

Federer squeaks past Goffin

Roger Federer says fans inspired him to reach Shanghai Masters quarter-finals | P12

OPED 6 Sheikha Alyazia's 'mishmash' of ancient and modern

THE DAILY **tribune**



Scarlett Johansson's love life is 'happy' and 'fulfilled'

10 CELEBS

WORLD 5 Iga Tokarczuk, Peter Handke win Nobel Literature prizes

EU removes Switzerland, UAE from tax-haven list

Luxembourg

The EU removed Switzerland and the United Arab Emirates from its list of tax havens yesterday, giving two global hubs for multinational tax schemes the all clear.

Switzerland had approved a tax reform in October 2018, but its entry into force had been delayed due to a referendum.

The United Arab Emirates, which includes Dubai, was also given a clean bill of health, lifted out directly from the blacklist after rushing through reforms.

The move leaves only nine countries or territories considered to be uncooperative on the list: American Samoa, Belize, Fiji, Guam, Oman, Samoa, Trinidad and Tobago, the United States Virgin Islands and Vanuatu.

e-customs clearance for all export operations

TDT | Manama

Director of Sea Ports Customs, Major Abdullah Subah Al Dosari announced yesterday the adoption of e-customs clearance system for all export operations from the beginning of the current month.

The decision was part of the outcomes of the Government Forum 2019 to enhance the efficiency of government procedures.

The move also meets the goals of the Customs Affairs Strategy 2017-2020 to promote the role of the private sector in development and investment.

Customs Service Centre at Khalifa bin Salman Port operates from 7:30 am to 6:00 pm.



03 Gone in 48.14 secs

04 'Government forum' confidence booster: iGA

08 Bahrain improves competitiveness

210 fils (includes VAT)



Trump confirms Al-Qaeda bombmaker killed two years ago

● Trump's statement provided no details on the operation

● It did not say why Trump is confirming al-Asiri's death now

Washington

President Donald Trump confirmed yesterday that master al-Qaeda bombmaker Ibrahim al-Asiri was killed two years ago

in a US counter-terrorism operation in Yemen.

Asiri, a Saudi national, was reputed to have made the so-called underwear bomb used in a failed attempt to bring down a US airliner on Christmas Day in 2009.

"The United States will continue to hunt down terrorists like al-Asiri until they no longer pose a threat to our great Nation," Trump said in a statement.

It did not say why Trump is confirming al-Asiri's death now. Asiri's death had been reported by US defense and other



Yemen-based Saudi al-Qaeda expert Ibrahim Hassan al-Asiri

sources in August 2018, but this was the first official confirmation of his death.

Trump's statement provided no details on the operation in which he was killed.

Asiri's activities kept airlines on tenterhooks for years, at times forcing suspensions of trans-Atlantic flights.

In the Christmas Day bombing, a Nigerian man attempted to detonate explosives concealed in his underwear on a Northwest Airlines flight from Amsterdam to Detroit.

When the explosives failed

to detonate properly, the passenger, 23-year-old Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, was tackled and restrained by another passenger.

Asiri was also linked to a disrupted plot in which bombs hidden in printer cartridges were placed on cargo planes in 2012.

"He also built an explosive device intended to be used against a passenger aircraft in 2012, and the device used in the attempted assassination of the former crown prince of Saudi Arabia," Trump said in his statement.

Kurds battle Turkish invasion

Thousands flee warzone as Turkey continues to pound Kurdish controlled areas

Agencies | Qamishli, Syria

Syria's Kurds battled to hold off a Turkish invasion yesterday after air strikes and shelling launched a long-threatened operation that could reshape the country and trigger a humanitarian crisis.

Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the UAE as well as senior members of US President Donald Trump's own Republican Party condemned him for making way for the incursion and abandoning Syrian Kurds.

Bahraini viewed the aggression as "a violation of the rules of international law and an attack on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria."

Saudi Arabia said the attack is as a blatant violation of the unity, independence and sovereignty of the Syrian territories.

US President Donald Trump tried to justify the de facto green light he gifted his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan for an assault seen as a blatant betrayal of Washington's erstwhile Kurdish allies.

Syrian Kurdish forces lost 11,000 personnel and played a



Syrian women carry what belongings they can as they flee on foot. - AFP

key role in the years-long battle to eliminate the "caliphate" the Islamic State group had set up in the region.

In scenes all too familiar since the start of Syria's war more than eight years ago, thousands of civilians were seen fleeing their homes yesterday, in vehicles or on foot with their belongings on their backs.

The broad offensive -- which Erdogan dubbed "Operation Peace Spring" -- drew international outrage and warnings, including from within Trump's own camp, and will be discussed in an emergency meeting of the UN Security Council.

After launching the assault with air strikes and intense artillery fire, the Turkish military and its Syrian proxies crossed the border into Kurdish-controlled areas.

The Kurdish-led authority in northern Syria said a prison

Russia calls for dialogue

Russia called yesterday for the start of dialogue between the Syrian and Turkish governments, according to an announcement made by the Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, reported by RIA.

struck by Turkish shelling holds "the most dangerous criminals from more than 60 nationalities" and Turkey's attacks on its prisons risked "a catastrophe".

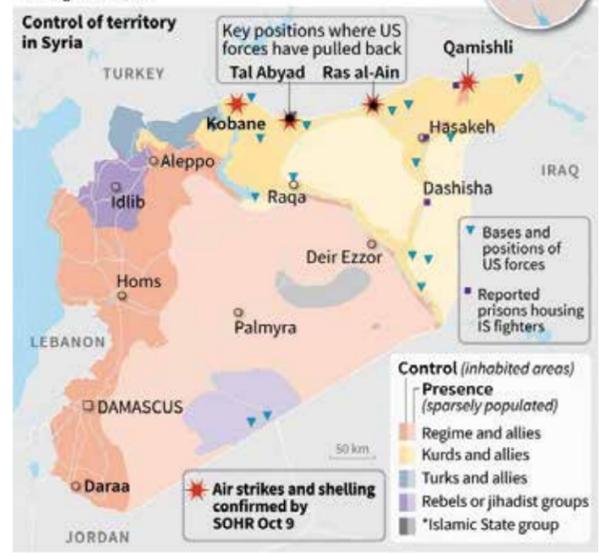
Turkey says 109 killed

Turkish forces have killed more than 100 in an assault on Kurdish forces, Turkey's president said yesterday.

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

Turkish assault in Syria

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced the start of the attack on Twitter and soon after jets and artillery targeted Kurdish positions along the full width of the border, sending thousands of civilians fleeing their homes



India 'deeply concerned'

New Delhi

India yesterday called upon Turkey to exercise restraint and respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria.

"We urge the peaceful settlement of all issues through dialogue and discussion," said India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in a statement.

The Ministry also mentioned "the military offensive" by Turkey. "We are deeply concerned at the unilateral military offensive by Turkey in north-east Syria. Turkey's actions can undermine stability in the region and the fight against terrorism. Its action also has the potential for causing humanitarian and civilian distress," read another comment by MEA.

Hotspot

Tourists rail against Hanoi 'train street' ban

Hanoi

Selfie-snapping tourists railed against the closure of Hanoi's 'train street' yesterday after police blocked off the Instagram-famous tracks for safety reasons.

The narrow railway corridor in central Hanoi has become a hotspot among visitors seeking the perfect holiday snap on the tracks -- often dodging trains that

rumble through daily.

But Hanoi authorities said this week they would block people from the tracks to avoid accidents, and police on Thursday erected barricades to keep out disappointed visitors.

"I'm very frustrated because today I can't go in and take a picture," Malaysian tourist Mustaza bin Mustapha said, vowing to come back later.



The narrow railway corridor in central Hanoi had become a hotspot among visitors

Dozens of other tourists were turned away, though some managed to get onto still-open sections of the railway, moving out of the way as an afternoon train chugged past.

Built by former colonial rulers, the railway once shipped goods and people across France's former Indochina colony and remains in use today by communist Vietnam's state-run railway company.