



TRIPOLI (Press TV)—An armed group has attacked two strategic oil terminals in Libya in a fresh attempt to gain a grip over the export of the country's economic lifeblood in its eastern Oil Crescent.

Officials said the armed faction called the Benghazi Defense Brigades (BDB) had entered two major Libyan oil ports at Es Sider and Ras Lanuf late on Friday after pushing back Libyan National Army (LNA) forces loyal to renegade general, Khalifa Haftar, who were in control of the facilities.

Colonel Ahmed al-Mesmari, the LNA spokesman, said Saturday that BDF forces had taken control of the main airfield in the oil port of Ras Lanuf after his forces had to stop their operations against the assailants to avoid major damage to the oil terminals.

NEW YORK (AFP) — U.S. immigration agents increasingly are detaining unauthorized migrants in or near places once considered "safe" like courthouses and churches, spreading panic among migrants and outrage among activists.

Since taking office on an "America First" agenda, President Donald Trump has made immigration a policy cornerstone, granting Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents broad authority to detain and deport unauthorized migrants.

The massive deportations feared under Trump have not materialized -- in fact, deportation numbers are similar to those under former president Barack Obama.

ACAPULCO (Dispatches) — A journalist was murdered in the troubled southern state of Guerrero, Mexican authorities said Friday, adding to a long list of reporter killings in what is considered one of the world's most dangerous countries for media professionals.

The Guerrero state prosecutor's office said in a statement that **Cecilio Pineda Birto** was shot dead Thursday evening in Ciudad Altamirano while in a hammock at a car wash waiting for his car to be serviced. Prosecutors said two attackers arrived on a motorcycle and one of them fired a handgun, according to eyewitness accounts. Authorities were investigating, and there was no immediate word on whether his killing may have been related to his work.

KUALA LUMPUR (AP) — The families of those onboard missing Malaysia Airlines Flight 370 launched efforts Saturday to raise at least \$15 million to fund a private search as they marked the third anniversary of the plane's disappearance.

Malaysia, Australia and China suspended a nearly three-year search in the southern Indian Ocean on Jan. 17 after it failed to find any trace of the plane. The jet disappeared March 8, 2014, while flying from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing with 239 people on board.

Transport Minister Liow Tiong Lai said in a speech at the event that a final report with information and analysis on what happened to the plane based on available data and evidence would be released this year. He didn't say when.

Mass S. Korea Rallies as Final Park Impeachment Ruling Looms



Anti-government protesters take part in a march in the South Korean capital Seoul.

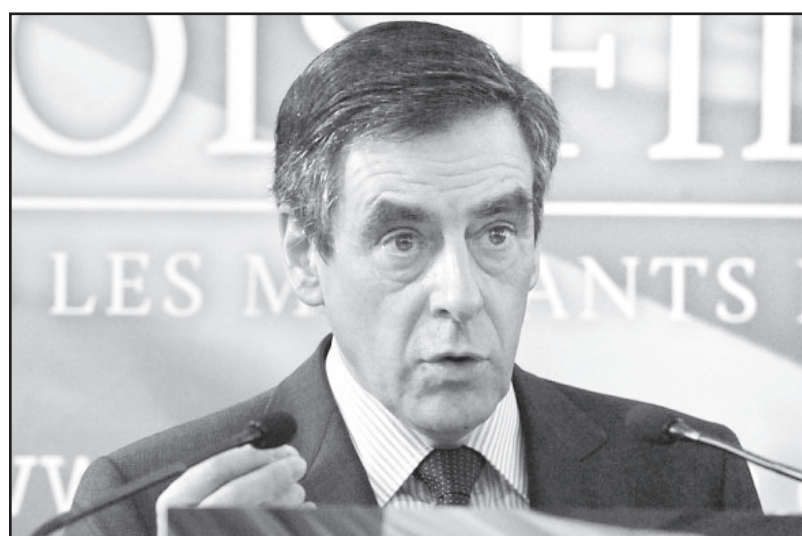
SEOUL (AFP) - Thousands of South Korean protesters held rival mass rallies Saturday over the impeachment of President Park Geun-Hye as judges prepare to rule on the scandal that has rocked the country. Park was impeached by parliament last December over a major influence-peddling scandal that prompted millions to take to the street for months to call for her resignation. The case has also engulfed South Korea's biggest business, with the heir to the Samsung empire and four other top executives indicted Tuesday on multiple charges including bribery and embezzlement.

Park -- currently holed up in the presidential palace with her power suspended -- expressed "belated regret", as the Constitutional Court wrapped up its hearings on Monday, with a decision expected in March. Her lawyers maintain that she was not aware of any wrongdoing and blamed her secret confidante Choi Soon-Sil, who is accused of using her presidential ties to force local firms to "donate" nearly \$70 million to non-profit foundations. The case has bitterly divided Park's supporters and detractors, who have regularly taken to the streets. Tens of thousands of anti-Park

protesters rallied in Seoul Saturday, some waving banners of the president in prison uniform and chanting in unison "Constitutional Court, impeach Park immediately!" Several blocks away, another much smaller demonstration demanded the court reject the impeachment against the "poor innocent president". The mostly middle-aged or elderly supporters waved signs urging the military to "rise up" and dismantle parliament. While the court's deliberations could technically take up to six months, local media reports predict the judgment could come as early as next week.

France's Fillon Under Increasing Pressure

PARIS (Press TV) - French conservative presidential candidate Francois Fillon has come under mounting pressure to quit the race for the presidency as top campaign staff and dozens of MPs leave his team after corruption charges were filed against him.



French presidential candidate Francois Fillon.

Fillon's chief campaign spokesman Thierry Solère, who is also a parliament member, became the latest figure among the nearly 100 elected politicians to leave his campaign on Friday over growing concerns that he is leading what has been described as a "sinking ship." It was revealed this week that the troubled candidate was to be charged over allegations that he paid his British wife hundreds of thousands of euros from taxpayers' funds for a suspected fake job as his parliamentary assistant. Additionally, he is accused of hiring his children in fake jobs that paid them extremely high salaries while they were students. However, he has denied the allegations, insisting at a Thursday night rally that he

would press on as a presidential candidate. "The French people back me," he has said. Asked on Thursday what he would do if all elected politicians quit his campaign, he insisted that he would carry on without them. Fillon has dropped in nationwide polls and appears on his way to be knocked out of the presidential race before the final round by the independent centrist Emmanuel Macron and the ultra-right candidate Marine Le Pen. Former right-wing minister Nadine Morano, a former Fil-

lon backer, said that the candidate must step down. He cautioned that Fillon was in a "dead end," his presidential chances were slipping away, and that he risked bringing "catastrophe" to the right. Fillon had vowed that he would step down if charges were pressed against him but he has retracted on his pledge. Instead, he slammed judges and the justice system and censured the workings of the French state this week with growingly inflammatory language, urging his supporters to rise up and "resist."

Malaysia Expels North Korean Ambassador Over Kim's Killing



North Korean Ri Jong Chol speaks in front of reporters at the North Korean Embassy in Beijing.

KUALA LUMPUR (AP) -- Malaysia's foreign minister says the government has expelled North Korea's ambassador for criticizing the investigation into the killing of the North Korean leader's estranged half brother. Foreign Minister Anifah Aman said in a statement that a notice was sent to the North Korean Embassy on Saturday saying Ambassador Kang Chol must

leave the country within 48 hours. Anifah said that earlier in the week, Malaysia demanded that North Korea apologize for criticizing the investigation into the Feb. 13 killing of Kim Jong Nam at Kuala Lumpur's airport. He said that no apology had come and that none appeared forthcoming, so Malaysia decided to expel the ambassador.

Irish Nationalists Surge in Northern Ireland Election

DUBLIN (AP) — Sinn Fein, the Irish nationalist party, has fallen just short of becoming the largest party in elections for the Northern Ireland Assembly. In results declared early Friday, the Democratic Unionist Party led with 28 seats, just one more than Sinn Fein's total. At stake in the outcome from Thursday's snap election is the revival or demise of power-sharing between Irish Catholics and British Protestants, the central objective of the U.S.-brokered Good Friday peace accord nearly two decades ago. Sinn Fein was seeking to overtake the Protestants of the Democratic Unionists and become the No. 1 party for the first time in Northern Ireland — an achievement that would have given Sinn Fein the right to the top government post of "first minister." Sinn Fein's new leader in Northern Ireland, 40-year-old Michelle O'Neill, was mobbed by supporters as the results rolled in.

O'Neill, the daughter of an Irish Republican Army veteran with childhood memories of the conflict that claimed 3,700 lives, represents a leadership shift within Sinn Fein to the first post-war generation following the IRA's 1997 cease-fire and 2005 disarmament. Friday's final Northern Ireland-wide total of first-preference votes — the core measure of party popularity — showed the Democratic Unionists narrowly on top with 28.1 percent, down 1 point from the last election 10 months ago. Sinn Fein trailed with 27.9 percent, up 4 points, the narrowest sectarian gap in Northern Ireland electoral history. Commentators credited the Sinn Fein surge to Catholic voters' anger at the Democratic Unionists, especially outgoing First Minister Arlene Foster, who was blamed for overseeing a wasteful "green energy" program and for fostering a culture of insults and disrespect toward Sinn Fein. Voter turnout reached nearly 65 percent, 10 points higher than last year.

EU's Mogherini Urges Kosovo to Ratify Montenegro Border Deal

PRISTINA (AP) — The European Union's foreign policy chief has urged Kosovo's opposition to ratify a border demarcation agreement with Montenegro, the last remaining condition before its citizens enjoy visa-free travel with Europe's Schengen member countries. Federica Mogherini was in Kosovo, the last stop on her tour of the Western Balkans, where she met senior leaders on Saturday. She commended them for their "constructive stand" in lowering recent tensions with Serbia. "It's time to vote for the ratification of the agreement. That would release the visa liberalization for the Kosovo people," she said at a news conference with Prime Minister Isa Mustafa. She urged opposition political parties to leave aside their political interest "and work together for the reconciliatory path to take the country ahead." The country's opposition has prevented parliament from voting on the Montenegrin deal and another with Serbia that gives more powers to ethnic Serbs in Kosovo. Obstructive tactics in the parliament include using tear gas, blowing whistles and throwing water bottles, while their supporters outside have clashed violently with police. In the last three months, relations between Kosovo and Serbia have been tense following a series of frictions and incidents. Last month Mogherini convened Kosovo's and Serbia's presidents and prime ministers twice in Brussels. Kosovo declared independence in 2008, recognized by 114 countries but not by Serbia.