

# NEWS IN brief

**6.9 quake triggers Japan tsunami**  
 AFP, Tokyo  
 A powerful 6.9-magnitude earthquake hit northeast Japan on Tuesday, sparking panic and triggering a tsunami including a one-metre wave that crashed ashore at the stricken Fukushima nuclear power plant. There were no immediate signs of widespread damage and only minor injuries were initially reported. A 9.0 quake in March 2011 unleashed a tsunami in Japan that left more than 18,500 people dead or missing.

**3,000 flee Myanmar clashes to China**  
 AFP, Beijing  
 At least 3,000 people have fled into China due to fighting in northern Myanmar, Beijing said yesterday, as the death toll from clashes between the military and ethnic insurgents rose to 10. Locals near the Chinese border in Myanmar's northern state of Shan said they were fleeing heavy fighting between the army and four armed ethnic groups.

**Egypt court quashes Morsi life sentence**  
 AFP, Cairo  
 An Egyptian appeals court yesterday quashed one of two life sentences handed down to Mohamed Morsi since his 2013 overthrow, in the Islamist ex-president's second appeals victory in a week. The Court of Cassation, Egypt's highest appeals court, issued the verdict, Morsi's lawyer and a judicial official told AFP. The court ordered a retrial in the case, citing many legal flaws.



Displaced people fleeing from Islamic State militants in Tahrir neighborhood, walk in Mosul, Iraq, yesterday. Inset, Refugees wait for food at the Khazir refugee camp in northern Iraq, on Monday. PHOTO: AFP, REUTERS

**India accuses Pakistan of killing troops**  
 Threatens retaliation, claims one of the soldiers beheaded  
 AFP, Srinagar  
 India said three of its soldiers were killed yesterday on the de facto border in disputed Kashmir and blamed Pakistani troops. The body of one of the dead soldiers had been "mutilated", the army said in a tweet, threatening "retribution". One army official said the Pakistani soldiers had crossed over the Line of Control that divides Kashmir to launch an attack. "This border action was like a sneak attack by Pakistan soldiers," he told AFP on condition of anonymity. Indian media reports said one of the soldiers had been beheaded, although this could not be confirmed. There was no immediate comment from Pakistan, which last week accused India of killing seven of its soldiers in cross-border fire in Kashmir. Tensions between the nuclear-armed neighbours have been running high since a September attack on an Indian base in Kashmir which killed 19 soldiers and which New Delhi blames on Pakistan-based militants. Since then there have been repeated outbreaks of cross-border firing in Kashmir, with both sides reporting deaths and injuries including civilians. Kashmir has been divided between India and Pakistan since the end of British colonial rule in 1947. Both countries claim the Himalayan territory in full and they have fought two wars over it. Several rebel groups have for decades fought Indian soldiers for independence for the region or its merger with Pakistan. The conflict has killed tens of thousands of people, mostly civilians.

## 'NATO AGGRESSION' ON MOSCOW'S DOORSTEPS Russia moves missiles closer to Europe

AGENCIES  
 Russian President Vladimir Putin has said his country will move missiles closer to Europe over "concern" about Nato expansion. Moscow will deploy S-400 surface-to-air missiles and nuclear-capable Iskander missiles in the exclave of Kaliningrad, a pro-Kremlin lawmaker told the state-owned RIA news agency. "Why are we reacting to Nato expansion so emotionally? We are concerned by Nato's decision making," Putin said in an interview due to be broadcast later on Monday. "What should we do? We have, therefore, to take countermeasures, which means to target with our missile systems the facilities, that, in our opinion, start posing a threat to us," he added. Speaking to a Nato parliamentary meeting in Istanbul, Nato's Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said: "Everything Nato does is defensive, proportionate and fully in line with our international commitments. Before Russia's aggressive actions in Ukraine, Nato had no plans to send troops to the Eastern part of our alliance." Up to 300,000 Nato troops were put on alert earlier this month. In October, Nato was preparing to station 4,000 troops on the Russian border with the Baltic states in its biggest military build-up since the Cold War.

## US destroys last Mosul bridge Coalition says move is to isolate IS; 68,000 flee fighting

AFP, Mosul  
 The US-led coalition bombed a key bridge in Mosul yesterday to isolate jihadists whose stiff resistance in the east of the city is threatening to bog down Iraqi forces. The number of civilians displaced since last month's start of the offensive against Mosul -- the Islamic State group's last stronghold in Iraq -- rose to 68,000, but most of the city's population remained trapped. A coalition aircraft carried out an air strike on Mosul's "third bridge", leaving a British-era bridge in the centre as the last crossing of the Tigris River running through the city. Coalition spokesman Colonel John Dorrian said IS fighters has been using the bridges to re-supply the eastern side of the city, "essentially rotating their forces". "We're not going to let that happen," he told AFP. A member of the provincial council for Nineveh, of which Mosul is the

capital, said the central bridge was the last remaining after four others over the Tigris had been destroyed. IS has put up fierce resistance to defend Mosul, the city where its leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi proclaimed a "caliphate" in June 2014. Over five weeks, Iraqi forces advancing on several fronts have made considerable progress in the advance, but the fighting in Mosul itself has been tough. The UN had initially predicted that 200,000 civilians could be forced from their homes in the first few weeks of the offensive, Iraq's biggest military operation in years.

Meanwhile in Syria, Syrian pro-government forces pushed deeper into rebel-held eastern Aleppo yesterday, forcing civilians to flee as the regime pressed an assault to recapture the entire city. Military aircraft dropped leaflets over east Aleppo, urging rebels to distribute food to civilians, leave the area and allow residents to do so too. The regime pounded the east of the city with air strikes and barrel bombs as ground troops advanced in the key eastern neighbourhood of Masaken Hanano, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said. A week into the latest round of fighting for the city, the regime controls around a third of the district, the Observatory said. At least 143 civilians, including 19 children, have been killed in the city's east since the latest assault began on November 15, according to the Britain-based monitor. Another 16 civilians, including 10 children, have been killed in rebel fire on western Aleppo, it said.

**WAR IN IRAQ AND SYRIA**  
 Civilians flee as regime advances in rebel-held Aleppo  
 Army accuses rebels of hoarding food, using civilians as human shields

**Trump 'won't push Clinton investigation'**  
 AFP, Washington  
 President-elect Donald Trump will not push for further investigation of Hillary Clinton related to her private email use and the Clinton Foundation, a close adviser said Tuesday, breaking with a key campaign theme. Trump triggered consternation -- and widespread condemnation -- when he made an unprecedented campaign threat to jail his Democratic rival should he win the White House. The Republican made Clinton's email scandal and allegations of pay-to-play at her family foundation a core theme of his campaign, railing against her "crimes" and leading fired-up supporters in chants of "Lock her Up!" But since his election he has deflected questioning on the subject, saying in an interview he would think about it, but had other priorities as incoming head of state. "I think when the president-elect... tells you before he's even inaugurated that he doesn't wish to pursue these charges, it sends a very strong message, tone, and content" to fellow Republicans, Trump aide Kellyanne Conway said in an interview on MSNBC. Clinton has attributed her loss to the bombshell decision by FBI director James Comey to re-open the probe into her use of a private email server, less than two weeks before the vote. Comey's second letter, sent three days before the election, stated that the FBI had not changed its July recommendation not to charge Clinton.

## Trump 'open' to climate pact

Says he would 'love' to broker peace between Palestinians, Israel  
 AGENCIES  
 US President-elect Donald Trump yesterday said he has an open mind about pulling out of world climate accords and admitted global warming may be in some way linked to human activity. "I think there is some connectivity. Some, something. It depends on how much," he told a panel of New York Times journalists. Asked whether he would make good on his threat to pull the United States out of UN climate accords, he said: "I'm looking at it very closely. I have an open mind to it." Trump also said he would "love" to clinch a deal to end the intractable conflict between Israel and the Palestinians despite the checkered history of US attempts to broker a Middle East peace. "I would love to be the one who made peace with Israel and the Palestinians, that would be such a great achievement," Trump said in the NYT interview. A New York Times reporter tweeted that Trump also suggested that his son-in-law Jared Kushner could help broker a peace deal. He also disavowed extremist alt-right movement in the NYT interview. However he defended his choice of Steve Bannon as chief strategist pushing back against suggestions that he is a far-right extremist. On Monday, Trump outlined plans for his first day in office, including withdrawing from a major trade accord and investigating abuses of work visa programs. Trump, who has not held a news conference since his election, issued a video on Monday evening outlining some of his plans for his first day in office, including formally declaring his intent to withdraw from the Trans-



**US IN TRANSITION**  
 Disavows alt-rights  
 Eendorses Farage as UK envoy; London rejects  
 Vows to withdraw from TPP trade deal, probe abuses of work visa programme  
 Keeps world in waiting on cabinet picks

attorney general, US Senator Jeff Sessions, a longtime critic of the program. Trump also returned to Twitter on Monday night, saying "many people" would like to see Brexit campaigner Nigel Farage as British ambassador to the United States. "He would do a great job!" But the UK government strongly rejected the suggestion. Pacific Partnership, or TPP, trade deal, which he called "a potential disaster for our country." He said he would replace the accord with bilaterally negotiated trade deals that would "bring jobs and industry back onto American shores." He promised to direct the Labor Department to investigate abuses of visa programs for immigrant workers. The main US visa program for technology workers could face tough scrutiny under Trump and his proposed

He announced no further appointments, keeping candidates and the public guessing about the shape of the administration that will take office on Jan 20. Meanwhile, the US has witnessed more than 700 incidents of hateful harassment since Donald Trump's election amid fears anti-Muslim hate crimes are reaching post-9/11 levels. There were 257 Anti-Islamic-motivated crimes reported in 2015, compared to 296 in 2001, according to



Protesters show their painted hands during a demonstration against a bill that could overturn men's convictions for child-sex assault if they marry victims in front of the Turkish Parliament in Ankara, Turkey, yesterday. PHOTO: AFP, REUTERS

## POST-COUP PURGE IN TURKEY 15,000 more fired, 375 NGOs closed Controversial child sex bill withdrawn

AFP, Ankara  
 Turkey yesterday dismissed over 15,000 state employees and ordered the closure of 375 associations within the state of emergency imposed after the July failed coup, in a purge that shows no sign of slowing. More than 100,000 people have already been suspended or sacked so far in a crackdown on those alleged to have links to coup-plotters while dozens of media outlets have been shut down. In the latest government decree published on Tuesday, 7,586 personnel working in the police, including police chiefs and commissioners, were dismissed. Meanwhile 1,956 soldiers and personnel in the air force and navy were sacked while another 403 were removed from the gendarmerie, which looks after domestic security. Thousands more were dismissed in government ministries and state institutions, including nearly 3,000 officials in the interior ministry and related institutions. In total, 15,726 people have been dismissed under the latest decrees. The decrees, published in the latest issue of the official gazette, also ordered the closure of 375 associations across the country working on issues ranging from rights to culture to women. Critics have claimed that the crackdown goes well beyond the suspected coup plotters and targets anyone who has dared show opposition to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Meanwhile, the Turkish government yesterday withdrew a controversial bill that could overturn men's convictions for child-sex assault, after an angry public backlash that saw thousands take to the streets. Critics had said the bill -- which would allow the release from jail of sex assault convicts if they marry their victims -- would legitimise rape of minors.

## MIGRANT TRAGEDY 8 more die in Med sea

AFP, Rome  
 At least eight people died and an unknown number were missing as a new series of Mediterranean boat dramas left Italy on the verge of a record number of migrant arrivals. Confirming the latest fatalities in what is already a record year for migrant deaths in the Mediterranean, Italy's coastguard told AFP that 1,400 people had been saved in 12 separate operations between Monday evening and Tuesday afternoon. The rescues will take the number of migrants to have arrived in Italy by sea this year to almost 170,000, a whisker short of the previous record set in 2014. Unusually, the survivors included "many families" from Syria, according to MOAS, as well as people from the Palestinian territories, Lebanon and Sudan. The latest victims will add to a total of 4,655 migrants confirmed to have died or disappeared in the Mediterranean so far this year, according to counts by IOM and UNHCR.

## Trump's grandfather was banished from Germany

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK  
 Germany to the US in 1885. "But he did so without formally deregistering and before doing his military service. That's why the authorities denied him repatriation in 1905." Trump left Germany at the age of 16, with few possessions, to find prosperity in the gold rush. He started working as a barber in the US, before going on to run a restaurant, bar and allegedly even a brothel -- enterprises that made him wealthy. He returned to the village of Kallstadt with his fortune in 1901 and met his future wife Elisabeth Christ. The two married and moved to New York, but returned to Kallstadt two years later, after Elisabeth said she was homesick. The decree orders "American citizen and pensioner Friedrich Trump" to leave the area "at the very latest on 1 May [...] or else expect to be deported". Trump wrote to the Bavarian Prince Luitpold begging the "well-loved, noble, wise and just" leader not to deport him. Yet Luitpold rejected the "most subservient request" and the couple left Germany for New York with their daughter. Elizabeth was three months pregnant with the future President's father, Fred. The royal order telling Trump's grandfather to leave was written on an "unspectacular piece of paper", Bild reported, but it "changed world history".