

# NEWSIN brief

## New activity at North Korean missile base

AFP, Washington

North Korea has expanded a key long-range missile base in the months since a summit between the country's leader Kim Jong Un and US President Donald Trump, according to satellite images published by CNN on Wednesday. Trump said on Saturday that he hoped to organize a second summit with Kim in early 2019.

## NZ military braces for climate change battle

AFP, Wellington

The New Zealand Defence Force identified climate change as one of its biggest security challenges yesterday, warning that responding to global warming will increasingly stretch its resources. The NZDF said the impact of climate change in the neighbouring Pacific islands promised to be so extreme that providing humanitarian assistance could limit its ability to perform its traditional defence roles.

## Burundi to shut UN rights office: sources

AFP, Nairobi

The Burundi government has ordered the United Nations Human Rights Council to shut its office in the country within two months, foreign ministry and UN sources told AFP. The government on Wednesday sent a verbal note to resident UN coordinator Garry Conille to transmit the message to the rights council's High Commissioner in Geneva.

## Boko Haram raids kill soldier in Nigeria

AFP, Kano

Boko Haram jihadists have attacked two military bases in Nigeria's restive north-east, killing one soldier and injuring two, security sources told AFP Wednesday. Riding in trucks fitted with anti-aircraft guns, Boko Haram fighters launched a raid late Tuesday on troops in the town of Gudumbali.



Indian Muslim supporters and activists take part in a protest in Mumbai yesterday to mark the 26th anniversary of the demolition of the 16th century Babri Masjid located in Ayodhya. Inset, supporters of Socialist Unity Centre of India burn an effigy of Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a protest in Siliguri. Some 2,000 baton-wielding police were on duty in the flashpoint city of Ayodhya yesterday to prevent clashes.

# Australia passes new laws

### Experts warn of global security threat as legislation will allow spies to sneak into encrypted communications

AFP, Sydney

Australia yesterday passed controversial laws allowing spies and police to snoop on the encrypted communications of suspected terrorists and criminals, as experts warned the "unprecedented powers" had far-reaching implications for global cybersecurity.

There has been extensive debate about the laws and their reach beyond Australia's shores in what is seen as the latest salvo between global governments and tech firms over national security and privacy.

Under the legislation, Canberra can compel local and international providers -- including overseas communication giants such as Facebook and WhatsApp -- to remove electronic protections, conceal covert operations by government agencies, and help with access to devices or services.

Australian authorities can also require that those demands be kept secret.

The conservative government had pushed for the bill to be passed before

parliament rises for the year this week, saying the new powers were needed to thwart terror attacks during the festive period.

A last-minute deal was struck with the opposition Labor Party over its demands for more oversight and safe-

## CYBER SNOOPING

The laws will compel FB, WhatsApp to remove electronic protections

UN rapporteur on right to privacy describes the bill as 'poorly conceived'

guards when the laws are used, with a review of the legislation to take place in 18 months.

The government also agreed to consider further amendments to the bill early next year.

National cyber security adviser Alastair MacGibbon said police have

been "going blind or going deaf because of encryption" used by suspects.

Brushing off warnings from tech giants that the laws would undermine internet security, MacGibbon said they would be similar to traditional telecommunications intercepts, just updated to take in modern technologies.

Global communications firms, including Google and Twitter, have repeatedly said the legislation would force them to create vulnerabilities in their products, such as by decrypting messages on apps, which could then be exploited by bad actors.

A central protection in the laws to block authorities from forcing companies to build a "systemic weakness" into their product remains poorly defined, critics say.

The Law Council of Australia, the peak body for the legal profession, said it had "serious concerns" about the changes.

Experts such as the UN special rapporteur on the right to privacy Joseph Cannataci have described the bill as "poorly conceived" and "equally as likely to endanger security as not".

# Crisis to end in seven days

### Says Sri Lankan president as power struggle continues with ousted PM Wickremesinghe

PTI, Colombo

Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena said that the current political crisis in the country will not drag on beyond a week even as a war of words between him and ousted prime minister Ranil Wickremesinghe intensified.

His statement came days after a lower court temporarily barred Sirisena's appointed prime minister, Mahinda Rajapaksa from performing his duties.

Sri Lanka is going through a major political crisis since October 26 when President Sirisena, in a controversial move, removed Wickremesinghe and installed ex-strongman Rajapaksa in his place.

The president later dissolved Parliament and called for a snap election on January 5. However, the Supreme Court overturned Sirisena's decision to dissolve Parliament and halted the preparations for snap polls.

In a statement, Sirisena said that he has always taken decisions in the best interest of the country and the people.

"The current political crisis will not drag on beyond seven days," he said on Twitter.

In his strongest yet statement against the

president, United National Party (UNP) leader Wickremesinghe on Tuesday said the United National Front (UNF) was prepared to face elections and they are "not afraid of elections."

"Don't be like Hitler and some of the other dictators who used the referendum," Wickremesinghe was quoted as saying by Sri Lanka Mirror.

Sirisena, speaking at the SLFP special convention at the Sugathadasa indoor stadium on Tuesday, said that he had been left with no option but to sack Wickremesinghe as he was destroying the noble principles of good governance.

"He destroyed me as well to some extent," the President said, adding that the former prime minister attempted to grab powers which were decentralised under the 13th Amendment to the Constitution.

President Maithripala Sirisena added that Wickremesinghe is a stubborn, headstrong person who was following far right wing neo-liberal policies.

On Tuesday, Rajapaksa filed an appeal before the Supreme Court against a court order that barred him from acting as prime minister.



# 'We'll fight them in court'

### Says Philippine journo in govt showdown

AFP, Manila

Threatened with prison and closure of the news site she co-founded, Philippine journalist Maria Ressa says there is one clear response to the government onslaught she faces: fight back.

The site, Rappler, has taken a critical stand on President Rodrigo Duterte's deadly anti-drug crackdown and now finds itself the target of grinding, unrelenting attacks from the authorities.

Ressa turned herself in this week to face one tax evasion charge, but could still face arrest on four other counts that she insists were crafted to bring the site to heel.

"I have nothing to hide. We have done nothing wrong. I'm willing to challenge the government and I will hold them accountable," she told AFP at Rappler's Manila headquarters.

"I'm not afraid of what it's (the government) doing. In fact, I call them on these lies. We'll fight them in court," she added of the charge that carries up to 10 years behind bars.



She is due to be arraigned today on the first case, which stems from allegations Rappler and Ressa did not pay taxes on 2015 bond sales that netted \$3 million.

The investments are at the heart of a case that led the Philippines' corporate watchdog to void the news site's license in January. That case is still pending.

"They want to intimidate. They want to harass," she said. "The end goal of all that is to (force us to) pipe down. Stop doing the stories."

The government said this week Duterte had no hand in the charges, saying "we will never interfere with the function of the judiciary."

Rappler has been among a clutch of Philippine news outlets that have questioned the methods of the president's signature crackdown, which police say has killed nearly 5,000 alleged dealers and addicts since 2016.

Rights campaigners say the true toll is triple that and could amount to crimes against humanity.



Supporters of arrested opposition leader Shahbaz Sharif scuffle with policemen on his arrival at a corruption court in Lahore, Pakistan yesterday. An accountability court in Lahore sent PML-N President and opposition leader Shahbaz Sharif to jail on a judicial remand.

PHOTO: AFP

## LOK SABHA POLLS

## BJP mulls to field Madhuri for Pune seat

NDTV ONLINE

The BJP is considering fielding Bollywood actor Madhuri Dixit-Nene from the Pune Lok Sabha constituency in the 2019 general elections, the party sources said.

In June this year, BJP chief Amit Shah had met the actor at her residence in Mumbai during his party's 'Sampark for Samarthan' (Contact for Support) programme and briefed her on the achievements of the Narendra Modi government.

A senior state BJP leader yesterday told PTI that the actress name has been shortlisted for the Pune Lok Sabha seat.

"The party is seriously considering giving candidature to Madhuri Dixit in the 2019 general elections. We think the Pune Lok Sabha



constituency will be better for her," he said.

"The party is in the process of finalising the list of probables for several Lok Sabha seats and Dixit's name has been shortlisted for the Pune Lok Sabha constituency...she is being seriously considered for it," the leader said.

The 51-year-old actor has featured in many Bollywood films, including Hum Aapke Hain Koun..!, Dil To Pagal Hai, Saajan and Devdas.

In the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, the BJP had snatched the Pune Lok Sabha seat from the Congress, with Anil Shirole winning by a margin of over three lakh votes.

## PAPUA MASSACRE

# Indonesia military finds 16 bodies

AFP, Wamena

Indonesian security forces yesterday stepped up the grim search for victims of a massacre by suspected separatist rebels in restive Papua province, having retrieved 16 corpses so far, the military said.

The fatalities, believed to be of construction workers, marked the deadliest bout of violence in years to hit a region wracked by a low-level independence insurgency.

"This was a very cruel act," national military chief Hadi Tjahjanto told reporters in Papua, vowing to catch the "rebels" and "bring them to justice".

The bodies were being sent to the city of Timika from the remote district of Nduga, a mountainous region where the attack happened Sunday, the local military said.

The dead have not yet been publicly identified and the military did not supply details about how they were killed, saying autopsies would be conducted.

# China, US, EU, India top CO2 emitters list: study

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

China, the US, the European Union and India have been ranked as the world's top four emitters respectively of carbon dioxide accounting for 58 percent of global emissions in 2017, according to a study.

The study, released on the occasion of the world climate conference in Katowice, Poland, warned that global emissions of carbon dioxide from fossil fuels and industry are projected to rise for the second consecutive year in 2018 by more than 2 percent to a new record mainly due to sustained growth in oil and gas use.

The emissions in the rest of the world -- remaining 41 percent of global emissions -- are expected to grow by 1.8 percent in 2018. This group is of mainly developing countries and the five countries contributing most to the growth in this grouping in the last decade are Saudi Arabia, Iran, Turkey, Iraq and South Korea, the study said.

While China contributed 27 percent, the US (15 percent), the EU (10 percent) and

India (7 percent), the rest of the world contributed 41 percent last year, said the projection by the Global Carbon Project.

It identifies China, the US, the EU, India, Russia, Japan, Germany, Iran, Saudi Arabia and South Korea as the world's top ten carbon dioxide emitters.

It also said though global use of coal remains three percent lower than its historical high, it is expected to grow in 2018, driven by growth in energy consumption in China and India.

According to the study, China, India and the European Union are setting the pace representing 40 percent of global carbon emissions.

The study said that while China and India still rely heavily on coal, the US and the EU are slowly de-carbonizing.

# Migrants tend to live longer: study

REUTERS, London

Migrants tend to be healthier than the residents of wealthy countries they travel to, such as the United States, and often help fight diseases by becoming healthcare workers in those nations, according to a study published on Wednesday.

Populist arguments that migrants pose a health risk and a burden to health systems are myths used to drive anti-immigrant sentiment, the report published by University College London and the Lancet medical journal concluded.

The two-year study found that migrants, in general, have a greater life expectancy than residents of host countries and were less likely to die of illnesses such as cancer and heart disease.

They were, however, more prone to diseases such as hepatitis, HIV and tuberculosis, but tended to spread those infections among immigrant communities rather than the general population, the study found.

"Our analysis suggests that migrants are healthier, migrants contribute positively to the economies of host countries, and in wealthy countries like the United Kingdom and United States, migrants constitute a large portion of the health workforce," said Ibrahim Abubakar, chair of the UCL-Lancet Commission on Migration and Health that carried out the study.