

WORLD IN BRIEF

Associated Press

Germany offers reward for arrest of suspect

BERLIN — German authorities are offering a reward of up to 100,000 euros (\$105,000) for the arrest of a Tunisian man suspected of involvement in the fatal attack on a Christmas market in Berlin.

Federal prosecutors describe 24-year-old Anis Amri as of average height and weight, with black hair and brown eyes.

In a public notice issued Wednesday, prosecutors warn that the suspect could be "dangerous and armed," and urge members of the public to notify police if they see him.

The attack on the market next to the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church in the center of the capital left 12 dead and 48 injured. Shortly afterward, a Pakistani man who had come to Germany as an asylum-seeker was detained based on a description from witnesses of a suspect who jumped from the truck and fled.

However, the Pakistani man was freed Tuesday after prosecutors couldn't find evidence tying him to the attack.

The claim of responsibility carried on IS's Amaq news agency on Tuesday described the man seen fleeing from the truck as "a soldier of the Islamic State" who "carried out the attack in response to calls for targeting citizens of the Crusader coalition."

Deadly Mexico fireworks blast hits busy market

TULTEPEC, Mexico — The San Pabloito fireworks market was especially well stocked for the holidays and bustling with hundreds of shoppers when a powerful chain-reaction explosion ripped through its stalls, killing at least 29 people and leaving dozens more badly burned.

The third such blast to ravage the market on the northern outskirts of Mexico's capital since 2005 sent up a towering plume of smoke that was lit up by a staccato of bangs and flashes of light. Once the smoke cleared, the open-air bazaar was reduced to a stark expanse of ash, rubble and the charred metal of fireworks stands, casting a pall over the country's Christmas season.

Mexico State health officials said 72 people were being treated for injuries from Tuesday's explosion, including for severe burns, in some cases over 90 percent of their bodies. Ten children were among the hospitalized. Authorities have not yet said what may have caused the explosions which took place in Mexico State, which rings the capital.

Survivor Crescencia Francisco Garcia said she was in the middle of the grid of stalls when the thunderous explosions began. She froze, reflexively looked up at the sky and then took off running through the smoke once she realized everyone was doing so. As she ran she saw people with burns and cuts, and lots of blood.

"Everything was catching fire. Everything was exploding," Francisco said. "The stones were flying, pieces of brick, everything was flying."

Trump meets with security adviser

PALM BEACH, Fla. — President-elect Donald Trump is planning to meet with his incoming national security adviser in the aftermath of a rattling day of violence around the world.



AP Photo/Eduardo Verdugo

Local policemen walk through the scorched ground of the open-air San Pabloito fireworks market, in Tultepec, outskirts of Mexico City, Mexico, Tuesday. An explosion ripped through Mexico's best-known fireworks market on the northern outskirts of the capital Tuesday, injuring scores and killing at least 29 people, according to Mexican Federal Police.

Trump appeared to jump ahead of investigators in blaming Islamic terrorists for deadly incidents Monday in Turkey and Germany and vowing anew to eradicate their regional and global networks. He called the brazen shooting of Russia's ambassador to Turkey "a violation of all rules of civilized order."

He added that a "radical Islamic terrorist" had assassinated the diplomat, Andrei Karlov. Turkish authorities identified the gunman as Mevlut Mert Altintas, a member of Ankara's riot police squad, and said he was later killed in a shootout with police. Altintas shouted in Turkish about the Syrian city of Aleppo and also yelled "Allahu akbar," Arabic for "God is great."

As for Berlin, where at least 12 people were killed and nearly 50 hurt when a truck plowed through a Christmas market, Trump said the Islamic State group "and other Islamist terrorists continually slaughter Christians in their communities and places of worship as part of their global jihad." A man held by German authorities after the violence was later released after a lack of evidence to connect him to the incident.

Trump's meeting scheduled today with retired Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn will come a day after Flynn and several other members of the incoming national security team met with Vice President-elect Mike Pence in Washington. Aides said the meeting was planned before the acts of violence, though they were discussed.

Pipeline rules face hazy future under Trump

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — President Barack Obama's administration is expected to push through long-delayed safety measures for the nation's sprawling network of oil pipelines in its final days, despite resistance from industry and concern that incoming president Donald Trump may scuttle them.

The measures are aimed at preventing increasingly frequent accidents such as a 176,000-gallon spill that fouled a North Dakota creek earlier this month. Thousands more spills over the past decade caused \$2.5 billion in damages nationwide and dumped almost 38 million gallons of fuel.

Fights over pipelines have intensified in recent years, illustrated by the dispute over

TransCanada's Keystone XL plan and efforts by American Indians to stop the Dakota Access Pipeline from crossing beneath the Missouri River near the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation.

The U.S. Department of Transportation proposal covers roughly 200,000 miles of lines that crisscross the country and carry crude, gasoline and other hazardous liquids.

NC lawmakers meeting to consider HB2 repeal

RALEIGH, N.C. — North Carolina's legislature is reconvening to see if enough lawmakers are willing to repeal a 9-month-old law that limited LGBT rights, including which bathrooms transgender people can use in public schools and government buildings.

House and Senate members planned to meet in the capital today for a special session two days after the Charlotte City Council gutted an ordinance that in March led the Republican-controlled General Assembly to pass House Bill 2, known by some as the "bathroom bill."

For months, the state's Republican leaders had said they were willing to consider repealing the law if Charlotte acted first to undo its expanded antidiscrimination ordinance. But the mayor and most council members, with the support of gay rights groups, had been unwilling to do so in the name of equality.

The Democrat-controlled council didn't act until Monday, two weeks after GOP Gov. Pat McCrory conceded the gubernatorial race to Democrat Roy Cooper.

During the race, Cooper blasted McCrory over the law he signed and its fallout — job losses, canceled concerts and sporting events — contributed to McCrory's narrow defeat. Cooper, the attorney general for the past 16 years, helped broker Charlotte's cooperation in the deal and said during the campaign he wanted HB2 repealed.

Delays hamper last Aleppo evacuations

BEIRUT — Delays hampered the last evacuations of Syrian rebels and civilians from what is left of the opposition's enclave in Aleppo as its residents waited today for the arrival of 20 U.N. observers meant to monitor the final exodus from the city.

Some 3,000 rebel fighters and civilians stood outside in harsh wintry conditions overnight, waiting in vain for to board what may be the last convoy out of the enclave. Activists circulated photos on social media of families huddled around fires amid the sleet and snow. By midday, temperatures in the city hovered around freezing.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which monitors the conflict through a network of activists on the ground, said 60 buses were waiting to leave eastern Aleppo today with the last of the evacuees — the final step that surrenders the Syrian opposition foothold in the war-torn city to the government.

Rebels and the government traded blame for the delay.

Syrian state media said on Tuesday evening that "differences among terrorist groups" were holding up the evacuations from Aleppo and from two rebel-besieged Shiite villages in the country's north, Foua and Kfarya. The government calls all armed opposition fighters terrorists.

Nepalis seeking jobs abroad come home dead

KATHMANDU, Nepal — A tiny young woman crouches just outside the airport, crying softly into her thin shawl. It's cold out, but her sleeping toddler is heavy and warm in her arms.

Travelers swarm around: Himalayan trekkers load up expedition backpacks. A Chinese tour group boards a bus. A dozen flight attendants in crisp blue suits and heels click by.

Saro Kumari Mandal, 26, covers her head completely, a bundle of grief.

Hundreds of young Nepali men excitedly wave final goodbyes to friends and family. On this day 1,500 will fly out of the Kathmandu airport bound for jobs mostly in Malaysia, Qatar or Saudi Arabia — jobs that are urgently needed by the people of this desperately poor country.

But on this day, too, six young men will come back in wooden caskets, rolled like suitcases out of baggage claim on luggage carts.

Marx says he's no 'hero' after plane incident

LOS ANGELES — Richard Marx says he wasn't a hero for apparently intervening after an unruly passenger disrupted a Korean Air flight and had to be restrained.

Marx and his wife, Daisy Fuentes, documented the incident on Facebook and Instagram on Tuesday. The "Right Here Waiting" singer and Fuentes, a former MTV VJ, were married last year. Fuentes wrote that her husband was the first to help subdue the man, and Marx criticized the flight crew for failing to properly restrain the man.

A Korean Air spokesman confirmed the incident aboard the flight from Hanoi to Seoul and that photos on Marx's Facebook page were shot during the flight. Cho Hyun Mook said the matter was under investigation and that it appears that crew members responded in accordance with airline policies.

Marx posted a later update saying he and Fuentes were home safe and saying he wasn't a "big 'hero'" but "just did what I would hope anyone would do in the same situation."

Citing Incheon police, the Yonhap News Agency reported that the passenger was a drunk 34-year-old South Korean man who became drunk after having 2 1/2 glasses of hard liquor on the flight.

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