

NEWSIN brief

22 migrants flee US to seek asylum in Canada

At least 22 migrants fled the United States for Canada over the weekend, sneaking across the border in Manitoba province to request asylum, authorities said Sunday. Emerson has seen the porous border -- in many areas with no official crossings -- drawing greater numbers of asylum seekers since Trump's travel ban.

Libya PM convoy comes under fire in Tripoli

A convoy carrying Libya's contested unity government chief, Fayez al-Sarraj, and other top officials came under heavy gunfire yesterday in Tripoli, but they survived unharmed, spokesmen for his administration said. Libya has been submerged in chaos since the fall and slaying of longtime dictator Moamer Gaddafi.

IS tortures Sunni Arab women too: HRW

Fighters from the Islamic State group, whose abuses against Yazidi women have been well documented, are raping and torturing Sunni Arab women too, Human Rights Watch said yesterday. The watchdog documented cases of arbitrary detentions, beatings, forced marriages and rape by the jihadists on women who have fled the town of Hawijah.

Four Russian military dead in Syria blast

Four Russian military personnel were killed and two injured when their vehicle was targeted with explosives in central Syria last week, a defence ministry statement quoted by Russian agencies said yesterday. The four deaths raise the number of Russian military officially reported killed in Syria to 26 since it started its campaign in Syria.

Sent back to old job

White House confirms senior National Security Council adviser Craig Deare reassigned after disagreeing with Trump

A senior National Security Council adviser was reassigned to his old job at the National Defense University, a White House spokeswoman confirmed Sunday, after he criticized the Trump administration's Latin American policies.

Craig Deare was removed from his role as a senior adviser at the National Security Council's Western Hemisphere division Friday and "sent back to his original position," said Sarah Sanders, a White House spokeswoman. Deare had been assigned to the NSC by the Trump administration.

Deare reportedly knocked the Trump administration's handling of Latin American policies during a speech at The Wilson Center Thursday in Washington. He also criticized overall White House dysfunction, Politico reported based on a source.

CNN could not independently confirm the account, and Deare did not respond to a request for comment.

Fielding questions about Deare's reassignment, Sanders said that people

who don't agree with President Donald Trump should not have a job in his White House.

"I don't think that any person that is there in order to carry out the President's agenda should be against the President's agenda," Sanders said during a briefing with reporters in West Palm Beach, Florida. "It seems pretty silly that you



would have someone who is not supportive of what you are trying to accomplish there to carry out that very thing."

Sanders said she was "not extending a blanket policy here" but later added: "If you don't support the President's agenda then you shouldn't have a job in the White House."

Deare's reassignment returns him to

the National Defense University, an appointed position he's held since January 2001.

This is not the first time a senior administration official has been removed from their post because of comments about Trump.

Republican consultant Shermichael Singleton, a political appointee at the Department of Housing and Urban Development, was fired last week for an op-ed he wrote before the election that criticized then-candidate Trump, a source with knowledge of the situation told CNN.

The op-ed, which was published in October, said Trump was leading to low morale within the Republican Party. Singleton, according to a source, was told he was dismissed because of the op-ed.

"We allowed that hostile takeover to happen on our watch," he wrote. "This individual recognized a moment of great disparity in the Republican base and, like cancer, attacked and spread, consuming everything in his path."

However, some of Trump's closest aides have also criticized him in the past.

'DAY WITHOUT IMMIGRANTS' PROTESTS

More than a hundred US employees sacked

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

More than a hundred workers across the US were reportedly fired for taking place in the "Day Without Immigrants" protests against President Donald Trump's immigration policies.

The demonstrations, for which support was largely drummed up online, urged foreign-born workers to refuse to participate in the US economy for a day.

Nearly 20 employees at Bradley Coatings, a commercial painting company in Tennessee, told supervisors on Wednesday that they would not be coming into work the following day, instead making up the time on Sunday.

However, they were told on Thursday that they had lost their jobs, NBC4 reported.

Robert Peal, the company's attorney, told NBC4: "Regretfully, and consistent with its prior communication to all its employees, BCI had no choice but to terminate these individuals. The reason these employees

missed work -- to engage in peaceful demonstrations -- had nothing to do with BCI's decision to terminate them."

The story was not a one-off. Local news outlets across the whole country reported that employees returned to work only to find out they had been fired from their positions.

In South Carolina, 21 members of staff at a boat manufacturing company were reportedly fired for taking part. Thirty masonry workers lost their jobs in Denver as well as 15 workers at the I Don't Care Bar and Grill, an Oklahoma restaurant.

The same week, the restaurant had posted on Facebook seeking employees for its open positions. Some people have taken to Twitter to call on customers to boycott the businesses that fired workers after the protest.

Trump has vowed to crack down on illegal immigration and signed an executive order, which was put on hold by federal courts, restricting entry from seven Muslim-majority countries.



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Women wearing US flag hijabs are pictured during an "I am Muslim Too" rally in Times Square, Manhattan, New York, US. Protesters march on Sunday in solidarity with American Muslims and against the travel ban ordered by President Donald Trump. PHOTO: REUTERS

'What has Trump been smoking?'

Ex-Swedish PM ridicules US president's terror attack claim

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

The former Prime Minister of Sweden has asked "what has Donald Trump been smoking?" after the President alluded to a mystery recent attack in the country.

Swedes reacted with general confusion after Trump said "look what's happening last night in Sweden" after listing a series of past terror attacks in Europe, during a speech at a rally in Florida.

Aftonbladet newspaper, a Swedish tabloid, listed some events that had happened in the country on that night, including police chasing a drunk driver, a man being treated for severe burns and an avalanche warning.

And former Prime Minister Carl Bildt took to Twitter to express his confusion, saying: "Sweden? Terror attack? What has he been smoking? Questions abound."

Although Trump did not explicitly state there had been an attack in Sweden, he did mention a range of attacks immediately after talking about the country.

"Sweden. They took in large numbers. They're having problems like they never thought possible. You look at what's happening in Brussels. You look at what's happening all over the world. Take a look at Nice. Take a look at Paris," Trump said.

"We've allowed thousands and thousands of people into our country and there was no way to vet those people. There was no documentation. There was no nothing. So we're going to keep our country safe."

Diplomatic row escalates

North Korea questions Malaysia probe; airport killing seen on CCTV

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

North Korea and Malaysia yesterday exchanged barbs over the investigation into the killing of leader Kim Jong-Un's brother, as footage emerged of the moment he was fatally attacked in Kuala Lumpur airport.

Malaysia's probe has put five North Koreans in the frame for the airport assassination of Kim Jong-Nam, but Pyongyang said it had no faith in the investigation and claimed Kuala Lumpur was in cahoots with "hostile forces".

The diplomatic confrontation gathered pace yesterday when Malaysia recalled its envoy to North Korea and summoned Pyongyang's ambassador Kang Chol for a dressing down. But an unbowed Kang hit back.

"It has been seven days since the incident, but there is no clear evidence on the cause of death and at the moment we cannot trust the investigation by the Malaysian police", he told

reporters in the Malaysian capital. Pyongyang has also criticised Malaysia for carrying out a post-mortem examination without North Korean permission -- a complaint Kuala Lumpur said was groundless. Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak backed those running the probe,

KIM JONG-NAM KILLING

Kuala Lumpur recalls ambassador to Pyongyang, summons envoy

Police says four North Korean suspects fled after murder

saying it would be "very professional". CCTV footage aired on Japanese television yesterday gave the first public glimpse of the apparent moment Jong-Nam was attacked at Kuala Lumpur International Airport.

The dramatic film shows two women approaching a portly man --

identified as Jong-Nam -- with one of them grabbing him from behind and appearing to push a cloth in his face.

The man is then seen talking to airport staff and apparently explaining to them what had happened, gesturing to his head. The staff then lead him to the airport clinic.

Seoul has pointed the finger of blame at Pyongyang for the attack last Monday, citing a "standing order" from the leader to kill his elder sibling and a failed assassination bid in 2012 after he criticised the regime.

The claim was bolstered over the weekend, with Malaysian police saying they believed five North Koreans were involved in the killing.

One of them was already in custody, and four are believed to have fled the country on the day of the murder.

Detectives are also holding an Indonesian woman and her Malaysian boyfriend, as well as a Vietnamese woman.

New Yorkers protest Trump's travel ban

RABIYA AHMED from New York

New Yorkers gathered on a warm and bright Sunday at the "I Am a Muslim Too" rally in solidarity with communities who have been targeted by Donald Trump's travel ban back in January.

Led by Def Jam founder Russell Simmons and other community leaders, including Imam Shamsi Ali, Rabbi Marc Schneier, and Woman's March organiser Linda Sarsour, the event took place at Times Square, 48th street and Broadway at noon.

Although the rally was primarily organised to stand in solidarity with Muslims, persons of all minority groups attended the event as Simmons had stated "Everyone except white privileged males are in immediate danger. African Americans, women, Latinos, Asians, and LGBTQ are all at risk."

Over a thousand people filled the streets while holding "We the people" posters as they intently listened to prayer recited in Arabic ringing throughout the vicinity. A few Muslim New Yorkers were seen per-

forming Zohr prayers as non-Muslim allies stood by to give them space.

Members of the Desi community, a term used by Bangladeshi and Indians to identify themselves, came out to join the rally to support and protect their communities.

A Bangladeshi American high schooler, Mariam, came out to "get the message to Trump and the White haters, that united, America will stand together. We are not divided. It doesn't matter what background you come from, what religion you are, this is our home and we're not going to leave it."

Thirty-year-old Indian Muslim software architect, Faheemuddin Mohammed, said, "We have to stand for each other. India is not banned but my friends and brother live in the countries that were on the list and I should stand with them when they are in difficulty."

There have been protests every week in the city in response to the immigration ban and raids on undocumented immigrants by the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement.



US VP Pence seeks to allay European fears

AFP, Brussels

US Vice President Mike Pence yesterday sought to reassure nervous Europeans of Donald Trump's strong commitment to transatlantic ties as he met EU chiefs amid anti-Trump protests.

Capping a European trip aimed at allaying EU fears the new US president might abandon them, Pence said Washington's support remained "steadfast and enduring".

"Today it is my privilege on behalf of President Trump to express the strong commitment of the United States to continued cooperation and partnership with the European Union," Pence said after talks with EU president Donald Tusk in Brussels.

Pence pledged the United States would keep working with Europe to boost the world's two biggest economies, fight terrorism and defend eastern EU states against Russian encroachment.

Trump's criticism of Nato as "obsolete", his praise for Britain's decision to leave the EU and prediction that others would follow, plus his apparent tilt to Russian President Vladimir Putin have all unnerved US allies.

Tusk, a former Polish premier, said that Europeans "truly needed" the meeting with Pence and that the 28-nation bloc counted on "wholehearted and unequivocal" US support.

Hundreds of migrants rush Spain's border

AFP, Madrid

Over 350 migrants stormed the border between Morocco and Spain at Ceuta yesterday, officials said, days after one of the largest rushes of arrivals over the frontier in more than a decade.

The young migrants forced their way through the high border fence into the Spanish North African territory, ecstatic to have finally crossed into a European Union state.

Some kissed the ground and shouted "Thank you lord" and "Viva Espana", although several had bloodied hands and feet as well as torn clothes after making it through the barrier.

Woman finds £5 note worth £50,000

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

A woman who found a rare five pound note worth £50,000 has donated the proceeds to help young people, the BBC has reported.

In December, Birmingham-based micro artist Graham Short engraved four of the new plastic fivers with tiny 5mm portraits of Jane Austen, before spending one each in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The latest find, in Eniskillen in Northern Ireland, means only the note spent in England remains in circulation.

"An old lady found it and she said 'I don't want my picture in the papers' and she said 'if it sells for a lot of money it will be better if young children could benefit from it,'" Short told the BBC.

A note sent to the gallery by the mystery woman, signed only with the letter J, read: "It was lovely to speak to you today. £5 note enclosed, I don't need it at my time of life. Please use it to help young people."



Zekeriya Kuzu, one of the main suspects accused of attempting to assassinate Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan on the night of the failed last year's July 15 coup, is escorted by Turkish gendarmes as he arrives for the first hearing of the trial in Mugla, Turkey, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS