

(1) Explosion...

however voiced their anger over the security situation and said government should have provided better security to protect the academy which they said "was under threat in the past". The Taliban has denied responsibility for the attack. (Tolo news)

(2) Fuel, Medicine...

The fighting in Ghazni began last Friday and intensified at the weekend. The telecommunications system is down and there is no electricity supply. Some people have managed to leave the city, while others have taken shelter in their homes. (Pajhwok)

(3) Time for Peace...

and expand common ground, he argued. The United Nations was ready to support any endeavours that would advance peace in Afghanistan, he concluded. (Pajhwok)

(4) Pakistan Supports...

expressed his heartiest congratulations to Pakistan on its 71st independence anniversary. He commended Pakistan's support for the jihad in Afghanistan, hosting more than 1.3 million refugees and granted Afghan students thousands of scholarships. He also praised Pakistan-funded socio-economic projects worth \$500 million in different provinces of Afghanistan. Mohaqiq congratulated Pakistan on holding successful elections.

During a flag-hoisting ceremony, messages of the president and the prime minister were read out. (Pajhwok)

(5) Ghani Slams...

their anger over the poor security at the academy. One parent said the academy "was under threat in the past".

One father from Afshar, whose son attended the academy until a month ago, said he took his son out due to security concerns.

"I removed by son last month because I was worried that the security at the academy was not strong enough - especially after the recent attack on Tabyan Cultural Center, in the same area." The Taliban has denied responsibility for the attack. (Tolo news)

(6) 16 Anti-Graft...

The report said The AGO developed ToRs for all prosecutors and operationalized the critical performance evaluation system for the prosecutors.

A Human Resource Management Information System (HRMIS) was established within the AGO, with prosecutors recruited for up to 20 insecure districts.

Comprehensive legal training programs have been initiated to improve the capacity of prosecutors.

The AGO dramatically increased the portion of female employees from just three percent to 21 percent.

To increase inter-departmental engagement, the Provincial Appellate Prosecution directorates were also involved in the planning and budgeting processes.

The AGO has constructed office facilities for its provincial offices in Nuristan, Daikundi and Khost, while construction of these facilities in five additional provinces are underway.

At the same time, the MEC observed that some of its recommendations have not been implemented or have seen limited progress during this quarter.

- Legal courses being conducted for prosecutors in provinces are ineffective due to lack of professional expertise for teaching the courses.

- No final decision has yet been taken by the Ministry of Justice regarding proposed changes to resources and support for Legal Aid Providers.

- Transportation issues for AGO staff at the District level and in insecure areas remain a serious problem.

- Appropriate Criminal Forensic Laboratory facilities and equipment are still not available in all provinces.

The MEC will monitor implementation of the recommendations issued in its Special Report of the AGO's Vulnerabilities to Corruption every quarter. (Pajhwok)

(7) Afghans, Syrians...

no German citizenship rose by 10,500, helping to lift the overall number of new vocational training contracts by 5,700 to 515,700 in 2017, the data showed.

Interest was particularly strong among young men from Afghanistan and Syria as their number among the new apprentices more than tripled, the office said. Without their applications, German companies would have ended up with fewer new trainees.

Merkel has argued in the past that Germany's ageing society could also benefit from the humanitarian decision to help refugees.

"The numbers of young refugees who started on-the-job training increased significantly. That's good news, and it underpins (that) integration through education can succeed," the head of the BDA employers association, Stefan Kampeter, said.

Kampeter urged asylum authorities in Germany's 16 federal states to implement nationally agreed integration rules more consistently in order to provide as much planning security as possible for companies and refugees alike.

Since August 2016, asylum seekers can continue on-the-job training over three years and work for another two years under certain conditions even if their asylum requests were rejected.

This so-called 3+2 rule is meant to facilitate integration and to reduce the risks for companies that they lose a skilled worker after having invested in his or her training. "Without reliability at this point, there's an increased risk of dropouts which could frustrate businesses and reduce their willingness to offer training to refugees," Achim Dercks from the DIHK Chambers of Industry and Commerce said.

Germany's dual-track training system, which also includes theory lessons at vocational schools, is being exported in various forms to Europe, Asia, Africa and the United States. But its popularity is waning at home as young people increasingly prefer the higher status of a university degree.

That could hurt growth in Europe's biggest economy by exacerbating a skilled labour shortage, which is partly caused by hundreds of thousands of ageing employees leaving the labour market every year.

The statistics office said that the number of dropouts in vocational training fell slightly last year as roughly 146,000 training contracts were terminated prematurely. (Reuters)

(8) Seven Police Killed...

weapons cache was destroyed. The four Taliban killed were traveling in a vehicle when they were targeted in an airstrike in Charkh district of Logar province.

Local officials did not provide more information and the Taliban has not yet commented. (Tolo news)

(9) 45 Afghan Security...

were killed.

On Monday, local officials in the northern province of Faryab confirmed that Afghan troops surrendered to the Taliban after their base -called Chenayeeha - fell to the Taliban in Ghormach district in the province.

The base reportedly remained under Taliban siege for 48 hours. According to local officials, over 40 security force members surrendered to the Taliban after they received no help nor ammunition supplies despite repeated requests.

Mohammad Tahir Rahmani, head of Faryab provincial council also confirmed that the troops surrendered.

Security officials have not yet commented on the collapse of Chenayeeha base to the Taliban. (Tolo news)

(10) Ghazni Battle...

Wednesday, said that more than 400 Taliban fighters were killed in the four-day battle.

It said that the battle killed also more than 100 Afghan forces and 35 civilians. (Agencies)

(11) Six Girls Killed...

were recorded in this time.

This was a 15 percent drop compared to the same period in 2017. However, as UNAMA pointed out there was a decrease in child casualties from explosive remnants of war, but that 89 percent of civilian casualties from explosive remnants of war were children. (Tolo news)

Uzbekistan may Build Central Asia's First Solar Power Plant in Navoi Region

TASHKENT - The International Finance Corporation (IFC), a member of the World Bank Group, will support construction of a solar power station in Navoi region of Uzbekistan with a capacity of up to 100 megawatts, Uzbek media reported referring to the decision of the Cabinet of Ministers.

According to the document, an agreement has been concluded between the State Committee for Investments, state energy operator Uzbekenergo and IFC on providing financial advisory services by IFC in attraction of private investors on a competitive basis for design, financing, construction and operation of solar power facilities worth up to \$1 billion on the basis of public-private partnership.

Within the framework of the agreement, a pilot project to attract private investments for construction of a solar power plant with a capacity of up to 100 megawatts in Navoi region is planned to be implemented.

In accordance with the road map, an international tender for the project will be conducted in March 2019. It is expected that the agreement on the project with an investor will be signed in August 2019.

The Uzbek government is planning to hold talks with IFC in September 2019 on terms, volumes and timing of the agreement on other solar power plants with a total capacity of up to 900 megawatts.

In Spring 2018, an agreement was signed with the Canadian SkyPower Global for construction of facilities for generation of solar energy with a total capacity of 1,000 megawatts. The company is intending to invest \$1.3 billion in construction of fa-

ilities in Tashkent, Samarkand, Navoi, Jizzakh, Surkhandarya and Kashkadarya regions.

Construction of Central Asia's first solar power plant in the Samarkand region of Uzbekistan was announced in 2014.

In 2016, it was reported that the tender for construction was won by the Chinese Zhuhai Singyes Green Building Technology. The project worth \$275.8 million was to be financed through loans from the Asian Development Bank and by the Fund for Reconstruction and Development of Uzbekistan and Uzbekenergo.

Later, however, as a result of careful examination of technical and economic documents related to the project, it was found that the project should be revised, resulting in construction of a solar power plant in the Samarkand region being suspended. (Trend)

Manafort Jury to Hear Closing Arguments in His Fraud Trial

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — Closing arguments were expected Wednesday in the trial of Paul Manafort, the former Trump campaign chairman accused of tax evasion and bank fraud. Manafort's defense rested its case Tuesday without calling any witnesses. Manafort himself chose not to testify.

It's the first trial to emerge from special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation, although the case didn't address allegations of Russian interference in the 2016 election. Mueller has been tasked with investigating those allegations, as well as possible collusion with the Trump campaign.

But as a result of the ongoing probe, Mueller's legal team says it discovered Manafort hiding millions of dollars in income he received advising Ukrainian politicians. The defense has tried to blame Manafort's financial mistakes on his former deputy, Rick Gates. Defense attorneys have called Gates a liar, philanderer and embezzler as they've sought to undermine his testimony.

Manafort's decision not to testify and not to call witnesses was announced by his attorney, Kevin Downing, before the jury on Tuesday afternoon. Asked by U.S. District Judge T.S. Ellis III whether he wished to testify in his defense, Manafort responded: "No, sir."

The announcement came after a more than two-hour hearing that was closed to the public. The judge has not given any explanation for the sealed proceeding, only noting that a transcript of it would become public after Manafort's case concludes.

After announcing that they were resting their case, Downing told reporters outside the courthouse that they did so because they believe "the government has not met its burden of proof."

Also Tuesday, Ellis rejected a defense motion that the case should be dismissed on those same grounds. Manafort's lawyers asked the judge to toss out all the charges, but they focused in particular on four bank-fraud charges.

The government says Manafort hid at least \$16 million in income from the IRS between 2010 and 2014 by disguising the money he earned advising politicians in Ukraine as loans and hiding it in foreign banks. Then, after his money in Ukraine dried up, they allege he defrauded banks by lying about his income on loan applications and concealing other

financial information, such as mortgages.

Manafort's lawyers argued there is no way that one of the banks, Federal Savings Bank, could have been defrauded because its chairman, Stephen Calk, knew full well that Manafort's finances were in disarray but approved the loan to Manafort anyway. Witnesses testified that Calk pushed the loans through because he wanted a post in the Trump administration. (AP)

EU Acting Too Slowly with Poland on Court Independence

WARSAW - Poland's top judge Malgorzata Gersdorf, who is locked in a dispute with the ruling party, has urged the European Union to move faster to defend her country's judiciary from government efforts to increase its influence over the courts.

The EU's executive Commission appears "to have put faith" in the nationalist Law and Justice (PiS) party's openness to negotiate, even as the government was "playing for time", she told Reuters in an interview.

Gersdorf, who is president of the Supreme Court, is at the centre of a dispute over the rule of law in Poland, the largest ex-communist state in the EU. She has defied PiS legislation to force her early retirement, insisting her constitutional term expires in 2020.

Last month, Polish President Andrzej Duda declared Gersdorf retired and she isn't hearing cases, but she is still working out of her office at the Supreme Court building and receiving a salary. After months of on-and-off negotiations, the EU has launched a series of legal steps against Poland's rules on the Supreme Court and other judicial reforms that it believes contravene the bloc's democratic standards.

The government says the overhaul is needed to improve the efficiency of the courts and rid the country of a residue of communism, which collapsed in Poland almost 30 years ago. (Reuters)

Germany Grants Farmers Exemption to Cultivate Nature Reserves after Drought

BERLIN - The federal government in Berlin has passed a motion on Wednesday which will allow German farmers affected by a recent drought to grow animal feed in environmentally-protected areas of the country.

"Animals require feed every day. As a consequence, I have made a legislative proposal which enables farmers to use ecological priority areas to grow a mixture of crops for feed purposes," a statement by agricultural minister Julia Kloeckner (CDU) read.

The temporary measure is a response to the extremely hot and dry weather which was recorded throughout parts of Germany this summer and is now anticipated to cause widespread crop failures by the agricultural industry. Farmers have pointed to a shortage of animal feed in particular as posing a risk to their financial solvency.

Citing effects of climate change as witnessed during an ongoing heatwave in Europe, the German Farmers Association (DBV) has downgraded its annual forecast for grain yield for a second time in 2018 from 41 million tonnes to 36 million tonnes. (Xinhua)