

Djokovic heaps praise on 'very complete' Medvedev

World number one Novak Djokovic hailed Daniil Medvedev as a "very complete player" yesterday, having lost to the young Russian in their last two matches.

P16

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White House 'won't co-operate'
 Washington, DC

The White House has officially refused to co-operate with the impeachment inquiry against President Donald Trump.

A letter sent to Democratic leaders rejected it as "baseless" and "constitutionally invalid".

Three Democratic-led House committees are investigating Mr Trump.

The inquiry is trying to find out if the president held back aid to Ukraine in exchange for an investigation into Joe Biden, who is running for the Democratic presidential nomination.

The White House letter comes hours after the Trump administration blocked the US ambassador to the European Union from appearing before a congressional impeachment investigation.

Brexit 'now impossible'
 London

A No 10 source has said a Brexit deal is "essentially impossible" after a call between the PM and Angela Merkel.

Boris Johnson and the German chancellor spoke earlier about the proposals he had put forward to the EU - but the source said she made clear a deal based on them was "overwhelmingly unlikely".

Mrs Merkel's office said it would not comment on "private" conversations.

But the BBC's Adam Fleming said there was "scepticism" within the EU that Mrs Merkel would have used such language.



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A judicious judiciary



His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa yesterday received, at Al Safriya Palace, newly-appointed Constitutional Court Vice-President Chancellor Ahmed Ibrahim Rashid Al Mulla and member Judge Ahmed Hamad Abdulla Al Dossary, who took their oath before HM the King. HM the King congratulated them on their appointment by royal order and wished them success, thanking them for assuming this judicial responsibility. HM the King praised Bahrain's courts for their longstanding history, hailing the Kingdom's pioneering role in all fields in the region. His Majesty commended the dedicated efforts exerted by members and affiliates of the Constitutional Court. Newly-appointed judges at the Court of Cassation and High Court of Appeals also took their oath before HM the King, who wished them success in performing their duties. HM the King praised Bahrain's judiciary, which has been marked, along its history, by its independence, impartiality, probity and the consolidation of the principles of truth, justice and the rule of law.

The unbridled Turks

Turkey boosts troops on Syria border after operation warning



Turkish army vehicles head to the Syrian border.

1,000
 US troops are still tackling IS forces in Syria.

- Trump says Washington has an important relationship with Turkey but threatens to obliterate its economy if it did 'anything outside of what we would think is humane'.
- Turkish defence ministry says preparations for northern Syria offensive have been completed.

Damascus

Turkey has boosted its military positions on the border with Syria after saying it is ready for a long-threatened operation that could target Kurdish forces long allied to the US.

Dozens of military vehicles were sent to the area following a US troop withdrawal from north-eastern Syria.

President Trump defended his move again on Tuesday, saying the Kurds had not been abandoned, calling them "special".

His controversial decision was widely condemned at home and abroad.

Turkey regards the Kurdish militias, which dominate the US-allied Syrian Democratic

'Return to Damascus or face abyss'

Damascus

Syria's deputy foreign minister has urged the country's Kurds to rejoin the government after the United States appeared to abandon their main ally and endorse a Turkish offensive on their autonomous north-eastern region.

Faisal Mekdad said the Syrian Kurds should re-join Damascus or be "plunged into the abyss" just hours after the Turkish military said that plans were prepared for an offensive.

His comments, published in pro-government daily Al Watan

on Tuesday, are the first since President Donald Trump's abrupt decision to stand aside along Syria's north-eastern border with Turkey.

On Tuesday evening, Turkey's parliament voted to extend by another year a mandate that allows the government to order cross-border military offensives in Iraq and Syria when faced with security threats.

In a show of hands, legislators approved the motion as Turkey says it is ready to carry out a new incursion into Syria.

Turkey has renewed the mandate - which has allowed the

country to battle Kurdish rebels, Islamic State group militants and other groups that Turkey views as terrorists in Iraq and Syria - every year since 2014.

The Syrian Kurds have reacted angrily to the US move and fear that the Turkish offensive will undermine the hard-fought autonomy they gained since 2011 by battling ISIS back from the territory they call Rojava.

Ankara sees the People's Protection Units (YPG) as the Syrian offshoot of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), a group which has waged a decades-long insurgency in Turkey.

Forces (SDF), as terrorists, and the US pullout was seen as paving

the way for an offensive. Convoys of trucks with armed

personnel carriers and tanks were seen heading

to the Turkish border town of Akcakale on Tuesday night. Images of buses carrying personnel were shown by state news agency Anadolu.

Mr Trump said his pullout - described as a "stab in the back" by Kurdish forces who helped defeat Islamic State (IS) in Syria - affected "only 50 soldiers" of some 1,000 US troops in the country.

In a series of tweets, Mr Trump softened his tone, praising Turkey as a trade partner and Nato ally, hours after saying he would "destroy and obliterate" its economy if the country went "off limits".

Turkey said Tuesday it was ready for an offensive into northern Syria, while President Donald Trump insisted the United States had not abandoned its Kurdish allies who would be targeted in the assault.

Trump has blown hot and cold since a surprise announcement on Sunday that Washington was pulling back 50 to 100 "special operators" from Syria's northern frontier.