

### (1) Trump Seeks ...

Management of Budget Mick Mulvaney said the request would enable DOD to support a comprehensive, whole-of-Government strategy to stop ISIS from posing a threat to the United States.

He said the request would fund critical efforts to strike ISIS targets, support partners fighting on the ground, disrupt ISIS's external operations, and cut off its flows of financing.

"The request also supports ongoing US efforts through OFS to prevent threats to the US homeland, our allies, and interests abroad from ISIS, al Qaeda, and their affiliated or associated groups."

He said the investment complemented additional US support for the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces as requested on November 10, 2016.

The budget proposes USD1.1 billion for ongoing American operations in Afghanistan and support to global counterterrorism activities.

The request also includes planning and design of construction projects in support of Detention Operations at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. (Pajhwok)

### (2) Ghani Meets ...

supported the security forces and institutions of the country.

"You are a huge capacity which needed to be expanded and supported," Ghani told the officers.

Personnel from the SPFU conducted operation during militant attack of Daud Khan Hospital and eliminated the assailants. (Pajhwok)

### (3) Billions ...

plementation of schemes.

No balance in development projects and negligence in providing information were other problems in projects' implementation.

According to a statement from the CSTIA, the investigation was completed in 10 months in cooperation with GIZ organization.

The investigation assessed challenges and available opportunities in the construction sector of Afghanistan, the source said.

"Absence of transparency in implementation of infrastructural projects over the past one and a half decade caused embezzlement of billions of dollars," the statement said.

Sibghatullah Karimi, CSTIA coordinator, also said corruption was rampant and problems plagued implementation of construction projects by the government and private sector.

Without providing details, he said corruption and some problems delayed projects' implementations and affected their quality.

He said some projects were awarded to companies based on favoritism without going through a legal procedure.

Karimi said poor reporting about construction process was one of the major problems.

The CSTIA decided to publish all information ranging from the procurement to signing of contracts as well as constructive procedure and completion of projects in order to ensure transparency, he added. (Pajhwok)

### (4) IEC Chief ...

leaders and members of the election commission have, for the past month, been in talks with the international community over the digitalization of the election process and over funding.

Meanwhile, institutions overseeing the election process said the IEC has failed to maintain trust among the people and the international community regarding transparent elections.

"It depends on the election commission and they should assure the international community and the Afghan government that they can manage the election and that they will hold it transparently," said Habiburrahman Nang, a member of the Afghan Civil Society and Election Network (ACSEN).

"If the Afghan government secures the international community's trust then they will be interested in funding the election process," said Ghulam Farooq Majroh, an MP.

Meanwhile, commenting on reports of the reappointment of Zabiullah Wagarai, the former head of election commission for Paktia, as head of election commission for Nangarhar province, Warimach said: "Zabiullah's duty station has been changed due to some problems that he had. The election commission will bring reforms and, in the near future, will assess IEC staff and will decide about them based on their performance."

In an earlier interview with TOLONews, the deputy head of the IEC said the international community and the Afghan government said they will fund the elections - if the process is transparent. (Tolonews)

### (5) Germany to...

the need for the implementation of major projects in the country to boost economic growth and job opportunities.

"These programs which are announced by the ministry of urban development and rural rehabilitation are for the short term, the villagers who are hired on these jobs again become jobless once the projects are complete," said Maruf Qaderi, head of labor union. (Tolonews)

### (6) Bill to Address...

terrorists. "One way we can do this is through the Special Immigration Visa program," he said.

"The Afghanistan Special Immigration Visa program helps those who have supported the American military and our mission abroad at risk to themselves and their families, and I am proud to support this legislation to allow more into visas in the program," he added.

"Our Afghan allies put their lives on the line not just for their country, but for ours, and they receive death threats because of their work with our troops. The idea that we would turn our backs on these patriots is wrong and un-American," Moulton said.

The bill will ensure that courageous Afghans aren't left to certain death by continuing the Afghan Special Immigration Visa (SIV) Program, he noted. (Pajhwok)

### (7) Afghanistan ...

on 228-5 in the 37th over, Stuart Thompson and Gary Wilson put on 50 for the next wicket over the next six overs but they both departed in quick succession to effectively end the contest.

Afghanistan bowler Khan finished with figures of 6-43 with Zadran taking three Irish wickets.

The Afghans beat Ireland in Wednesday's opening one-day game and there are three further contests, beginning with Sunday's game at the same venue.

Ireland had already been white-washed 3-0 in a Twenty20 series between the sides in India.

The teams will play meet in a further Intercontinental Cup match at the end of the month in Greater Noida. (BBC)

### (8) Kabul ...

out of the shop, we saw that a man was lying on the ground," said Mohammad Zia, another shopkeeper.

The three suspects fled the scene. Kabul residents have meanwhile called on the new Kabul police chief to put an end to such incidents. (Tolonews)

### (9) Kabul Considers ...

production and smuggling of drugs and the two sided agreed at joint efforts to fight the menace of narcotics.

Atmar said Afghanistan considered Russia a key regional ally and needed Moscow's cooperation in the fight against terror, assistance for Afghan security forces and restoring peace and stability and countering narcotics.

Afghanistan ambassador to Russia Abdul Qayum Kuchi and Russia special representative for Afghanistan Zamir Kabulov were present at the meeting. (Pajhwok)

### (10) Current ...

Terrorist groups, under different names, have been attacking our territory. These terrorist groups also receive support," said Abdullah.

But other speakers criticized political leaders for their rifts.

"The only thing that will help us to stay and develop our shared values is unity. The lack of unity and discord will lead us to destruction," said Adib Fahim, first deputy of National Directorate of Security.

Panah, along with a few of his men, was killed in clashes with the Taliban in Paghman district of Kabul province during the Taliban's move to seize Kabul city. (Tolonews)

### (11) Ulama Denounce...

studies, in order to prevent their going abroad, which results in their recruitment against Afghanistan.

Ghani, after hearing about the council's declaration, said Afghanistan's enemies had snatched lives and education opportunities from the citizens, including children. He branded the terrorists as the enemies of present and future generations, because they wanted to see Afghans live in perpetual humiliation and backwardness.

The president asked the religious scholars to spread public awareness and inform people through mosques about the causes and impact of the war imposed on the Afghans.

"Those who violate human values and commit crimes against Afghan people should be exposed and made to face legal action - no matter what position or authority they have." Ghani thanked the clerics for motivating the youth to join defence

and security forces, saying terrorist groups including the Taliban were committing crimes against humanity by carrying out suicide attacks and bombings.

About finding alternative routes for the transit of commercial goods, he said his talks with the new government of Uzbekistan were yielding good results.

Efforts were being made to find other routes besides the Aqina and Chabahr ports, the president added. The issues being faced by Afghan youth have also been discussed with Iran. (Pajhwok)

### (12) Security Organs...

until the situation was improved in the security sector, Rahimi added.

Wide-ranging changes have been made in the 101 Asmayee Police Zone of Kabul while former intelligence chief, Amrullah Saleh, was recently appointed as state minister for reforms in the security sector.

Saleh also leads the High Board of Appointments of Senior Officers in Defense and Security Forces.

CEO spokesman, Mujib Rahman Rahimi, welcomed the meeting between Afghanistan and Pakistan officials in London on resolving political differences between the two neighbors.

"Negotiations are underway between Pakistan and Afghanistan on national security advisors levels, we hope the opportunity is used to end the tension," he said.

Afghanistan has always tried to resolve differences with its neighbors through diplomatic channels and peacefully, a policy still enforced, Rahimi said, adding Pakistan should take action and target terrorist safe havens on its instead of giving empty promises.

National Security Council (NSC) spokesman Tawab Ghorzard said the London meeting on Wednesday night on sorting out political tensions between Kabul and Islamabad was productive.

He said the meeting was attended by National Security Advisor (NSA) Mohammad Hanif Atmar and Ambassador Omar Zakhilwal.

Adviser to Pakistan Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz and National Security Adviser of UK Mark Lyall Grant also participated in the meeting. (Pajhwok)

### (13) US Senators ...

allowed to target Islamic State fighters in Iraq and Syria. They argued the lack of action allows the Taliban to rebuild and recover when it suffers a loss, especially when it reportedly receives aid from nations such as Russia and Iran.

The senators said that lack of action has led to a stalemate, something Gen. John W. Nicholson, commander of U.S. and coalition forces in Afghanistan, told the Senate Armed Services Committee last month. He said the Afghan government only holds power in 57 percent of the country's districts, down from 72 percent last year. McCain and Graham said the U.S. has adopted a sort of "don't lose" mindset in Afghanistan, instead of sticking to its original objective of preventing terrorist groups from using the country to attack America.

The United States has been at war in Afghanistan for nearly 16 years. Weary as some Americans may be of this long conflict, it is imperative that we see our mission through to success.

In addition to the unspecified troop increase - made up of both U.S. and coalition soldiers - they called for more and sustained support of Afghan government and security institutions so that the country can learn to defend itself from al-Qaida and others.

In a related move, McCain and several other senators introduced a bill Wednesday that would provide 2,500 additional visas to the Afghan Special Immigrant Visa program. The program allows those that assisted U.S. forces to apply for refugee status in America.

"We simply cannot win this war without the assistance of the Afghan Ghani, after hearing about the council's declaration, said Afghanistan's enemies had snatched lives and education opportunities from the citizens, including children.

"Unfortunately in recent years, Congress has reneged on the promise we made to protect these brave individuals by failing to authorize the appropriate number of Special Immigrant Visas for Afghan translators and interpreters. It's because of our failure that the lives of thousands of Afghans are in imminent danger from the Taliban." (Pajhwok)

### (14) Ahadi Seeks ...

individuals to improve the situation, but it did not do so," the ANNF head added.

Ahadi also lashed out at the government's stance on Pakistan's rocket shelling into border parts of the

country and said: "The government's stance on Pakistan is coward and shameful."

He also voiced on Taliban militants to come up with a clear plan for the peace process and set aside irrational demands.

"Taliban should turn the coming spring into a season of peace activities instead of attacks. The Afghans have suffered a lot and violence must be stopped," he said.

Ahadi asked the government to have a clear plan for the peace process and prevent corruption in major projects.

MWPC head, Faridun Alokozay, who announced support to Ahadi, criticized the government's policies and said the national unity government had turned into a tribal syndicate which was unacceptable to people.

He urged other political and civil society groups to join forces with the ANNF and jointly monitor the performance of the government. More than 200 people were participated in the gathering. (Pajhwok)

### (15) Thousands of....

items. The governor's spokesman said the relief items were provided by NCRO, WFP and IOM.

Sarhadi Zwak told Pajhwok each family received pulses, salt, ghee, biscuits and other edibles. He said 250 families were given tents, blankets, tarpaulin, gas balloons, heaters and other items. (Pajhwok)

### (16) Nangarhar Police...

prior information, searches and an exclusively devised plan in the limits of Jalalabad city. He said the gang, accused of several murders, was arrested after an armed clash.

The police chief invited preys of the gang to visit the police headquarters and register their complaints.

Rahimi also said 72 militants including Taliban and Daesh were killed in joint and special forces' operations backed by air support in Nangarhar last week.

He said another 10 militants were wounded and seven suspects were detained during the operations.

Drugs weighing 240 kilograms were seized by police during search operations last week, the police chief said. (Pajhwok)

### (17) 1 Killed, 29 ...

Corps first battalion commander Gen. Nasir Hidayat told Pajhwok Afghan News that one soldier was killed and five others were wounded in the attack.

Yaqobi district chief Mir Gul Miakhel said the powerful blast damaged 40 homes, four mosques, one seminary and one high school buildings.

Sixteen women and children were injured inside their homes due to the impact of the blast, he said.

"I saw a Taliban vehicle came and took away their wounded and injured colleagues after the blast," a resident of the area, Ibrahim, said.

The Taliban have claimed responsibility for the car suicide bombing, with their spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid claiming a number of soldiers were killed and wounded.

He said 70 ANA troops were based in the compound that was attacked. He named the attacker as Sangar Yar, a resident of Khost province. (Pajhwok)

### (18) 3 Civilians Killed, ...

"When the commando personnel stormed the Taliban safe-haven, the insurgents took refuge in a residence. Seven rebels were killed and three others wounded in the attack," the police chief said.

Hameedi added three civilians were also killed and seven others wounded during the operation. However, he did not go into details.

Other local sources said the bombardment took place at around 11pm, and that the air raid was conducted by foreign troops.

Naz Bibi, who was injured in the attack and admitted to the Kunduz Zonal Hospital, said they were sleeping when the aircraft struck their house.

"My father, mother and sister were killed. Two of my sisters, a brother, a nephew, a cousin and I were wounded in the bombardment."

Hakeemullah, a teacher who was also injured, said: "At 11pm the aircraft hit our house, killing three of my family members and wounding six others, including me."

Dr. Naeem Mangal, the hospital director, said seven injured, including four women, a child and two men, had been brought to the hospital. Condition of a woman is said to be critical. (Pajhwok)

### (19) Official Claims ...

hopeful about their future.

Tariq is one young resident who hopes to one day become a doctor.

"I hope that the war ends and peace comes to Achin district, because if security is not maintained, then

there would not be any progress in schools," he said. (Tolonews)

### (20) Only Marble...

had blocked contracts.

He said 70 percent of deposits in Kunar contained marbles and if the government did not grant him the contract, his factory would collapse.

He said the marble in Kunar enjoyed good reputation for its colours on regional and international level. The government should encourage the industry instead of creating problems for it, he said.

A resident of Asadabad, the provincial capital, Amirullah, said closure of the only marble factory in Kunar had rendered dozens of workers jobless who were now in economic constraints.

He said the government should once again award the contract to the factory in order to encourage the sector in Kunar province.

Amir Muhibullah, whose contract has also been withheld, said he had completed all legal requirements two years ago and had bought equipment from Iran and Turkey.

He said the Ministry of Mines had told them the government had suspended contracts.

He said if the government was not giving them contract, it should buy equipment they had bought for marble extractions.

Kunar Mines and Petroleum director Eng. Haroon Rashid said those lacking permits were not allowed to extract marble stone under the relevant law.

He said they had sent successful bidders to the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum for approving their contracts, but the bidders were told the law on mines had been amended.

Under the new law, all contracts are approved by the National Procurement Commission. (Pajhwok)

### (21) Helmand...

arrested from the vicinity of Lashkargah city, the provincial capital of Helmand.

According to NDS, Nabi was encouraged to carry out the attack by a terrorist Taliban leader identified as Mullah Abbas.

Nabi confessed that he was trained in Pakistan to carry out suicide attack in a busy part of Lashkargah city, NDS said, adding that the would-be suicide bomber was transferred to Helmand by Mullah Abbas to carry out the attack.

Helmand is among the relatively volatile provinces in southern Afghanistan where the Taliban insurgents are actively operating in its various districts and often carry out insurgency activities.

This comes as the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces are busy conducting counter-terrorism and clearance operations against the Taliban insurgents in some of the volatile districts of Helmand.

The Taliban insurgents have sustained heavy casualties during the operations which are being conducted with the support of the foreign forces based in Afghanistan who are mainly providing close-air support. (KP)

### (22) Taliban ...

the eastern Nangarhar Province on Friday afternoon, at least one person was killed and a few others injured.

According to a local official who declined to be identified, the target of the attacker was Zahir Haqqani, the director of Hajj and Religious affairs of Nangarhar Province but he escaped unhurt. However his brother was killed in the blast.

Although no group has claimed responsibility, the locals do not rule out the involvement of Taliban insurgents in the attack.

Similarly, Taliban militants in attack against government interests set on fire some oil tankers on the highway linking the northern Baghlan Province to Kunduz city on Friday morning.

Hundreds of travelers were stranded on the highway, according to local media reports.

Taliban militants traditionally intensify activities in spring and summer commonly known as the fighting season in the war-battered country. (Xinhua)

### (23) Calls for ...

like Afghanistan, which is grappling with insurgency, there is a need for a range of reforms not only in the leadership but also among the lower ranks, so as to improve the capabilities of the security sector.

They also proposed that all high-ranking security officials must be held accountable for major attacks in the country.

The MoD said however, that reforms are being made within the ministry.

"In the procurement section, we have

reshuffled nearly one thousand people," said Dawlat Waziri, a defense ministry spokesman.

Experts believe that reforms should include that of boosting cooperation among the security institutions; preventing appointments on the basis of political affiliations; and that all new employees should be screened.

According to experts, the political leadership in government must consider the appointment of security leaders on the basis of merit and qualification only so that they can fight corruption within the security institutions.

"Issues in the security institutions are there because of the slow pace of reforms in these institutions; threats and other security challenges are actually hindering the process of undertaking strategic reforms," said Mol spokesman Sediq Sediqqi.

Currently there are around 350,000 soldiers within the ranks of the Afghan security institutions. But experts say that there is a dire need to focus on the quality of the conventional forces. (Tolonews)

### (24) UN Establishes...

human health," Mohamed told reporters here. "It's a multi-sectoral problem involving animal health, agriculture, environment, trade and many other sectors."

"AMR really does pose a formidable threat to attainment of the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals), particularly in all developing countries," she said. "AMR has profound effects on our ability to insure clean water, sustainable food production and to eliminate poverty."

Antibiotic resistance "can prolong illness or require expensive second or third line antibiotics to get well," said Chan. (Xinhua)

### (25) U.S. Treasury...

in the fall of this year" without an increase in the debt limit, according to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office.

At that time, the Treasury will have exhausted extraordinary measures and would need to borrow more money to avoid a government debt default. (Xinhua)

### (26) Indian President ...

embroiled in corruption. Since then, there was no stopping back. His charisma has helped the country's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party win assembly polls in several states.

The Indian prime minister, who is one of the most followed politicians in the world on Twitter, has successfully used the micro-blogging site for his pet campaigns like #MakeInIndia, #SwachBharat, #MannKiBaat and #SelfieWithDaughter to reach citizens. (Xinhua)

### (27) Turkish Politicians ...

Wednesday that "the decision was influenced by the trend of Islamophobia (in Europe)."

Bekir Bozdogan, Turkish Justice Minister, described the decision as the "apocalypse of justice."

"It is a violation of human rights," he said on Wednesday, adding that "forcing people to choose between practicing their religion and their jobs does not comply with human rights, EU values or with law and justice." (Xinhua)

### (28) DPRK Wishes...

historic day the two countries have steadily developed the cooperation and exchanges in various fields including economy and culture and deepened the bonds of friendship for the last 68 years," the daily said.

In the 21st century, several meetings were held between DPRK late leader Kim Jong Il and Russian President Vladimir Putin and historic joint documents were adopted in that course, it said. "As a result, a new prospect was opened for carrying forward the long-standing tradition for cooperation and further developing it," it said. The official daily said that to value and develop the bilateral friendly ties "is beneficial for ensuring development and stability of the two countries and peace and security in Northeast Asia." (Xinhua)

### (29) U.S. State ...

denuclearization. The top U.S. diplomat indicated a need for tougher UN Security Council sanctions on the DPRK's nuclear program and other weapons of mass destruction, but he did not go so far as to say that a military action is required. (Xinhua)

### (30) Turkmenistan ...

liquefied natural gas. "Qatar's experience in this sphere will be very useful for our dynamic economy," said the Turkmen president.

Construction of the Turkmen section of TAPI was launched on Dec. 13, 2015. (Trend)