

(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)

U.S. Says Redirects Syria Funds as Allies Pony up \$300 Million

WASHINGTON - The U.S. State Department said on Friday it will redirect \$230 million in frozen funding away from Syria and had raised \$300 million from coalition partners for recovery efforts in areas retaken from Islamic State militants in northeast Syria.

President Donald Trump had frozen the funds in March while his administration reassessed Washington's role in the Syrian conflict.

The department's spokeswoman Heather Nauert said Saudi Arabia had contributed \$100 million and United Arab Emirates had pledged \$50 million toward the new funding.

"This decision does not represent any lessening of U.S. commitment to our strategic goals in Syria," Nauert said in a statement. (Reuters)

Row over Putin's Attendance at Austria Minister's Wedding

Vienna - The expected attendance of Russian President Vladimir Putin at Saturday's wedding of Austrian Foreign Minister Karin Kneissl sparked a row Friday over whether the visit was appropriate.

"How is Austria's presidency of the EU meant to live up to the government's own claims of building bridges (between the EU and Russia) and being an honest broker, when Austria's foreign minister and chancellor are so obviously on one side?" asked MP Andreas Schieder of the opposition Social Democrats (SPOe).

SPOe MEP Evelyn Regner said the invite sent a "shameful" image of Austria to its EU partners, branding it "a provocation of European proportions".

The Greens called for Kneissl's resignation, pointing out that "Vladimir Putin is the EU's most aggressive enemy in matters of foreign policy".

Kneissl, 53, who was nominated for the post by the far-right Freedom Party (FPÖ), will marry businessman Wolfgang Meilinger in a ceremony in a wine-growing village near the south-eastern city of Graz.

Putin confirmed he would be attending the wedding before heading to talks with German Chancellor Angela Merkel near Berlin on Saturday evening.

Putin's attendance was originally described as a "private event" by Kneissl's office but has since been upgraded to a "working visit".

Several hundred police officers will take part in the security operation around the wedding.

Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz of the centre-right People's Party (ÖVP) and FPÖ Vice-Chancellor Heinz-Christian Strache are also expected at the ceremony.

In 2016, the FPÖ signed a "co-operation pact" with Putin's United Russia party.

The invitation to Putin has angered Kiev, which said it would prevent Austria playing a role in the Minsk agreements aimed at ending the conflict in eastern Ukraine.

The foreign ministry has insisted that Putin's visit "will not change anything in terms of Austria's foreign policy positions".

The invitation has even provoked some criticism from within Kurz's own ÖVP party, with one of its MEPs Othmar Karas saying: "I can't grasp the logic and the purpose of making such a personal occasion political and open to misuse in this way".

Russia has been accused of seeking to weaken and divide the EU, notably by maintaining links with populist parties in several European countries.

Kurz's ÖVP and the FPÖ have been in coalition together since December after an election campaign in which both parties ran

Trump Says Turkey Has Acted Badly in Brunson Case

WASHINGTON - U.S. President Donald Trump on Friday said the United States was not going to take Turkey's detention of U.S. Christian pastor Andrew Brunson "sitting down," a day after his Treasury chief said Washington could hit Ankara with further sanctions.

"They should have given him back a long time ago, and Turkey has in my opinion acted very, very badly," Trump told reporters at the White House. "So, we haven't seen the last of that. We are not going to take it sitting down. They can't take our people." (Reuters)

Fury Clouds Funeral Plans for Italy Bridge Victims

GENOA (Italy) - Grieving relatives wept over the coffins of dozens of victims of Genoa's bridge disaster Friday amid growing fury over a planned state funeral, while rescuers pressed on with their tireless search for those missing in the rubble.

The collapse of the Morandi bridge, a decades-old viaduct that crumbled in a storm on Tuesday killing at least 38 people, has stunned and

angered the country, with Italian media reporting that some outraged families would shun Saturday's official ceremonies.

Italy's government has blamed the operator of the viaduct for the tragedy and threatened to strip the firm of its contracts, while the country's creaking infrastructure has come under fresh scrutiny.

Authorities plan a state funeral service on Saturday at a hall in Genoa, coinciding with a day of mourning.

Relatives who gathered at the hall on Friday embraced and prayed over lines of coffins, many adorned with flowers and photographs of the dead.

But according to La Stampa newspaper, the families of 17 victims have refused to take part, while a further seven have yet to decide whether they will attend.

"It is the state who has provoked this; let them not show their faces, the parade of politicians is shameful," the press cited the mother of one of four young Italians from Naples who died.

The father of another of the dead from Naples took to social media to vent his anger.

"My son will not become a number in the catalogue of deaths caused by Italian failures," said his grieving father, Roberto.

"We do not want a farce of a funeral but a ceremony at home."

Despite fading hopes of finding survivors, rescue workers said they had not given up as they resumed the dangerous operation to search through the unstable mountains of debris.

"Is there anyone there? Is there anyone there?" one firefighter shouted into a cavity dug out of the piles of concrete and twisted metal, in a video published by the emergency services.

Between 10 and 20 people are still missing, according to Genoa's chief prosecutor.

Ten people remain in hospital, six of them in a serious condition.

Hundreds of rescuers are using cranes and bulldozers to cut up and remove the biggest slabs of the fallen bridge, which slammed down onto railway tracks along with dozens of vehicles.

"We are trying to find pockets in the rubble where people could be -- alive or not," fire official Emanuele Gissi told AFP.

Officials say about 1,000 people in all are working on the disaster site, 350 of them firefighters.

The populist government has accused infrastructure giant Autostrade per L'Italia of failing to invest in sufficient maintenance and said it would seek to revoke its lucrative contracts.

Interior Minister Matteo Salvini demanded that the company offer up to 500 million euros (\$570 million) to help families and local government deal with the aftermath of the disaster.

The dead also include children, one as young as eight, and three Chileans and four French nationals.

The French nationals, all in their 20s, had travelled to Italy for a music festival, and other victims included a family setting off on holiday and a couple returning from their California honeymoon.

More than 600 people were evacuated from around a dozen apartments beneath the remaining shard of bridge.

On Thursday evening the first residents of some buildings in the affected area were allowed to return home, though others are too badly damaged to save. (AFP)