

### (1) No American ...

end of this year," Obama told the reporters after holding a meeting with Ghani on Tuesday afternoon. Praising the capability of Afghan forces, Obama stated that the Afghan forces were better equipped than the Taliban and Haqqani network.

He also noted that since the U.S. had been engaged in drawdown, the casualties of American soldiers had also decreased.

"Casualties have come down precipitously as we've engaged in the draw down," Obama said. "It's been over 90 days since two Americans were killed in Afghanistan. That has occurred precisely because we are not in a combat role." Praising the U.S. sacrifices for Afghanistan, Ghani welcomed his American counterpart's decision of keeping their soldiers in the country.

"The flexibility that has been provided for 2015 will be used to accelerate reforms to ensure that the Afghan security forces are much better led, equipped, trained and are focused on their fundamental mission," Ghani said. "I am pleased to say that the departure of 120,000 international troops has not brought about the security gap or the collapse that was often anticipated."

Ghani expressed that the new U.S. mission of training, advising and assisting Afghan forces was "a vital part of their collective interest and collective endeavors."

The US-Afghan relations, which were strained during former President Hamid Karzai's presidency, are now said to have been improved following the first visit of Ghani and CEO Abdullah Abdullah to the United States since the formation of National Unity Government (NUG). (Tolonews)

### (2) Wolesi Jirga ...

passengers in Maidan Wardak, he added.

Ibrahimi said: "If we had summoned the ministers, the people would have realised that we are their representatives. Our mere complaints against ministers won't address the issue; we have to exercise our discretion."

On Monday, the minister of interior and defence, as well as the National Directorate of Security deputy chief, were summoned to answer lawmakers' questions on growing violence.

About 60 legislators put questions to the top security bosses. But only 33 were present when the ministers and the NDS official started answering their queries. He requested members to take active part in sessions.

"Due to the quorum issue, we have no agenda for today's session. Parliament can't be run like this," deplored the speaker.

MP Haider Jan Naemzoy said most of members were busy doing personal things or going on foreign visits. He asked the administrative board to take strict actions against the absent members. (Pajhwok)

### (3) Kajran District...

of Helmand and Uruzgan, from where insurgents often sneak into the town.

Mukhtar Ansari, a resident, said in the last 10 days attacks on security outposts had intensified. As a result, he added, two policemen and a civilian were killed and five others injured.

Ibrahim Rahmani, provincial council member, said Taliban had already taken seven villages including Gharma, Menara and Chobzar. He said security forces have been dispatched to the area but it was not enough.

"If extra troops do not arrive, there is a possibility that Kajran may fall," Rahmani warned, adding insurgents were only two kilometres away from the centre of the district.

Ramin Poya, Kajran administrative head, said Taliban were only planting roadside explosives and attacking from distance. They did not have the capability to fight face-to-face.

A security official on condition of anonymity told Pajhwok that Kajran was under

Last week, Syed Habib Husseini, the Kajran police chief, was injured in a mine attack along

Ansari claimed the Taliban had stopped 18 food trucks that were on their way from Kandahar to Kajran and had taken their drivers to an unknown location.

The Kajran district head acknowledged the incident but said only five drivers were unaccounted for. (Pajhwok)

### (4) Taliban ...

of anonymity.

Following a dispute between two tribes over the copper mine, the insurgents gained control of the site. They plan to start mining soon after the construction of the road. Meanwhile, Director of Mines Fazal Bari confirmed receiving information from local inhabitants in this regard. The authorities have launched an investigation.

He added the mine was recently discovered and they had shared samples with the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum. Security forces have been tasked with guarding the site.

But Attaullah Khogyani, spokesperson for the acting governor, said no one could dig the mine without prior permission from the government. He added officials had been asked to probe the issue. The official claimed the government had received nearly 700 million afghanis in revenue from mines last year but some people allege the militants get half of the amount. (Pajhwok)

### (5) Ghani Set to...

Obama's decision will help the Afghan people in the long run. And I believe that Ghani has shown a willingness to work together to achieve both of our security goals," Smith said.

Senator Robert Menendez, ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said the first democratic transition in Afghanistan's history marked the start of a new day for the Afghan people.

"The international community has a new partner in the Afghan government which has displayed a revitalised commitment to increasing accountability, strengthening governance, bolstering the private sector and ensuring citizen's rights," Menendez said.

Senator Bob Corker, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, welcomed Obama's announcement of maintaining a stronger US counter-terror and security presence in Afghanistan.

"This is the right decision in the effort to improve stability in the region and should signal a continued flexibility based upon circumstances on the ground," he said.

Senator Mac Thornberry, chairman of the House Armed Service Committee said the decision not to further reduce US troop numbers in Afghanistan this year was appropriate. (Pajhwok)

### (6) 70pc of ...

law and win people's trust for a better Afghanistan," the official said.

International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)'s combat mission ended on December 31, 2014 and Afghan security forces have since taken the lead.

Mol's evaluations showed police in Faryab have improved a lot, as compared with previous years in counter-terrorism, counter-narcotics and law-enforcement operations.

Faryab has been among the insecure provinces because of intensifying insurgent activities. Officials, however, claim their regular operations have kept fighters them at bay, opening the way for development and reconstruction. (Pajhwok)

### (7) Tuberculosis Kills...

with the disease, of which 12,000 to 13,000 of them are females.

"Tuberculosis is an infectious disease that can be transferred from one patient to another, but, fortunately it is treatable, and is usually caused due to poverty, lack of food and vitamins," Feroz said.

"Every year, World Tuberculosis Day is recognized, but only in words. This year, it will be different than other years, while celebrating the day, we commit to work for the reduction of the disease."

The World Health Organization (WHO) has said that Afghanistan has one of the highest fatality rates in the world when it comes to tuberculosis. The WHO and the Afghan MoPH have said they are committed to jointly working to reduce tuberculosis rates in Afghanistan. (Tolonews)

### (8) Afghanistan ...

percent in the income of the government from air operations which is also increasing. (KP)

### (9) President Pledge...

pledging the empowerment of women, children, and citizens.

"We will have several tough years. But one thing must be certain: We will never yield; we will seek peace, because peace is an impera-

tive. We'll sacrifice for the sake of peace, but not at the expense of our gains."

He promised to stabilise Afghanistan and create a regional framework of cooperation that was necessary to bring stability and stand firm against the threats.

Accompanied by his Chief Executive, Dr Abdullah, Ghani said affirmed their commitment to increase the number of women ambassadors and deputy ministers. He also sought support for a women's university in Kabul.

Abdullah said the unity government was committed to serving the national interest and facilitating a stable and democratic and peaceful Afghanistan, with respect for universal values.

Ghani said leadership was about sacrifice, not privilege. And sacrifice means putting the country first and putting personal affairs in order. Leadership is about commitment to reform and the honesty of knowing that "we are among the most corrupt countries".

Welcoming the guests Kerry said over the past two days at Camp David, they had the greatest affirmation of the capacity of leaders to put their ego aside and the interests of their people and nation at the forefront. (Pajhwok)

### (10) Fulbright Scholars...

number of Fulbright fellowships available to qualified Afghan students by 50 percent for the next five years, making this one of the largest programmes in the world," the joint statement said.

He also announced the establishment of a \$18 million scholarship programme to support women attending universities throughout Afghanistan.

The presidents also welcomed the decision of the Smithsonian Institution to host a major exhibition of contemporary Afghan handicrafts in 2016.

Obama and Ghani acknowledged the significant challenges Afghanistan was facing in overcoming its current budgetary gap and becoming self-reliant.

Ghani admitted Afghanistan continued to face formidable challenges, including the need to root out corruption and strengthen good governance, build the foundation for sustainable and inclusive economic growth, increase regional connectivity, and address illicit drug production.

In support of these efforts, Obama and Ghani announced a New Development Partnership that would focus up to \$800 million in US economic assistance on urgent Afghan priorities tied to achievements of specific development results.

The presidents welcomed the decision to resume regular meetings of the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement Council and the agreement to expand capacity-building cooperation. (Pajhwok)

### (11) Protestors Call ...

her baby after the 27-year-old victim of a mob attack.

Farkhanda was murdered by a mob last Thursday after she criticised a cleric at a mosque in Kabul for selling amulets. But people, who took part in or witnessed the incident, accused her of burning the Quran -- a charge rejected by the Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs.

Ministry of Interior (Mol) investigations reveal no copy of the Quran had been found at the site. It said Farkhanda was beaten to death without committing any blasphemous act.

Hundreds of enraged protestors, including religious scholars and civil society activists, rallied in Pul-i-Khumri, the provincial capital, demanding public trial of the perpetrators.

A woman protestor, Sosan Wafa, said: "We will always remember Farkhanda, who was cut in her prime." She called on the officials to punish those involved in her ruthless killing.

The protestors passed a resolution, urging ulema to declare Farkhanda as martyr and asking the government to commemorate her death anniversary every year.

According to the Mol, 40 people including 20 policemen have been held in connection with the murder. It said that investigation were still underway to unearth more facts. (Pajhwok)

### (12) US, Taliban ...

say initial investigations show no signs that she committed the sacrilegious act of burning the Quran. A statement US Embassy condemned the killing of Farkhanda and asked the Afghan government

to bring her killers to justice.

"We support the current efforts by the Afghan government against gender discrimination and for law enforcement," the statement added.

Separately, the Taliban also criticized the killing of the woman. Their spokesman Zabihullah

The militant movement warned those involved in murdering the woman of harsh punishment if the fighters captured them. (Pajhwok)

### (13) Kandahar Urges ...

Afghanistan, in Kandahar City, the provincial capital.

Acting Governor Dr. Weesa Toryalai, Public Health Director Dr. Abdul Qayyum Pukhla and other officials participated in the meeting. Pukhla said remote areas in the province were still deprived of health services.

The government did not have enough funds to pay salaries to health professionals and send them to far-flung districts, he argued, asking the WHO for assistance.

Pukhla also called for the WHO to conduct community public awareness programmes about the prevention of polio.

Weesa also stressed the need for public awareness about polio and said the disease could be eradicated when the distance between mosque and schools was bridged. Weesa asked health organizations to pay attention to people's needs and coordinate with the provincial administration in implementing their programmes. (Pajhwok)

### (14) 15 Major ....

orchards, micro-finance, water and investment.

He added majority of these projects would be funded with provincial revenue. A major chunk will be spent on building the 160-kilometre Shahrwah canal in Dasht-i-Archi district.

The project costing \$86 million would help irrigate lands in the neighbouring provinces. Safi said the project would kick off soon and thousands of job opportunities would be created.

Asadullah Adel, economy department head, said there were still five more vital projects that needed to be completed. Construction of an airport, universities, roads and industrial parks are among them. According to Adel, funds for these projects have not been allocated so far, although, it was necessary to complete the projects as soon as possible. (Pajhwok)

### (15) 2014 Deadliest...

Siddiqui also said the government should avoid using heavy weapons in residential areas. He said Afghan local police had not been professionally trained and they lacked knowledge about human rights.

The provincial Human Rights Commission also demanded the government bring to justice those responsible for civilian deaths and keep civilian lives protected.

Hajji Mohammad Jan Rasoulyar, Helmand's deputy governor, confirmed 2014 had been the bloodiest year so far and claimed that security forces had been trying their best to avoid civilian casualties. He accused Taliban militants of causing all civilian casualties, but he had no exact

Citing an example, he said only two civilians had been killed during forty days of an ongoing operation "Zulfikar" in the province.

At least 16 civilians have been killed and another 71 injured in three car bomb attacks in Lashkargah over the past two weeks. (Pajhwok)

### (16) Afghan Traders'...

Activists to Support Democratic Reforms in Tajikistan, funded by the European Union, and Strengthening Capacities, Bridging Divides in Central Asia, funded by the Foreign Ministry of Norway. The contents of this article are the sole responsibility of IWPR and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of either the European Union or the Norwegian foreign ministry. (Agencies)

### (17) 7 Million ...

Eng. Mohammad Sharif, environment director, hailed the sapling plantation drive as highly useful. "Trees and green environment help prevent several diseases."

Sharif said they were supporting the Green Revolution in the province and it was ongoing in coordination with civil society organizations, ulema and other figures. (Pajhwok)

### (18) Nangarhar to...

storages", the deputy governor said with pleasure.

"The government is serious to build a cold storage for every five hundred people this year to preserve their agricultural products and food."

Hamidullah Nazir, the provincial agriculture director, said agricultural growth had increased in the province last year, when 225,000 metric tonnes of wheat, 200,000 metric tonnes of rice and 100,000 metric tonnes of maize were harvested, up from previous years.

Besides these products, around 287,000 metric tonnes of vegetables were produced in the province last year, said Nazir.

He said 170 different proposals had been submitted to the Ministry of Agriculture to further develop the province's agriculture, if the proposals were approved.

The farmers' day was celebrated at the Sherzai Cricket Stadium by arranging an exhibition showcasing different stalls of food and agricultural items.

Haji Zamaraei Ahmadzai, a local elder, told Pajhwok Afghan News farmers struggled with finding access to market for their products. "The lack of market is one of the main problems farmers face," he said, urging the government to take concrete steps toward addressing the issue.

He demanded the government construct veterinary clinics for animals and cold storages for agriculture products. (Pajhwok)

### (19) ALP Needed...

hammad Hanif Gardiwal told Pajhwok Afghan News there was a need for the deploying the ALP to border district to halt insurgent the activities.

He said some border districts, where small ALP contingents were already working, needed additional personnel. The ALP number in Momand Dara is 50, needing 200 more personnel.

The deputy governor praised local police officials for their role in peace and stability. He claimed ALP staff enjoyed a good reputation in Nangarhar.

Mohammad Jan, the 201st Selab Military Corps commander, said the presence of ALP personnel had left a positive impact on security in Nangarhar.

"ALP men understand the culture and traditions of their areas. Therefore, they can better deal with matters," Jan believed, praising the force for good communication with other security organs.

The Afghan National Army (ANA) commander justified demand for increasing the strength of local police because their role had been effective.

Earlier, a senior official at the Ministry of Interior (Mol) said high-level consultations were underway to deploy local police force to Nangarhar province.

Col. Mohammad Khalil Oryakhel, head of the local police force, said this during a workshop in Jalalabad: "Initially, we will consult tribal elders and residents. In the second phase, a proper deployment mechanism will be evolved."

Earlier in the week, ALP General Commander Maj. Gen. Alisha Ahmadzai told reporters in Jalalabad the number of local police would be increased in certain areas. (Pajhwok)

### (20) Russia Warns ...

Northeast Asian states favor such a deployment.

This is while the United States says the missile system is aimed at acting as a deterrent against North Korea's provocative moves.

The Korean Peninsula has been locked in a cycle of military rhetoric since the Korean War, which lasted from 1950 to 1953. No peace deal has been signed since then, meaning that Pyongyang and Seoul remain technically at war. (Agencies)

### (21) Turkey Shells...

where they join the ranks of extremist terror groups.

The file photo shows foreign-backed militants in Syria, preparing to launch mortar shells.

Last month, Turkey and the US signed a deal to train and arm what they called moderate militants fighting against the government of Assad. (Press TV)

### (22) Iraqi President...

consulted.

"If we need air strikes, we will tell our government...up until now, we don't," he said.

For his part, Massoum alluded to the United States' previous reluctance to participate in battles alongside Irani-

an-supported Shi'ite armed factions and their Iranian advisers.

"If there were any kind of hesitation in the position of the coalition to support the (Iraqi) army and volunteers in Tikrit, it seems now that this sensitivity has ended," Massoum said.

"Of course, the participation of the coalition will have an impact."

The start of air strikes would mark the first active participation by the U.S. military and Iranian advisors in the same battle space since U.S. air strikes were carried out last August to help liberate the Shi'ite Turkmen town of Amerli.

Massoum said the country was not beholden to Iran despite its neighbor's substantial contribution of weapons and advisers since Islamic State seized large parts of northern and western Iraq last year, imperiling Baghdad.

"Iran has provided military and humanitarian help to Iraq from the first day... (But) they have no right to object to any Iraqi decision," Massoum said.

The president stressed that Iraq was seeking a balance among its Iranian, Western and Arab states participating in the fight against Islamic State, which aims to create a modern-day Islamic caliphate imposing a militant form of Islamic law across the Middle East.

"The coordination of the Iranians is not at the expense of Iraq's independence and sovereignty. The same applies with our coordination with the coalition countries," Massoum said.

The president said the timing of the air strikes would be determined by Iraqi and coalition military experts. (Reuters)

### (23) IS Releases....

governments are backing U.N. negotiations to end the crisis in Libya, worried that the large North African state just across the Mediterranean from mainland Europe is becoming a haven for Islamist militants.

Libyan militants claiming loyalty to Islamic State in Iraq and Syria have been blamed for high-profile attacks this year involving foreigners, including an assault on a Tripoli hotel and the beheading of a group of Egyptian Christians.

Militants this month also stormed and damaged several Libyan oilfields around al-Ghani, forcing the government to declare force majeure, pull out workers and shut down production on 11 oilfields in the central Sirte basin.

U.N.-backed talks to form a unity government and a lasting ceasefire in Libya are continuing in Morocco. But both sides face internal splits over the negotiations and fighting between the two governments continues. (Reuters)

### Roshan Ranked Among Top 10 Innovative Companies

KABUL - Afghanistan's telecommunications giant Roshan it has been named one of the world's 10 most innovative companies of 2015.

A statement from the telecom firm said on Wednesday the ranking had been issued in Social Good by Fast Company -- one of the leading business magazines in the world.

The top 10 most innovative companies' list usually includes prominent international corporations, including tech giants such as Apple and Google.

It is the first time that an Afghan company has been included in Fast Company's ranking, bringing prestige and honor to the country's telecom industry.

In the Social Good section, Roshan was ranked number seven alongside two of the most well-known global companies, General Electric and Intel Corporation.

When Roshan launched operations in 2003 in Afghanistan, there were barely 100,000 people with access to a phone. A decade later, it has over 6.5 million customers and has invested more than \$600 million.

Roshan is not just a telecom company but a social enterprise, leveraging its robust nationwide network and innovative technology to empower Afghans, according to the CEO. Through its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) arm, the firm has undertaken a number of programmes, including the Roshan Telemedicine plan which links 4 hospitals across Afghanistan to the Aga Khan University Hospital Fast Company's Editor Robert Safian said: "Our goal is to illuminate the state of innovation as it exists right now within the rapidly changing global landscape." (Pajhwok)