

# NEWS IN brief

## Two Ukraine soldiers killed in new clashes

AFP, Kiev  
Ukraine's military yesterday reported the death of two soldiers in the past day of fighting with pro-Russian insurgents in the separatist east. Military spokesman Andriy Lysenko added that 20 soldiers were wounded in clashes in the mostly Russian-speaking Lugansk region.

## Radical cleric Hamza jailed for life in US

BBC ONLINE  
Radical Muslim cleric Abu Hamza al-Masri has been sentenced to life in prison by a court in New York for supporting terrorism. He was convicted in May of multiple charges, including hostage-taking and plotting to set up a terrorism training camp in the US.

## Romney mulling 2016 presidential bid

AFP, Washington  
Two-time US presidential candidate Mitt Romney told donors Friday he is mulling another White House bid, US media reported. Romney, a Republican establishment favorite and former governor of Massachusetts, has repeatedly told reporters over the past year that he was not running for president in 2016, after losing to Barack Obama in 2012.

## ISIS kills 26 Kurdish forces

AFP, Arbil  
Militants from the Islamic State jihadist group launched a surprise attack on Kurdish forces in the Gwer area of north Iraq, killing 26, security officials said yesterday. Meanwhile, car bombs killed at least 16 people, most of them civilians, when they targeted al-Qaeda and Kurdish fighters in Syria's northern province of Aleppo, a monitor said yesterday. Most of the dead were civilians but included two Nusra fighters, he said, adding that several people were also wounded.



The tail of the AirAsia QZ8501 passenger plane lies on the deck of the Indonesian Search and Rescue ship Crest Onyx after it was recovered at sea, yesterday. The find is a major step towards locating the plane's black boxes, helping shed light on what caused it to crash into the sea.

PHOTO: AFP



# Plane tail lifted from seabed

AFP, Aboard Kri Banda Aceh  
The mangled tail of an AirAsia plane that crashed with 162 people on board was lifted out of the Java Sea yesterday, but without the crucial flight recorders, Indonesian authorities said.

The Airbus jet went missing in stormy weather on December 28 as it flew from the Indonesian city of Surabaya to the Singapore, killing all aboard.

The wreckage of the tail, which contained the black box data recorders that are essential to explaining the disaster, was found in the seabed 10 days after the crash.

The 10-metre-long (33-feet) stretch of mostly mangled metal was finally lifted on to a tugboat vessel on Saturday using giant balloons and a crane, but there was no sign of the black boxes.

"It's definite that the black boxes aren't there," S.B Supriyadi, a director with the National Search and Rescue Agency, told reporters after the tail had been inspected.

The black boxes are seen as important because they should contain the pilots' final words as well as various flight data.

However Supriyadi said the boxes were still emanating ping signals and

were believed to be buried in the seabed close to where the tail was found, about 30 metres under the surface.

Supriyadi said divers, from an elite Marines unit, would continue scouring the sea for the black boxes.

"The challenge is that these sounds are very faint. If a ship passes by, the sounds will be drowned out. So we really need calm waters," he said.

To aid the tracking of the signals, Supriyadi said the engines of the warships involved in the search operation would be turned off on Sunday.

## AIRASIA TRAGEDY

Search efforts also involving foreign naval ships continued throughout Saturday for other parts of the plane's wreckage, as well as for the bodies of the passengers and crew.

Just 48 bodies have been found so far, according to Indonesian authorities.

There was no success yesterday in finding the cabin part of the plane where most of the passengers were.

"We strongly intend to find other parts of the plane as we are confident that the victims' (bodies) are still trapped in there," Indonesian military chief Moeldoko told reporters.

All but seven of those on board were Indonesian.

The non-Indonesians were three South Koreans, one Singaporean, one Malaysian, one Briton and a Frenchman -- co-pilot Remi Plesel.

The Indonesian meteorological agency has said weather was the "triggering factor" for the crash, with ice likely damaging the engines of the Airbus A320-200.

Before take-off, the plane's pilot, Captain Iriyanto, had asked for permission to fly at a higher altitude to avoid a major storm. But the request was not approved due to other planes above him on the popular route, according to AirNav, Indonesia's air traffic control.

In his last communication, the experienced former air force pilot said he wanted to change course to avoid the storm. Then all contact was lost, about 40 minutes after take-off.

Indonesia's transport ministry also said AirAsia was flying the Surabaya-Singapore route on an unauthorised day, highlighting concerns over chaotic regulation of the nation's aviation industry.

A subsequent ministry audit found five other airlines, including national carrier Garuda, were flying dozens of routes without permits.

# Sirisena welcomes dissidents home

AFP, Colombo

New President Maithripala Sirisena invited exiled dissidents back to Sri Lanka and promised to end censorship yesterday as he began to turn the page on the authoritarian rule of his toppled predecessor.

A day after his shock victory over veteran incumbent Mahinda Rajapakse, Sirisena began assembling a cabinet to deliver his pledges to repair the war-scarred nation's diplomatic standing and implement a raft of reforms.

Sirisena, who was sworn in Friday evening after ending Rajapakse's decade-long rule, was trying to form a "national unity" cabinet that would include members from a cross section of parties, an aide said.

"He will name some ministers next week and the balance after the pope's visit," from January 13 to 15, said Sirisena's top aide Rajitha Senarathne.

He said that Sirisena has ordered the immediate lifting of censorship on dissident websites, an end to phone tapping, surveillance of journalists and politicians, and the establishment of a right to information law.

There was also an invitation to dozens of Sri Lankan journalists and other dissidents who have fled the country fearing attack from the previous administration to "come back immediately".

"From now on, you have the freedom to criticise us. We will take strong action against anyone who tries to undermine media freedom," Senarathne told reporters in Colombo.

Sirisena had promised a 100-day programme to carry out urgent political and economic reforms, including moves to cut back on the powers of the president that Rajapakse gave himself during a decade in office.

# Modi targets 'anarchist' Kejriwal

PTI, New Delhi

Kickstarting BJP's poll campaign for Delhi, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday wooed voters with a host of promises as he singled out 'anarchist' AAP leader Arvind Kejriwal for attack and asked people to punish him for 'wasting' one year.

Without naming Kejriwal or his party, Modi said at a rally here that if the AAP leader wants to be an 'anarchist' as he has claimed to be, he should go to jungles to join naxals as Delhi cannot have anarchy. Kejriwal had said about a year ago that he is an 'anarchist'.

At the rally at Ramlila Ground attended by all three new BJP chief ministers of Maharashtra, Haryana and Jharkhand, Modi sought a clear mandate for his party to ensure all-round development and create a "new" Delhi.

Delhi, which is under President's Rule, is expected to have Assembly polls next month.



# Ex-CIA chief faces felony charges

AFP, Washington

The FBI and US Justice Department prosecutors have recommended bringing felony charges against retired General David Petraeus for allegedly providing classified information to his former mistress while he was director of the CIA, The New York Times reported Friday.

The investigation stems from an affair Petraeus -- who was also commander of American forces in both Iraq and Afghanistan -- had with an Army Reserve officer who was writing his biography, the newspaper said, citing unnamed officials.

The probe focuses on whether Petraeus, who resigned in 2012 when the affair became public, gave Paula Broadwell access to his CIA email account and other highly classified information.

FBI agents discovered classified documents on her computer after he quit, according to the Times, which said that Attorney General Eric Holder must decide whether to seek an indictment that could send Petraeus to prison.

Holder was expected to decide by the end of last year whether to bring charges against Petraeus, the newspaper said.

Petraeus has said he never provided classified information to Broadwell, who was 20 years his junior and wrote a biography of the general before becoming his lover.

Petraeus is one of the most decorated and respected military officers of his generation.

# They survived hidden in a refrigerator

AFP, Paris

From the father who hid his toddler inside a supermarket refrigerator to the employee who texted tactical information to police from beneath a sink, authorities praised the quick instincts of survivors in the hostage incidents that gripped France Friday.

At the printing business northeast of Paris besieged by the brothers believed to have carried out the Charlie Hebdo massacre, one employee took refuge "under a sink in the canteen" upstairs, Paris prosecutor Francois Molins told reporters.

The employee - a 26-year-old graphic designer named Lilian, according to a source close to the investigation - was "terrified", Molin said.

But, overcoming his fear as he remained undetected, he began communicating with police outside via text message, sending them "tactical elements such as his location inside the premises," a source said.

The brothers - identified as Cherif and Said Kouachi, who had been on the run since they are believed to have slaughtered 12 people at the weekly magazine's offices in Paris on Wednesday - had been cornered there after a firefight with police which Molins said left Said with a minor neck wound.

Some 40 kilometres away, shortly before 1:00pm, a father called Ilan and his three-year-old son were at a kosher supermarket in Vincennes when Amedy Coulibaly, believed to be an ally of the Kouachi brothers, burst into the store and pulled out a Kalashnikov.

The father and son quickly hid in the supermarket's refrigeration unit, two relatives told AFP. At least three other people were with them, according to sources close to the investigation.

Ilan, in his thirties, quickly removed his jacket and wrapped his son in it to protect the toddler from the frigid temperatures. Hidden in the cold, they and the other hostages remained in the refrigerator for nearly five hours.

Meanwhile, Ilan's mother realised quickly that her son and grandson were hidden and decided not to try to contact them, even by text.

Instead she gave Ilan's mobile phone number to law enforcement, who were able to use it to track the location of the man, his son and the other hostages inside the store.

This knowledge, according to the prosecutor, may have contributed to their survival when police finally stormed the store and killed Coulibaly.



## FRENCH TERROR ATTACKS

Thousands of people march during a rally along the sea front in Nice yesterday in remembrance for the victims of an attack by armed gunmen on the offices of French satirical newspaper Charlie Hebdo. Inset, a woman pays tribute to the victims.

PHOTO: AFP



# France's most-wanted woman

AFP, Paris

A crossbow in her hands and covered head-to-toe in a black Islamic headwear and robe that leaves only her eyes visible -- that is the image now circulating of France's most-wanted woman: Hayat Boumeddiene.

The 26-year-old is the partner of Amedy Coulibaly, one of the three gunmen shot dead by police after 3 days of high drama in France.

The photo -- first published by Le Monde -- contrasts with the one French police issued in its public appeal to locate her following the bloody events of Friday, when Coulibaly was killed by police commandos after he took hostages in a Jewish supermarket in Paris.

The mugshot provided by the police shows a sleepy-eyed young woman, her face and brown hair showing, whom they had questioned in 2010 about Coulibaly.

The police notice warns that Boumeddiene, now France's most-wanted woman, is considered "armed and dangerous".

She is suspected of being Coulibaly's accomplice in the murder of a policewoman in southern Paris on Thursday, during a massive manhunt for two brothers who a day earlier massacred 12 people at the country on January 2 and couldn't arrest her due to lack of information from French authorities.

Coulibaly, 32, who claimed himself to be a ISIS member, was a longtime criminal who apparently became a radical Muslim during one of his frequent stints in prison.

Coulibaly also said he had coordinated his hostage-taking with the other two gunmen, brothers Cherif and Said Kouachi, who claimed that they belonged to al-Qaeda in Yemen.

Police also said Boumeddiene and Cherif's wife Izzana Hamyd were in close contact. Hamyd has been in custody since Wednesday. After her mother's death, Boumeddiene was put into foster care with her young siblings at six because her father, a delivery man, was unable to take care of them.

She married Coulibaly in 2009. The couple lived in a modest apartment in a poor suburb south of Paris.

Le Parisien newspaper said she lost her job as a cashier because she insisted on wearing a niqab.



Hayat Boumeddiene & Coulibaly

# Nasa offers 'space vacations'

CNN ONLINE

When packing for a vacation on Kepler 16-b, it's good to remember the sunscreen. It does, after all, have two suns.

OK, so a long weekend visiting a planet 1,200 trillion miles away, may not be a realistic prospect just yet, but that hasn't stopped scientists at NASA from dreaming.

To mark the exciting discovery of a slew of potentially distant habitable worlds by its Kepler space observatory, the U.S. space agency's Jet Propulsion Laboratory at the California Institute of Technology has created a series of posters advertising imaginary vacations to some of them.

Rendered in the retro style of

classic travel billboards of the 1920s, '30s and '40s, the posters depict these distant worlds as pleasurable destinations.

The image for Kepler 16-b -- previously compared to the fictional "Star Wars" planet of Tatooine because of its dual suns -- shows a space-suited figure basking in the light from the twin orbs overhead.

"Relax on Kepler 16-b," the poster says. "The land of two suns ... Where your shadow always has company."

Although the planet is depicted as a rocky, terrestrial world, Nasa says it could also be a gas giant like Saturn with freezing temperatures that would make it hostile to known lifeforms.

