

Day 2: People converge near WH against travel ban

NEW YORK, JAN 30 /-/-/ Protests against President Donald Trump's travel ban on people from seven predominantly Muslim nations continued for the second day, with thousands of demonstrators gathering at airports and outside the White House in solidarity with those hit by the controversial move. Protesters gathered outside the White House and raised slogans like "This is what America looks like." "The people united, will never be divided" and "No hate, no fear, refugees are welcome here," as they waved the American flag and held placards, opposing Trump's order to block any visitors for 90 days from seven designated countries: Iran, Iraq,

Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen. Similar protests were held across the nation and at airports, where confusion continued to prevail over the order after a New York judge's order temporarily halting removal of individuals detained in the country. People gathered at Battery Park in Lower Manhattan, within sight of the Statue of Liberty, Boston's Copley Square as well as popular spots across San Francisco demonstrating and extending their support and solidarity with refugees and those impacted by the ban. Hundreds of protesters had gathered at the Dulles International Airport, while at the Dallas-Fort Worth International Air-

Yemen says travel ban will encourage 'extremism'

ADEN, JAN 30 /-/-/ Yemen's government warned today that US President Donald Trump's order banning travellers from mainly Muslim countries would encourage global "extremism." "Yemen expresses its dissatisfaction after the order prohibiting, even for a limited time, the entry to the United States of people holding a Yemeni passport," a foreign ministry spokesman said. The Arabian peninsula country was one of seven named by Trump in Friday's order whose nationals will be temporarily barred from travelling to the US. "Such a decision is likely to strengthen the position of extremists," the spokesman said, adding that "the only way to achieve victory in the fight against terrorism is dialogue and not creating barriers." Yemen is gripped by a conflict that has killed more than 7,400 people since March 2015, when a Saudi-backed coalition began bombing raids on rebel forces who had seized control of capital Sanaa and other key coastal parts of the impoverished nation. (AFP)

Emirates changes flight crews after travel ban

DUBAI, JAN 30 /-/-/ Dubai carrier Emirates said it has adjusted its crews for flight to the United States following President Donald Trump's travel ban on people from seven predominantly Muslim countries. The new president faced mass protests and global outrage over the controversial ban on travellers from Iraq, Syria, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen, as around 300 people were stopped or detained worldwide en route to the US. "We have made the necessary adjustments to our crewing, to comply with the latest requirements," a statement from Emirates said. The carrier added that no staff member had yet been affected by the travel restrictions and stressed that all flight attendants are being rotated as scheduled. (AFP)

Philippine police stop anti-drug crackdown amid scandal

MANILA, JAN 30 /-/-/ The Philippine police chief has stopped the use of the national police force in anti-drug operations and disbanded all police anti-narcotics units after the brutal crackdown was used to cover by rogue officers to kidnap and kill a South Korean man. Police Director-General Ronald Dela Rosa told police officers today he would use the indefinite halt of anti-drug operations to launch a massive purge of police involved in crimes. Members of the 170,000-strong force will not conduct raids, serve arrest warrants or visit the homes of drug suspects, though other anti-drug agencies will continue the crackdown. President Rodrigo Duterte says his crack-down, which has been criticized internationally for its high death toll and possible human rights violations, will continue until the last day of his six-year term. (AFP)

Body of small migrant boy found on Spanish beach

MADRID, JAN 30 /-/-/ The lifeless body of a six- to seven-year-old boy believed to be a migrant trying to get to Europe was washed up on a southern Spanish beach, authorities said today. In a grim reminder of the discovery of Aylan Kurdi, the three-year-old Syrian boy found drowned on a Turkish beach in 2015, the body was found Friday in the municipality of Barbate on Spain's southern tip. (AFP)

Nazi propaganda chief Joseph Goebbels' secy dies at 106

MUNICH, JAN 30 /-/-/ The former secretary of Nazi Germany's propaganda boss Joseph Goebbels died aged 106 last week, on International Holocaust Remembrance Day, the maker of a documentary about her said today. Brunhild Pomsel died on January 27 in a care home in the southern city of Munich, said Christian Kroenes, who conducted extensive interviews with her for his 2016 film "A German Life". Pomsel, who worked for Goebbels as a secretary, typist and stenographer from 1942-45, had insisted she had no idea of the Holocaust that claimed the lives of six million Jews while it was happening. "We knew nothing," she said in the film. "We ourselves were all trapped in a vast concentration camp," she said about the totalitarian state of Adolf Hitler. As one of half a dozen secretaries in Goebbels' office, Pomsel was among the last eyewitnesses to the inner circle of top Nazis. In "A German Life", she insisted she felt no guilt and also said: "I could not put up resistance - I was too much of a coward." She told AFP last year that she had once cheered on Hitler, in 1933, adding "we didn't know then what lay ahead." She spoke of the final days in Hitler's bunker, saying a lot of alcohol was drunk because the Nazi chiefs had to "numb themselves". When Soviet troops marched into Berlin at the end of World War II, Pomsel was captured and would spend five years in Russian detention camps. From 1950 she worked for a German public broadcaster, for 20 years, but kept silent about her war-time job until she gave a newspaper interview in 2011. She opened up at great length in the 2016 film, which its makers said aimed to force viewers to ask themselves what they would have done, and whether they would have had the courage to resist the Nazi machine. In the black-and-white film, extreme close-up shots of Pomsel recalling her time with Goebbels are interspersed with archival footage of Nazi horror, including of naked Jewish corpses and mass graves. Pomsel herself said: "Nothing's black and white. There's always a bit of grey in everything. I wouldn't see myself as guilty," she said, "unless you end up blaming the entire German population." She said that "since I have a clear conscience for myself, I do not see why I should not talk about it". She said the point of the film was "for future generations to be informed about all these things. There are ever fewer eyewitnesses left. So I agreed." She described Goebbels as well groomed and polite, and "an excellent actor," who during public speeches turned into a "raging dwarf", unrecognisable. She also labelled him "a very cold person" who showed no interest in the lives of those who worked for him. Asked about rising right-wing populism in Europe now, she said she found it "horrific, just horrific". Filmmaker Kroenes confirmed to AFP that she died on January 27 in the old people's home but had remained mentally alert until her death. (AFP)

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Turkey puts Gulen, 269 others on trial over coup bid

ANKARA, JAN 30 /-/-/ Turkey today opened the biggest trial yet over the failed July coup aimed at ousting President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, trying 270 suspects, including in absentia, the alleged mastermind Fetullah Gulen. The suspects, 152 of whom are in pre-trial detention, include ex-high-ranking military officials like former Aegean Army Command Chief of Staff Major General Menduh Hakbilen, the state news agency Anadolu reported. The "number one" suspect is US-based Islamic preacher Gulen who is charged with ordering the failed July 15 coup, an accusation he strongly denies. Ankara also accuses the movement Gulen leads of being a "terror organisation" although the group insists it is a peaceful organisation promoting moderate Islam. Those on trial in the western city of Izmir face multiple charges including being a member of the "armed terror group". Turkey has repeatedly asked the United States to extradite Gulen, who has been living in exile there since 1999. The previous administration of Barack Obama had insisted that a possibly slow legal process should take its course but Ankara is hoping for a more eager response to its extradition request from new President Donald Trump. Other charges against the suspects include seeking to prevent parliament performing its duty as well as attempting to remove the constitutional order, the agency said. The suspects face life imprisonment if convicted in a trial expected to take two months, the Hurriyet newspaper reported. It said Izmir was believed to be one of the main plotting hubs in the coup with the Aegean city used as a "logistical base". A special courtroom was built to accommodate the size of the trial and security was tight ahead of the hearing. Intensive security measures included a drone above the courthouse, bomb-sniffing dogs and commando units. Previous trials have opened in Istanbul and smaller cases in other provinces in what is expected to be the largest legal process in the country's history. Some 43,000 people are under arrest ahead of trial in a large-scale crackdown within a state of emergency declared after the coup which remains in place. In December, 29 police officers went on trial in Istanbul accused of falling to defend Erdogan while 62 rebel soldiers are being tried over claims they attempted to take over Istanbul's Sabiha Gokcen Airport on the night of July 15. (AFP)



Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May chairs a Joint Ministerial Committee attended by Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon (3rd R) and Wales' First Minister Carwyn Jones (5th R) at Cardiff City Hall, Wales.—REUTERS

5 troops reported killed in fighting in eastern Ukraine

MOSCOW, JAN 30 /-/-/ At least five Ukrainian troops have been killed in an apparent uptick in fighting in eastern Ukraine, government officials said today. An armed conflict between government troops and separatist rebels has killed more than 9,600 since it began in 2014, according to the UN Human Rights Office. A January cease-fire had until recently helped to limit the fighting to sporadic shoot-outs. The government's press office for the operation in the east said on Monday it recorded an increase in fighting on several fronts on Sunday which left at least five killed and nine troops injured. Kiev accused the rebels of using Grad multiple grenade launchers and said they recorded intensified fighting all along the front line outside the separatist stronghold of Donetsk, in the south of the frontline north of Mariupol and west of Luhansk. In Donetsk, self-proclaimed separatist authorities reported substantial damage to civilian infrastructure, with several villages and Donetsk neighborhoods left without electricity and gas supply. (PTI)

Up to six dead in shooting at Quebec City mosque: Media

QUEBEC CITY, JAN 30 /-/-/ Six people died and eight were injured after gunmen opened fire at a Quebec City mosque, a shooting that Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau condemned today as a "terrorist attack". Police spokeswoman Christine Coulombe told journalists that two suspects were arrested following the attack, that police were also treating as an act of terrorism. Trudeau said in a statement that "we condemn this terrorist attack on Muslims in a center of worship and refuge." "Muslim-Canadians are an important part of our national fabric, and these senseless acts have no place in our communities, city and country." According to witnesses interviewed on local television, two masked gunmen entered the cultural center around 7:15 pm yesterday. The motive of the attack was not immediately clear. Police quickly set up in the mosque's vicinity. Coulombe said those killed were between ages 35 and 70. Police did not rule out the possibility of a third suspect who had fled the scene. "It is heart-wrenching to see such senseless violence," Trudeau said. "Diversity is our strength, and religious tolerance is a value that we, as Canadians, hold dear." Quebec Premier Philippe Couillard said in a series of Twitter posts that the government was "mobilized to ensure the security of the people of Quebec."

"Quebec categorically rejects this barbaric violence," he wrote. "Solidarity with Quebec people of Muslim faith." Police stationed near the mosque told AFP that they had been preparing for this type of attack "because it's happening all over the world." "I don't understand why here - it's a small mosque," said a man who was inside the center at the time of the attack. "It's not Montreal or Toronto." The mosque has already been the target of hate: a pig's head was left on the doorstep last June during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. Other mosques in Canada have been targeted with racist graffiti in recent months. The attack comes as Canada has vowed to open its arms wide to Muslims and refugees after US President Donald Trump's controversial immigration ban Friday sparked chaos and outrage around the world. Canada will offer temporary residency permits to people stranded in the country as a result of Trump's order, the immigration ministry said Sunday. "Let me assure those who may be stranded in Canada that I will use my authority as minister to provide them with temporary residency if needed as we have done in the past," Immigration Minister Ahmed Hussen said at a news conference. (AFP)

'Record number of Muslim refugees entered US in 16'

WASHINGTON, JAN 30 /-/-/ Nearly 39,000 Muslim refugees entered the US in 2016 - the highest number on record - making up about half of the new arrivals in the country, according to a new report made public amidst the controversy triggered by President Donald Trump. The report comes shortly after Trump signed an order imposing an indefinite travel ban on Syrian refugees and a temporary curb on people from six other countries - Iran, Iraq, Libya, Sudan, Yemen and Somalia - from entering the US for at least 90 days. "The US admitted 84,995 refugees in the fiscal year ending in September 2016, the most in any year during the Obama administration," said Pew Research Centre analysts Jens Manuel Krogstad and Jynnah Bedford. An additional 31,143 refugees have been admitted to the US from October 1 through January 24, including more than 1,136 refugee admissions since Trump became president on January 20, researchers said, based on statistics from the US State Department's Refugee Processing Centre. "Nearly 39,000 Muslim refugees entered the US in fiscal 2016, the highest number on record," they said. "Muslims made up nearly half (46 per cent) of refugee admissions, a higher share than for Christians, who accounted for 44 per cent of refugees admitted," researchers were quoted as saying by "The Washington Times". (PTI)

One m sign petition to cancel Trump's UK State Visit

LONDON, JAN 30 /-/-/ An online petition seeking cancellation of US President Donald Trump's State Visit to the UK has quickly crossed the one-million signature mark to be considered for a debate in British Parliament, amid international uproar over his controversial immigration ban on people from seven Muslim nations. The petition titled "Prevent Donald Trump from making State Visit to the United Kingdom" on the UK Parliament website had been created on Saturday afternoon and rapidly collected the 100,000 signatures needed for it to be considered for a debate in the House of Commons. The issue will be discussed in the House of Commons tomorrow for a date to be set for the debate. "Donald Trump should be allowed to enter the UK in his capacity as head of the US Government, but he should not be invited to make an official State Visit because it would cause embarrassment to Her Majesty the Queen," the peti-

tion reads. "Donald Trump's well documented misogyny and vulgarity disqualifies him from being received by Her Majesty the Queen or the Prince of Wales. Therefore, during the term of his presidency Donald Trump should not be invited to the United Kingdom for an official State Visit," it adds. British Prime Minister Theresa May had communicated the invitation to Trump on behalf of Queen Elizabeth II during her US visit last week. Downing Street has indicated that it has no plans of withdrawing the invitation for the state visit, which involves lavish pomp and ceremony, often with a stay at Buckingham Palace hosted by Queen Elizabeth II. "We extended the invite as it was accepted," a Downing Street statement said. UK Opposition parties have also called for a postponement of the visit, scheduled for June this year. Theresa May would be failing to invite the British people if she does not postpone the state visit and



condemn Trump's actions in the clearest terms. That's what British people expect and deserve," Labour party leader Jeremy Corbyn said. Palace has so far declined comment on the controversy gathering momentum in the wake of the US President's executive order that temporarily suspends all immigration for citizens of Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen for 90 days. UK

foreign secretary Boris Johnson has secured assurances from the White House that the vast majority of British citizens with dual nationality of countries on the list will be exempt from the new US travel ban. Trump has provoked a fierce backlash after his ban on people from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen from travelling to America. (PTI)