

# NEWSIN brief

## Man with knife held at Eiffel Tower

French police arrested an intruder brandishing a knife at the Eiffel Tower on Saturday night which led to the monument to be evacuated, sources said. The man, who is aged around 19 and has a history of psychological problems, forced his way past security guards and then shouted "Allahu Akbar" ("God is Greatest"), a legal source told AFP. Armed soldiers who are permanently stationed at the Eiffel Tower ordered him to drop his weapon, which he did without attacking anyone, the source said.

## Iran soldier opens fire on base, killing 4

At least four soldiers were killed and eight injured when one of their colleagues opened fire on a military air base in southern Tehran yesterday, the Iranian military said in a statement. The incident was "probably related to psychological problems of the soldier who suddenly started firing on his comrades," the statement said.

## Tourists detained in Berlin for Nazi salute

Two Chinese tourists were detained in Berlin for making the straight-armed Hitler salute for photos in front of the Reichstag parliament building, a police spokeswoman said yesterday. The holidaymakers were spotted by officers on a routine patrol Saturday snapping smartphone pictures of each other posing with the banned gesture outside the historic landmark in the heart of the German capital. The pair were questioned at a local police station and released after paying 500 euros (\$589) bail each.

# Global pressure mounts

## US says China must ensure sanctions implemented as Tillerson pushes Asian nations on Pyongyang

AGENCIES  
The United States and China piled pressure on North Korea yesterday to abandon its nuclear missile programme after the UN Security Council approved tough sanctions which could cost Pyongyang \$1 billion a year.

One day after Council members voted unanimously for a partial ban on exports aimed at slashing Pyongyang's foreign revenue by a third, top diplomats from the key powers in the dispute met in Manila.

US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said he was encouraged by the vote, but officials warned that Washington would closely watch China -- North Korea's biggest trade partner -- to ensure sanctions are enforced.

China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi met his North Korean counterpart Ri Hong-Yo before a major regional security forum being hosted by the 10-nation Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

He urged the North to halt its nuclear and ballistic missile tests.

"It will help the DPRK to make the right and smart decision," Wang told reporters, speaking through a translator, after talks with Ri -- referring to the sanctions and to Ri's presence in Manila.

Pyongyang's top envoy has so far avoided the media in

Manila, reported AFP.  
But in a characteristically fiery editorial before the latest sanctions were approved, the North's ruling party newspaper Rodong Sinmun warned against US aggression.

"The day the US dares tease our nation with a nuclear rod and sanctions, the mainland US will be catapulted into an unimaginable sea of fire," it said.

Tillerson also met Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and was to see Wang later yesterday, seeking to intensify Kim Jong-Un's diplomatic isolation and reduce the risk of renewed conflict.

"It was a good outcome," Tillerson said of the UN vote, before a meeting with South Korean Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-Wha.

Senior US envoy Susan Thornton said Washington was "still going to be watchful" on the implementation of sanctions, cautioning that previous votes had been followed

by China "slipping back".  
But she added China's support for the UN resolution "shows that they realise that this is a huge problem that they need to take on".

A Japanese foreign ministry spokesman yesterday welcomed tougher UN sanctions on North Korea over its missile tests and said it was time to exert more "effective pressure" on Pyongyang rather than to pursue dialogue, reported Reuters.

### NORTH KOREA TENSIONS



# Beijing gets Asean blow

## Urges non-militarisation in South China Sea

REUTERS, Manila  
Southeast Asian foreign ministers ended an impasse yesterday over how to address disputes with China in the South China Sea, issuing a communique that called for militarisation to be avoided and noting concern about island-building.

The South China Sea has long been the most divisive issue for the Association of South East Asian Nations (Asean), with China's influence looming large over its activities. Some countries are wary about the possible repercussions of defying Beijing by taking a stronger stand.

Asean failed to issue the customary statement on Saturday, over what diplomats said was disagreement about whether to make oblique references to China's rapid expansion of its defence capabilities on artificial islands in disputed waters.

China is sensitive to even a veiled reference by Asean to its seven reclaimed reefs, three of which have runways, missile batteries, radars and, according to some experts, the capability to accommodate fighter jets.

The communique later yesterday took a stronger position than an earlier, unpublished draft, which was a watered-down version of one issued last year in Laos.

The agreed text "emphasised the importance of non-militarisation and self-

restraint".  
It said that after extensive discussions, concerns were voiced by some members about land reclamation "and activities in the area which have eroded trust and confidence, increased tension and may undermine peace, security and stability".

Also yesterday the foreign ministers of



Asean and China adopted a negotiating framework for a code of conduct in the South China Sea, a move they hailed as progress but seen by critics as a tactic to buy China time to consolidate its maritime power.

Several Asean diplomats said that among the members who pushed for a communique that retained the more contentious elements was Vietnam, which has competing claims with China over the Paracel and Spratly archipelago and has had several spats with Beijing over energy concessions.



US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson (4th R) link arms with Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) foreign ministers and their representatives as they take part in the Asean-US Ministerial meeting during the 50th Asean regional security forum in suburban Manila, yesterday.

# 12 killed in Nigeria church shooting

AFP, Warri  
Gunmen stormed a Catholic church in a town in southeast Nigeria early yesterday, killing 12 worshippers, hospital sources and witnesses said.

The attack took place at around 6am at St. Philip's church in Ozubulu, near the city of Onitsha, witnesses said.

"So far, 12 persons have been confirmed dead and deposited in the mortuary here while several persons are receiving medical attention," a staff worker at Nnamdi Azikiwe University Teaching Hospital in Nnewi, where the victims were admitted, told AFP.

Several worshippers with gunshot wounds were receiving treatment at the hospital, the source said.

Witnesses said five gunmen in masks stormed the church and opened fire on worshippers. They feared that up to 20 people may have died.

In contrast, Anambra State Police Commissioner Garba Umar said the attacker was a lone gunman, who "went on a shooting spree, killing and wounding" worshippers.

Witness Chukwuma Emeke said he had just stepped out of the church to stretch his legs "when I heard gunshots and screaming and people running inside."

"When the chaos subsided I went inside, I saw my fellow church members dead in a pool of their own blood and many others were screaming in pain."

Security agents were said to have cordoned off the church.

# 'Rebellion' foiled in Venezuela

## Officials say army base attacked, 'terrorists' arrested

AFP, Caracas  
Troops in Venezuela put down a "terrorist" attack on an army base in the country's third city of Valencia yesterday, military chiefs said, after a video surfaced of uniformed men declaring an army "rebellion" there.

Several of the assailants were arrested, officials said, after reports of shots being fired near the base in the city's Paramacay Fort used by the National Bolivarian Armed Forces (FANB in Spanish).

"Our FANB successfully repelled a paramilitary criminal terrorist attack, the 7 captured are giving information!" Rear Admiral Remigio Ceballos, head of the military's strategic operational command, said on Twitter.

The head of the armed forces, Defense Minister Vladimir Padrino, tweeted: "They couldn't do anything against the FANB... they try to assault it with terrorist attacks. They can't."

Local media and social networks spoke of a possible military uprising in the city against the government of President Nicolas Maduro, but there was no immediate confirmation.

In the video posted online, a man presenting himself as an army captain declared a "legitimate rebellion... to reject the murderous tyranny of Nicolas Maduro."

Speaking with 15 other men dressed in camouflage standing by him, some of them armed, he demanded a transitional government and "free elections."

The reported unrest occurred as a new assembly with supreme powers and loyal to Maduro started functioning in Venezuela, a week after it was elected in polls marred by violence and allegations of vote-tampering.

On Sunday, the assembly announced the creation of a "truth commission" to probe alleged crimes committed during Venezuela's lengthy political crisis.

The opposition and dozens of foreign governments say the new body is illegitimate and serves only to support a Maduro "dictatorship" by bypassing the opposition-controlled legislature.

In its first act on Saturday, the body, the Constituent Assembly, ordered the dismissal of the country's attorney general, Luisa Ortega, who became a vociferous critic after breaking ranks with Maduro.

Ortega's dismissal triggered an international outcry, and she has refused to recognize it.

The United States, which has imposed sanctions on Maduro, called the sacking "illegal," with a State Department spokeswoman saying it was aimed at tightening the "authoritarian dictatorship of (the) Maduro regime."

Colombia, Chile, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama and Peru also slammed the decision.

At the same time, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay and Brazil announced Venezuela's indefinite suspension from the South American trading bloc Mercosur for its "rupture of the democratic order."



### MYANMAR GOVT PROBE ON ROHINGYAS ABUSES

# Forces given clean cheat

## Dismisses UN allegations of widespread abuses

AFP, Yangon  
A government-appointed commission yesterday cleared Myanmar security forces of systematic rape, murder and arson against Rohingya Muslims, dismissing UN allegations of widespread abuses during a recent crackdown.

The commission examined the deadly violence which began in northwestern Rakhine State in October last year after attacks by Rohingya militants on police posts near the Bangladesh border.

The government is refusing to allow a UN fact-finding team to conduct its own probe into whether the security response amounted to "ethnic cleansing" of the stateless Rohingya minority.

Giving their conclusions yesterday, a state-backed commission said it found no evidence that Myanmar security forces carried out a systematic campaign of rape, murder or arson.

Instead any "excessive actions" were likely committed by low-rank "individual members of the security forces".

"Some incidents (of abuse) appeared to be fabricated... others had little evidence," according to a press release by the commission.

It also took aim at a detailed report by the

UN's Human Rights Office released in February this year.

That report said it was "very likely" that crimes against humanity had been committed during the crackdown.

Based on interviews with 204 witnesses who fled to Bangladesh, the UN alleged Myanmar security forces gang-raped Rohingya women, butchered children and tortured men.

But "no such cases were uncovered" by the government commission, which said the UN findings lacked balance and failed to recognise the gravity of the attacks by Rohingya militants.

Myanmar's de facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi, who is a Nobel peace prize winner, is blocking a visit by a UN team. She says the government commission is an adequate response to the violence, which left scores dead and displaced tens of thousands of Rohingya to Bangladesh.

The Rohingya are reviled in Myanmar and widely seen as illegal immigrants. Stateless, poor and subject to tight controls on movement, education and work, roughly one million of the Muslim group are hemmed into the impoverished border zone -- which remains locked down and under curfew.



### CRACKDOWN ON LEAKS

# Trump praises Sessions for taking action

AFP, Washington

US President Donald Trump on Saturday had some warm words for Attorney General Jeff Sessions after weeks of publicly slamming him as weak.

"After many years of LEAKS going on in Washington, it is great to see the A.C. taking action! For National Security, the tougher the better!" Trump wrote on Twitter from his golf club in Bedminster, New Jersey.

Sessions had been the public target of the president's anger recently because he had recused himself from a probe into allegations that Trump's aides coordinated with Russia to tilt last year's election in his favor.

At one point, Trump told The New York Times he would never have appointed Sessions had he known he would recuse himself. Trump also took to Twitter to blast Sessions as "VERY weak," among other criticisms on social media.

The attacks were widely seen as designed to force Sessions into resigning.

However, the former Alabama senator appeared to be on Trump's good side Saturday after launching a high-profile campaign to crack down on government employees who leak classified or sensitive information to the media.

The action comes after a spate of scoops -- many of them unfavorable -- about the Trump administration.

"I strongly agree with the president and condemn in the strongest terms the staggering number of leaks undermining the ability of our government to protect this country," Sessions told a press conference Friday.

# Migrant deaths on US-Mexico border rise

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK  
More people crossing the United States-Mexico border are dying, despite significantly fewer people attempting the journey according to the UN's migration agency.  
"Some 232 migrant fatalities have been recorded in the first seven months of 2017, an increase of 17 per cent compared with the 204 deaths recorded between January and July 2016," said Julia Black, of the Missing Migrants Project, part of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM).  
The UN agency stated that the US Border Patrol has caught 140,024 migrants between January and June 2017.

### PILGRIM MURDERS IN KASHMIR

# Pak-based Lashkar responsible: police

AFP, Srinagar

Indian police said yesterday a Pakistan-based Islamist militant group blamed for the 2008 Mumbai attacks was responsible for last month's killing of eight Hindu pilgrims in Kashmir.

Police said an investigation had concluded that Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Kashmiri accomplices were behind the July 10 attack that saw militants open fire on a bus carrying Hindus on the annual Amarnath pilgrimage.

"Lashkar was involved and the accused have been identified," Inspector General of Police Muneer Ahmed Khan told reporters in Anantnag district in Indian-administered Kashmir.

"Once the investigation was started it was revealed that... a Pakistani militant of Lashkar along with two other militants and one local Kashmiri Lashkar militant carried out the attack."  
Three others who provided logistical support to the militants, including hiding places and vehicles, had been arrested.

The July shooting was the worst such attack in the divided Himalayan region since 2000, when gunmen fired on a group of Hindu pilgrims and killed 32 people including two police officers.



Children pray after releasing paper lanterns on the Motoyasu river facing the Atomic Bomb Dome in remembrance of atomic bomb victims on the 72nd anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima, western Japan yesterday.