Iraq request to discuss troop withdrawal

Says it is ready for a conversation, but not about pullout

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
WASHINGTON

The United States on Friday rejected a request by Iraq to start talks on pulling out its 5,200 troops, notching up the discord after Washington killed a top Iranian General in Baghdad.

Angry at an attack seen as violating Iraqi sovereignty and enmeshing the country again in war, Iraq’s caretaker Prime Minister asked Secretary of State Mike Pompeo late on Thursday to send a delegation to begin withdrawal arrangements.

The State Department said it was ready for “a conversation” – but not about removing troops.

“At this time, any delegation sent to Iraq would be dedicated to discussing how to best recommit to our strategic partnership – not to



Iraq’s caretaker premier Adel Abdel Mahdi

discuss troop withdrawal, but our right, appropriate force posture in the Middle East,” State Department spokeswoman Morgan Ortagus said in a statement.

### ‘Force for good’

Calling the U.S. “a force for good,” Ms. Ortagus said: “We want to be a friend and partner to a sovereign,

prosperous and stable Iraq.”

President Donald Trump has described the 2003 US invasion of Iraq as a mistake and in the past criticised U.S. troop deployments, in Iraq and elsewhere, as wasteful.

Nonetheless, he has responded angrily to Iraqi efforts to expel U.S. troops, even threatening sanctions on a country promoted as a U.S. partner.

Mr. Pompeo, speaking to reporters, said that the U.S. troops’ mission in Iraq was “very clear” – training local forces and fighting the Islamic State extremist group.

“As times change and we get to a place where we can deliver up on what I believe, and the President believes, is our right structure, with fewer resources dedicated to that mission, we will do so,” he said.

# U.S. sanctions target eight top Iran officials, metals industry

‘It will continue until regime stops funding global terrorism’

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
WASHINGTON

The United States on Friday announced fresh sanctions against eight top Iranian officials it accused of working to destabilise the region, as well as against more than a dozen leading producers of metals in the Islamic republic.

“As a result of these actions, we will cut off billions of dollars of support to the Iranian regime,” Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin told reporters at a White

House briefing. Among the officials targeted in the new measures were Ali Shamkhani, the secretary of Iran’s Supreme National Security Council, Mohammad Reza Ashtiani, the Iranian armed forces Deputy Chief of Staff and Gholamreza Soleimani, the head of the Basij militia, a volunteer force loyal to the regime.

The U.S. Treasury also slapped sanction on 17 Iranian metals producers and mining companies, which, it said, generated billions of

dollars in revenue.

The sanctions also included a network of three entities that are based in China and the Seychelles as well as a vessel “involved in the purchase, sale, and transfer of Iranian metals products,” the Treasury said in a statement.

Mr. Mnuchin said the measures hitting Iran’s economy “will continue until the regime stops the funding of global terrorism and commits to never having nuclear weapons.”

## ELSEWHERE



### Impeachment articles may reach Senate next week

WASHINGTON  
The Democratic-led U.S. House of Representatives is poised to transmit articles of impeachment against President Donald Trump to the Senate next week, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said on Friday. REUTERS

### Fiancee plotted murder of Sikh man: Pak. police

PESHAWAR  
The police in Pakistan have termed the death of a 25-year-old Sikh man as a case of “contract killing”. They have arrested Prem Kumari, 18, for plotting the murder of Parvinder Singh, as she did not want to marry him. PTI

## Gotabaya orders probe into anti-graft panels

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
COLOMBO

Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa on Friday ordered a presidential probe into the previous government’s anti-corruption panels which investigated the members of the Rajapaksa family, including himself.

Two retired senior judges and a former police chief have been appointed to the panel which has been mandated to come out with a report within six months from January 9, according to a gazette issued by the government.

The work of the Financial Crime Division (FCID) of the police, the Bribery and Corruption Commission and the police’s special investi-



Gotabaya Rajapaksa

gation units would come under the focus of the probe covering the period commencing January 9, 2015 to November 16, 2019, the day of the presidential election when Mr. Rajapaksa was elected President.

The probe would focus on whether any public service personnel had been politically victimised during the previous government through its probe panels.

## Strong winds merge two enormous fires in Australia

Blaze spreads over 6,00,000 hectares in eastern States

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
EDEN

Strong winds in Australia merged two enormous fires into a mega blaze spanning an area four times the size of Greater London on Friday, while tens of thousands rallied to again demand action on climate change.

“The conditions are difficult today,” said Shane Fitzsimmons, rural fire service commissioner for New South Wales State.

“It’s the hot, dry winds that will prove once again to be the real challenge.”

Temperatures soared above 40° Celsius in parts of New South Wales and Victo-



**Making a stand:** Protesters rally in Melbourne, in response to the ongoing bushfire crisis in Australia. • GETTY IMAGES

ria, where attention was focused on the two fires that linked to form yet another monster blaze of more than 6,00,000 hectares.

In Sydney and Mel-

bourne, thousands of people again took to the streets to demand Australia’s conservative government do more to tackle global warming and reduce coal exports.

## 15 killed, 20 injured in blast at Pakistan mosque

Senior police officer among the dead

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
KARACHI

A powerful blast at a mosque during Friday evening prayers killed at least 15 people, including an Imam and a senior police officer, and left 20 others injured in Pakistan’s restive Balochistan province, three days after a bomb explosion claimed two lives in Quetta.

The nature of the explosion, which occurred inside the mosque during Maghrib prayers in the Ghousabad neighbourhood, was not immediately known, *Dawn* newspaper reported.

Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Amanullah was among the 15 people killed in the incident, Quet-

ta Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Abdul Razzaq Cheema said.

According to some media reports, the slain police officer was the likely target.

Last month, unidentified gunmen killed the DSP’s son in Quetta, *The Express Tribune* reported.

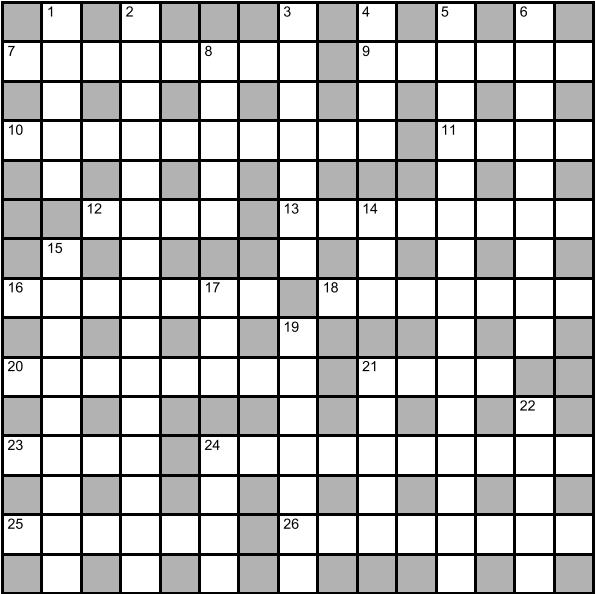
Twenty others were also injured in the blast, the report said.

Law enforcement agencies have cordoned off the area to investigate the incident.

The mosque, which is located in a densely-populated Pashtun-majority area, was being searched by the bomb disposal squad and security personnel.

## THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12830

Log on to crossword.thehindu.com for more puzzles



To play an interactive version of this crossword online, scan the QR code

### ■ ACROSS

- 7 Basilica tap ultimately helping to make a siege weapon (8)
- 9 Class cut short to obtain hard cash (6)
- 10 Assent in German by the Frenchmen to break the key to a sailing ship (10)
- 11 Original board of the hedge fund making a choice for the indecisive (4)

- 12 Bird, a string-controlled flier? (4)
- 13 Mercury removed by the irate fishmonger ends up getting a sword-like shape (8)
- 16 Ranch hand finding equipment from the east in a hooded garb (7)
- 18 A checkout for the afterlife? (7)
- 20 Abnormal loss of strength for the model attached to a bird entering the continent (8)
- 21 Cries like a corvine bird after the lawsuit’s announcement (4)
- 23 Grave bishop replacing an Oriental book (4)
- 24 Hidden cut needed patching after Tesla’s entry (10)
- 25 Dismissal mode is reportedly clear (6)
- 26 Lath manufacturing prior to countering the quote showing the nature of a good fielder (8)

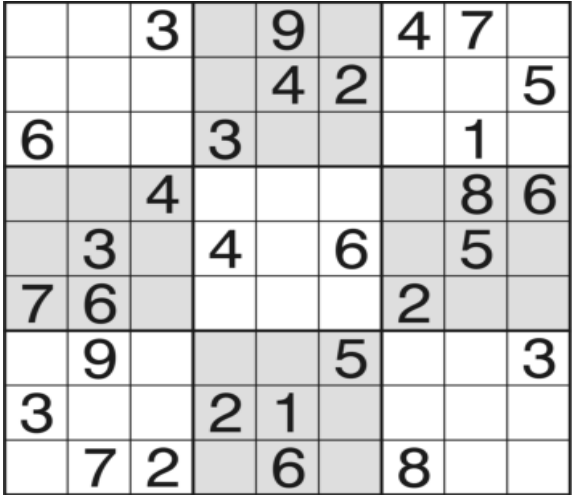
### ■ DOWN

- 1 Horizontal number line? (1-4)
- 2 Hail bland length used to effect a particular mode of dismissal (8,3,4)

(set by Neyartha)

- 3 Dumpster almost destroyed in a dismissal mode (7)
- 4 Celebrity’s son steps down for the old aristocrat (4)
- 5 One might shake or break it in front of a small gate for a particular mode of dismissal (3,6,6)
- 6 Chronicer in Hawaii spoils write-up on the Scot (9)
- 8 Procedure for Rishi to place the uniform on top (5)
- 14 Settled the petty quarrel after the power cut (3)
- 15 Cap boxed by the stooge accidentally becomes ruined (4,2,3)
- 17 Campaign that may be a result of batsmen crossing over (3)
- 19 Talks profusely about going around the gate for a flood-prevention item (7)
- 21 Dismissal mode may cause friction after resistance drops, following the loss of the opener (5)
- 22 Authorized by law, a number of the Spanish return for the princess (5)
- 24 Separate the parts of the playground object (4)

## SUDOKU



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

### Solution to puzzle 12829

PEERESS BIGOTRY  
LNSYEOI  
ENSUE CARTOUCHE  
AEMOESKLL  
SOWCARPETEASED  
EHHHS  
CESSADULTERY  
DECLANTNEOE  
BUDUPTES  
APINGALLOTMENT  
DLHDIEER  
GREATDANERODOE  
EUEGSRLAL  
REMRORSETRAMMEL

### Solution to yesterday’s Sudoku

736195482  
192846357  
854723619  
617938245  
523467198  
948251736  
469512873  
375684921  
281379564

## FAITH

### Benefits of satsanga

Rishis of yore, endowed with the awareness of the past, present and future, have perceived clearly the changes that are characteristic in each Yuga and the kind of effect it will have on the people. They have always stressed the importance of satsanga, or association with the good, as most essential to all at all times. Such association helps one to develop detachment and cultivate the ability to discriminate between the real and the unreal in this world.

Anticipating the kind of confusion about the values and goals of life that is to prevail in Kali Yuga and the difficulty in aligning with the good, the sages have narrated the stories of great heroes and kings who have faced life stoically, and abided by dharma even in the most trying of circumstances. Such narratives are hence considered to be on a par with satsanga in inspiring and instilling the essential values and dharma for every individual, pointed out Sri B. Damodhara Dikshitar in a discourse. This beneficial effect is seen in the way the Pandavas are able to cope with the mental and physical strain that their exile has brought on them when Sage Brihadhaswa consoles them and narrates the story of Nala to them.

Nala becomes a victim of the influence of the spirit of Kali and loses his sense of judgment. Deceived by Pushkara in a game of dice, he loses his wealth and kingdom and is forced into exile. Nala deserts his wife who has accompanied him. He wanders about and is almost mad in his loneliness before he regains all he has lost and is reinstated as king. At least Yudhishtira’s mind is sound, and he has his brothers and the brahmanas with him in the forest. Trials and tribulations are the lot of man and have to be borne with fortitude is the truth of life.