



ROME (Press TV) – Official figures show Italy's unemployment rate in September increased beyond expectations, amid government efforts to overhaul the job market.

The jobless rate rose to 12.6 percent in September, from 12.5 percent in August, the National Statistics Institute (Istat) reported on Friday, while economists expected the figure to drop to 12.4 percent.

The Rome-based institute's report showed that 3.24 million people were currently unemployed.

The administration of Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi recently announced proposals to change job protection rules, which critics believe would prevent companies from hiring new staff and, in turn, worsen the situation in the job market.

The proposed reforms have drawn criticism from unions and left-wing members of Renzi's own Democratic Party, who say the proposals will undermine the rights of workers and fail to do anything to address the root causes of Italy's economic stagnation for decades.

MOSCOW (Reuters) - Russia could resume natural gas deliveries to Ukraine as soon as next week if Kiev pays \$2.2 billion in debt and pre-payments, gas exporter Gazprom said on Friday, under a deal that also safeguards winter deliveries to Europe.

Moscow, Kiev and the European Union reached an agreement on Thursday over the gas supplies despite tensions over a pro-Russian separatist rebellion in east Ukraine.

Gazprom cut off Ukraine in June amid a bitter dispute over unpaid bills and pricing for the former Soviet republic, which is seeking closer ties with the West.

Gazprom CEO Alexei Miller said Gazprom would restart the flow of gas within two days of Kiev covering part of its debt and pre-paying for deliveries in November.

"Everything depends on when Ukraine makes this payment. We understand this can happen by the end of next week," Miller told Russian state TV broadcaster Rossiya 24.

The Kremlin on Friday welcomed the deal as "an important step in the context of ensuring further uninterrupted gas transit to Europe".

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The confrontation between the state of Maine and a nurse who treated Ebola patients in Sierra Leone heated up on Friday when a judge issued a temporary order enforcing a quarantine after she defied state officials and took a bike ride.

The order from Charles LaVerdiere, chief judge of the Maine District Court, instructs nurse Kaci Hickox to submit to "direct active monitoring," and "not to be present in public places" like shopping centers, movie theaters or workplaces except to receive necessary healthcare.

The temporary order permits her to engage in what the judge called "non-congregate public activities" like walking or jogging in the park but instructs her to maintain a 3-foot (1 meter) distance from other people.

The quarantine confrontation between Hickox and Maine has become the focal point of a struggle between several U.S. states opting for stringent measures to guard against Ebola and a federal government wary of discouraging potential medical volunteers to fight the Ebola outbreak in West Africa.

Pennsylvania Sniper Held Without Bail in Trooper Shooting

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - A bruised and gaunt Eric Frein, captured after a seven-week manhunt and held with the handcuffs of a Pennsylvania trooper he is accused of slaying, was held without bail on Friday after facing murder charges in court.

A massive police presence surrounded the 31-year-old survivalist, who prosecutors say will face the death penalty, as he was escorted in and out of the Pike County Courthouse for a preliminary arraignment on a first-degree murder charge and one count of homicide of a police officer, among other charges.

Wearing an orange jumpsuit with

his face looking battered, Frein was asked by the judge whether he understood the charges against him.

"Yes I do," Frein said in a strong voice.

Frein arrived at court in the cruiser and handcuffs used by Corporal Bryon Dickson, 38, who he is accused of killing in a sniper attack on Sept. 12 outside a Pennsylvania state police barracks in Blooming Grove. Frein also is charged with wounding Trooper Alex Douglass, 31, in the shooting.

Police later said Frein's bruises, including an oozing gash over his nose, were the result of injuries he suffered while hiding in the woods as a fugitive.

Army Chief Takes Power After Burkina President Bows to Protests



People load goods looted from a building, which according to locals, belongs to Francois Compaore, the younger brother of Burkina Faso's President Blaise Compaore, in Ouagadougou, capital of Burkina Faso, October 30, 2014.

Ouagadougou (Reuters) - The head of Burkina Faso's armed forces took power on Friday after President Blaise Compaore resigned amid mass demonstrations against an attempt to extend his 27-year rule in the West African country.

Compaore, who seized power in a 1987 coup, had attempted to defy popular pressure for him to step down after a day of violent protests on Thursday in which demonstrators stormed parliament and state television.

However, with hundreds of thousands of protesters packing the streets of the capital Ouagadougou for a second day on Friday and no sign of international support for him staying on, Compaore announced his

resignation.

"I declare a vacancy of power with a view to allowing a transition that should end with free and transparent elections in a maximum period of 90 days," Compaore said in a written statement read on local radio and television.

A heavily armed convoy believed to be carrying Compaore was seen traveling on Friday towards the southern town of Po, near the border with Ghana, two diplomatic sources and local media said.

Crowds danced and cheered in Ouagadougou's dusty streets, blowing on whistles after Compaore's statement was broadcast. The mood cooled, however, as it became plain that military chief General Honor Traore had taken over the reins of power.

Under Burkina Faso's constitution, when the president resigns the head of the National Assembly should take office, but parliament had already been dissolved by the Traore on Thursday under short-lived martial law.

"Considering the urgency of saving the nation, I have decided that I will assume from this day the responsibility of the head of state," Traore told a news conference.

"I undertake a solemn engagement to proceed without delay with consultations with all parties in the country so as to start the process of returning to the constitutional order as soon as possible."

There was no immediate reaction from opposition leaders to Traore's announcement.

Many protesters said they wanted a transition led by retired General Kouame Lougue, a popular former defense minister who was accused of trying to topple Compaore in 2004.

Egyptian Opposition Angry Over Forced Evacuation of Sinai Residents



A convoy of Egyptian military vehicles (file photo)

CAIRO (PRESS TV) – Egyptian opposition parties have condemned the military's forced evacuation of residents in the Sinai Peninsula near the border with the Gaza Strip, Press TV reports.

The Egyptian opposition, led by the Muslim Brotherhood, denounced the regime's recent practices in Sinai as "fascist".

Egypt is creating a buffer zone along its border with the Gaza Strip following recent deadly attacks on Egyptian security forces in the Sinai Peninsula.

The move will see the demolition of about 800 homes, and the construction of a 500-meter deep buffer along the 10-kilometer border with the besieged Palestinian coastal en-

clave.

Egypt had ordered the area's 10,000 residents to pack up and leave before they would destroy their homes.

The opposition is concerned by the compulsory deportation of residents, the lack of fair compensation for those who agree to leave their homes, and the likely grim fate awaiting those who might resist.

The April 6 Youth Movement said the citizens of Sinai should not pay the price for the failure of security forces to fight terrorism.

The Revolutionary Council and the Cairo Declaration Movement also warned the authorities against the move, saying the so-called security buffer zone in Sinai is part of an old Zionist plot aimed at preventing resi-

dents from developing and protecting the strategic peninsula.

On October 24, at least 30 Egyptian soldiers lost their lives when a bomber rammed a vehicle packed with explosives into a checkpoint in the area of Karam al-Qawadees near the town of Sheikh Zuweid, close to the border with the Gaza Strip.

Hours later, three security personnel were killed when militants opened fire on a checkpoint in the nearby city of el-Arish.

Following the assaults, Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sisi held an emergency meeting of the National Defense Council to discuss the new spate of violence in Sinai, and announced three days of mourning in the country.

Spain Rejects Symbolic Catalan Vote

MADRID (Press TV) – The Spanish Council of State has ruled that a new planned symbolic referendum on independence in the Catalonia region is illegal, saying it backs a veto of the vote.

A spokeswoman for the council said Thursday that the consultative body decided that the government should ask the Constitutional Court to declare the November 9 referendum as unlawful.

The council made the ruling after receiving a request by Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy to urgently give its opinion on the upcoming vote.

Rajoy announced after the council's decision that Madrid would take a final decision on how it will respond to the regional Catalan government plans during a weekly cabinet meeting.

The prime minister argues that Catalonia's independence bid does not respect democratic conditions.

If the symbolic referendum were to be held, a "Yes" for independence referendum would not automatically lead to the secession of the region. The vote would only give the Catalan president the mandate to negotiate independence with the Spanish administration.

The wealthy northeastern region of Spain has a population of 7.6 million people, accounting for nearly one-fifth of the country's economy, and has been seeking independence for years.

Polls indicate that around half of Catalans want more independence from Spain and a vast majority of them want a referendum to determine the region's future.

Many Catalans believe their economy would be more prosperous on its own, complaining that a high portion of their taxes goes to the central government in Madrid.

UN Chief Slams Renewed Violence in South Sudan

NEW YORK (Press TV) – The United Nations secretary general has condemned a fresh outbreak of violence in two northern towns in South Sudan's key oil-producing state of Unity.

In a statement released by Ban Ki-moon's spokesperson on Thursday, the UN chief called for an immediate end to all hostilities between South Sudan's army and rebel forces loyal to the country's former vice president, Riek Machar, in the towns of Bentiu and Rubkona.

Ban described the resumption of hostilities in South Sudan's north as a "serious violation" of earlier peace agreements between the warring sides, saying the new spate of violence "undermines the ongoing IGAD (Intergovernmental Authority on Development) efforts to find



United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon

a political solution to the conflict."

The UN chief further called on the conflicting sides to "participate constructively in the ongoing po-

litical negotiations in Addis Ababa and reach urgently an agreement on inclusive and comprehensive transitional arrangements."

Ban also warned both parties of the "inviolability" of the African country's UN bases that are home to tens of thousands of displaced civilians.

The recent clashes in Bentiu and Rubkona come despite two peace accords signed between Juba and rebel forces earlier this year. Mediators from IGAD, the East African regional trading bloc, brokered both agreements.

The fighting in South Sudan erupted last year between troops loyal to the country's President Salva Kiir and defectors led by Machar around the capital Juba.

The conflict soon turned into an all-out war between the army and defectors, with the violence taking on an ethnic dimension that pitted the president's Dinka tribe against Machar's Nuer ethnic group.