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Afrin city center surrounded

‘Critically important areas have been seized’ during Operation Olive Branch, says Turkish army



Anadolu Agency Photo

ANKARA - Afrin city center in northwestern Syria has been surrounded since Monday as part of Turkey-led Operation Olive Branch, Turkish Armed Forces said Tuesday. In a written statement, the Turkish General Staff said the center of Afrin has been surrounded since March 12 and “critically important areas” have been seized as a result of the ongoing operations in the region. A total of 3,393 terrorists have been “neutralized” since

the start of the operation, the army said in another statement on Tuesday. Turkish authorities often use the word “neutralized” in their statements to imply the terrorists in question either surrendered or were killed or captured. Only terrorists and shelters, gun emplacements, weapons, tools and equipment belonging to them have been targeted during the operation, which has been “successfully” continuing, the statement said. **MORE DETAILS**



Parliament ratifies bill on electoral alliances

By Muhammet Emin Avundukluoglu

ANKARA - The Turkish parliament has ratified Tuesday a bill which paves the way for electoral alliances among political parties. After a 20 hours of deliberation, lawmakers approved the 26-article bill that sets up the framework for forging electoral alliances in the country. The bill, submitted by the ruling Justice and Development (AK) Party and the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) on Feb. 21, states a political party can back another during elections. It bears the signatures of Prime Minister Binali Yildirim and MHP

leader Devlet Bahçeli. The bill makes the most significant changes with regards to threshold rules. In general elections, a political party must receive 10 percent of the votes nationwide for any of its candidates to win a seat in parliament. Now, only the alliance needs to pass the 10-percent threshold in order for the parties to claim seats in parliament.

Ballots will bear the name of the alliance juxtaposed to that of the candidates whose parties have decided to proceed with forging an alliance. The parties that decide on making an alliance should submit an... **MORE DETAILS**

‘Results achieved’ by cooperating with Russia



By Meltem Bulur

ANKARA - Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu on Tuesday said meetings against Daesh that gathered a coalition of 65 countries were futile. “We achieve results with our cooperation with Russia,” Cavusoglu said in a speech on Turkish foreign policy at Moscow State Institute

of International Relations (MGIMO). Cavusoglu said: “Our cooperation with Russia started in Aleppo and then we added Iran to this cooperation. Whatever we agreed on, we applied [...] Therefore, no one should be disturbed by this. On the contrary, they should support this.” “We meet and meet [with

the coalition] but there is no result. There is a coalition against Daesh with 65 countries in it. Sixty-five countries cannot fight Daesh and some of our allies in the coalition appeal to another terrorist organization,” Cavusoglu said. “This is essentially an indication of the insincerity and uncertainty of the global system. Sixty-five... **MORE DETAILS**



Anadolu Agency Photo

Turkey plan to buy S-400 ‘national decision’

By Serife Cetin

BRUSSELS - NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg has said Turkish plan to buy Russia's S-400 air defense missile system reflects the country's “national decision”. In an interview with Anadolu Agency, Stoltenberg said: “It is a national decision by each and every ally, including Turkey, what kind of military capability they would like to invest in. “This is a national

Turkish decision. What is important for NATO is the interoperability, meaning that different systems can work together. “There has been no request [to] integrate the S-400 into a joint NATO system. It goes without saying that integrating such a system would be difficult.” Last December, Turkey announced it had concluded an agreement with Russia for the purchase of two S-400 systems by early 2020. The S-400 system... **MORE DETAILS**



Anadolu Agency Photo

910 children killed in Syria last year

At least 961 children were recruited, used in the conflict in 2017, nearly triple the number in 2015, UN says