

FAILED TURKEY COUP STRANGE TALES

From a mysterious new moustache to suggestions that genies helped the coup plotters, here are some of the stranger stories emerging after Turkey's botched military putsch.

HOW TO STOP A TANK
Civilians played a crucial role in defeating the coup. Online searches for "How to stop a tank" skyrocketed on the night of the coup on July 15, according to Google Trends, especially in the cities of Konya, Kayseri, Istanbul and Ankara. Istanbul restaurant owner Mehmet Suku Kintas and chef Danyal Simsek found an unusual but effective method for halting the tanks: stuffing clothes into their exhaust pipes, according to media reports. Soon after they heard about the coup attempt, the pair took their car and blocked tanks heading for the city's main international Ataturk airport. Acting on a tip-off from a repairman there, they managed to stop about 10 tanks by blocking their exhaust pipes and filters, the Hurriyet newspaper reported.

HYPNOTISING WITH GENIES
Ankara Mayor Melih Gokcek, in an interview with CNN-Turk television, claimed that alleged coup mastermind Fethullah Gulen was hypnotising his followers using "an interesting method". He said that Gulen, a reclusive US-based cleric, was "taking hold of people" through genies. "It's possible," Gokcek said. "He has such a capability."

COUP PLOTTER IN DRAG
Coup plotters who attacked the hotel where Erdogan was staying on the night of the putsch were forced to take desperate measures as they went on the run for days afterwards. Some of them ate leaves from vineyards to survive as they fled the scene of the attack in the western seaside resort of Marmaris, while one of them stole women's clothes from a farm house to wear in disguise, reports said. Another was caught in the nearby town of Ula while trying to hitchhike, dressed as a holidaymaker in shorts and a shirt.

LOYALTY BY MOUSTACHE?
Turkey's previously clean-shaven spy chief Hakan Fidan -- under pressure for intelligence failures -- has come out with a different image since the coup bid. At a recent meeting with Erdogan, Fidan was suddenly seen with a new moustache in what some saw as an expression of loyalty to the similarly moustachioed president.

SMARTPHONE ROCKETS TO FAME
In the midst of the coup, Erdogan's first messages to the public came through the rather untraditional medium of a FaceTime video call to a reporter's mobile phone. CNN-Turk's Ankara correspondent Hande Firat, who took the call, has since been fending off lucrative offers for her now globally famous smartphone -- including from a Saudi businessman who said he'd pay \$250,000 for it. SOURCE: AFP



Iraqi women and children who fled the towns of al-Shirqat and Qayyarah during reported fighting between Iraqi government forces and jihadists of the Islamic State (IS) group, are transferred to a camp for displaced people on Wednesday. PHOTO: REUTERS

DEMOCRATIC PARTY CONVENTION KEY QUOTES FROM DAY 3

"I can say with confidence there has never been a man or a woman -- not me, not Bill, nobody -- more qualified than Hillary Clinton to serve as president of the United States of America."

"Our strength, our greatness does not depend on Donald Trump. In fact, it doesn't depend on any one person, and that in the end may be the biggest difference in this election -- the meaning of our democracy."

President Barack Obama

"He's (Trump) trying to tell us he cares about the middle class? Give me a break! That's a bunch of malarkey! This guy doesn't have a clue about the middle class -- not a clue. (...) He has no clue about what makes America great. Actually, he has no clue, period."

Vice President Joe Biden

"Folks, you cannot believe one word that comes out of Donald Trump's mouth. Not one word! (...) Our nation, it is just too great to put it in the hands of a slick-talking, empty-promising, self-promoting, one-man wrecking crew."

Tim Kaine, Clinton's vice presidential running mate

"Trump says he wants to run the nation like he's running his business? God help us. I'm a New Yorker, and I know a con when I see one. (...) We must unite around the candidate who can defeat a dangerous demagogue."

former New York mayor Michael Bloomberg

"He (Trump) asked the Russians to interfere in American politics. Think about that. (...) As someone who was responsible for protecting our nation from cyber attacks, it is inconceivable to me that any presidential candidate would be that irresponsible."

Ex CIA director and secretary of defense Leon Panetta



Al-Nusra splits from Qaeda

Russia announces aid ops, humanitarian corridor in Aleppo

The head of Al-Nusra Front in Syria said his jihadist group was breaking ties with al-Qaeda and changing its name, in remarks broadcasted yesterday by Al-Jazeera.

Abu Mohamad al-Jolani said Al-Nusra would change its name to Jabhat Fateh al-Sham (Conquest of Syria in Arabic) and expressed his gratitude to the "commanders of al-Qaeda for having understood the need to break ties".

The announcement came a week after US Secretary of State John Kerry and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said they had agreed on "concrete steps" to save a failing Syria truce and tackle jihadist groups like al-Nusra and the Islamic State group.

Al-Qaeda prepared the ground for the announcement earlier yesterday in an online message urging the affiliate to sever ties to "protects the jihad of the Syrian people".

Meanwhile, Russia yesterday announced a "large-scale" aid operation

to allow civilians and fighters to flee besieged Aleppo.

Government forces have surrounded rebel-held districts in eastern Aleppo since July 17, sparking fears for at least 200,000 people who live there.

SYRIA WAR
Assad offers amnesty for rebels who lay down arms

France, UK call for end to 'disastrous' siege

Regime forces "widely using" cluster bombs: HRW

Residents have reported food shortages and spiralling prices in rebel districts since regime forces cut off the opposition's main supply route into the northern city earlier this month.

Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu said three humanitarian corridors were being opened "to aid civilians held hostage by terrorists and for fighters wishing to lay down their arms".

He told Russian news agencies that a fourth corridor would be opened to the north of Aleppo for rebels to flee with their weapons.

Medical and food assistance would be provided along the routes for civilians and fighters who lay down their weapons, Shoigu said, adding the operation would get underway later yesterday.

President Bashar al-Assad, meanwhile, issued a decree offering an amnesty to rebels who surrender over the next three months.

As Russia made the announcement, France and Britain renewed demands for an end to the regime's "disastrous" siege of eastern Aleppo.

Meanwhile, Human Rights Watch yesterday said the Russian-backed Syrian government's air campaign against rebels is widely using cluster munitions. The rights group said it had documented 47 cluster munitions attacks, which killed or wounded dozens of civilians in opposition-controlled territory in the last two months.

France names 2nd church attacker as anger grows

France yesterday identified the second jihadist involved in the brutal killing of an elderly priest, as calls mounted for the prime minister and interior minister to resign after the latest terror attack.

Prosecutors named the assailant as 19-year-old Abdel Malik Petitjean, who was listed in June on France's "Fiche S" system of people posing a potential threat to national security after he tried to reach Syria from Turkey.

Petitjean, whose face was disfigured when he was shot dead by police, had been harder to identify than his accomplice Adel Kermiche, also 19. Investigators confirmed Petitjean's identity after a DNA match with his mother.

The two jihadists pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group in a video made before they stormed a church in the Normandy town of Saint-Etienne-du-Rouvray on Tuesday and slit the throat of 86-year-old priest Jacques Hamel at the altar.

President Hollande yesterday confirmed plans to create a National Guard drawn from existing reserves, after the government previously urged "patriots" to sign up to become reservists.

The government has faced tough questions since it emerged that both church attackers had been on the radar of intelligence services and had tried to go to Syria.

Sparking particular ire was the revelation that Kermiche had been released from prison while awaiting trial on terror charges after his second attempt to travel to Syria. He was fitted with an electronic tag -- allowing him out of the house on weekday mornings -- despite calls from the prosecutor for him not to be released.

Petitjean, from France's eastern Savoie region, had several part-time sales jobs and was described by his incredulous mother as "gentle", insisting he "was not involved at all".

Others who knew him were equally shocked, describing him as normal and showing no signs of radicalisation.

WAVE OF TERROR ATTACKS IN GERMANY

Merkel 'firmly' rejects refugee policy change

German Chancellor Angela Merkel yesterday rebuffed calls to reverse her welcoming stance toward refugees after a series of brutal attacks in the country.

Merkel, who interrupted her summer holiday to face the media in Berlin, said the four assaults within a week were "shocking, oppressive and depressing" but not a sign that authorities had lost control.

The German leader said the assailants "wanted to undermine our sense of community, our openness and our willingness to help people in need".

"We firmly reject this," she said at a wide-ranging news conference.

Merkel repeated her rallying cry from last year when she opened the borders to people fleeing war and persecution, many from Syria, which brought nearly 1.1 million migrants and refugees to Germany in 2015.

"I am still convinced today that 'we can do it' -- it is our historic duty and this is a historic challenge in times of globalisation," she said.

"We have already achieved very, very much in the last 11 months."

Merkel was speaking after an axe rampage, a shooting spree, a knife attack and a suicide bombing stunned Germany, leaving 13 people dead, including three assailants, and dozens wounded.

Three of the four attackers were asylum seekers, and two of the assaults were claimed by the Islamic State group.

Merkel said that she would not allow jihadists, following a series of deadly attacks in France, Belgium, Turkey and the US state of Florida, to keep her government from being guided by reason and compassion.

"Despite the great unease these events inspire, fear can't be the guide for political decisions," she said.

"It is my deep conviction that we cannot let our way of life be destroyed."

While the German political class has largely called for calm, opposition parties and rebels from Merkel's own conservative bloc have accused her of exposing the country to unacceptable risks without stricter controls on people let in.

The German attacks came with two state elections looming in September, in Berlin and in Merkel's fiefdom of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania.



Lack of exercise takes 5 million lives a year

A study of one million people has found that physical inactivity costs the global economy \$67.5 billion a year in healthcare and productivity losses, but an hour a day of exercise could eliminate most of that.

Sedentary lifestyles are linked to increased risks of heart disease, diabetes and cancer, researchers found, but activity - such as brisk walking - could counter the higher likelihood of early death linked with sitting for eight or more hours a day.

Such inactivity is estimated to cause more than 5 million deaths a year - almost as many as smoking, which the World Health Organization (WHO) says kills 6 million a year.

People who sat for eight hours a day but were otherwise active had a lower risk of premature death than people who spent fewer hours sitting but were also less active, suggesting that exercise is particularly important, no matter how many hours a day are spent sitting.

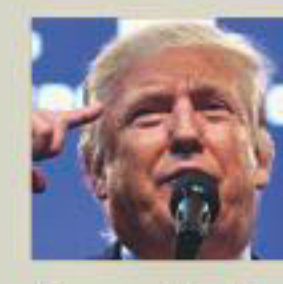


A woman holds a placard which reads "Clemency for Merry Utami" in Cilacap, Central Java, Indonesia, yesterday. Indonesia yesterday rejected appeals from the UN and EU to halt the execution of 14 drug convicts including foreigners, as speculation mounted they could face the firing squad in a matter of hours. PHOTO: REUTERS



POPE ON TERRORISM

"Let's recognise it. The world is in a state of war. ... Not a war of religion. There is a war of interests. There is a war for money. There is a war for natural resources. There is a war for domination of peoples. This is the war. All religions want peace. Others want war. Do you understand?"



"I wouldn't go to France... France is no longer France" Donald Trump



"France will always be France, because France will never yield. ... When you lower your standards, you are no longer what you are. That's something that may happen to others, on the other side of the Atlantic" Replies Hollande

Youth Campaign for Earthquake Preparedness

#Shakelt

Do you want to make a big difference?

Calling all the youth across Bangladesh to form teams and compete in the Bangladesh's first earthquake innovation challenge. The Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR) and United Nations Development Programme in Bangladesh (UNDP) is presenting this exciting opportunity for young talents interested in earthquake preparedness.

Form your team and compete for one of the two exciting challenge funds where prizes are waiting for you. Compete by creating, designing, presenting a proposal for either a 'Shake It' preparedness app (Challenge Fund One) or a 'Cracks in the Campus' preparedness campaign (Challenge Fund Two).

For guidelines and information to participate, go to www.bd.undp.org/yepec or email us at yepec.bd@undp.org
Submission deadline is Monday, August 15, 2016, by 12:00am local time via yepec.bd@undp.org

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- Mr. Md. Nuruzaman** (Service Manager)
- Mr. Rajib Ratan Das** (Project Manager)
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