**Documents of 5 Cabinet Nominees Found Valid**

KABUL - The Wolesi Jirga has found valid the documents of five ministers-designate, an official said on Wednesday, a day after the cabinet picks were referred to the lower house for a trust vote.

President Ashraf Ghani on Tuesday introduced 25 ministers-designate and nominees for the National Directorate of Security (NDS) and Da Afghanistan Bank (DAB) to the assembly.

Religious and Cultural Affairs Commission head Kamal Vaezi Chah suggests that the documents of five ministers-designate were not submitted before they explained their plans to public representatives.

Eight of the candidates, who have dual nationality, would be and given a trust vote and the documents of the rest would be reviewed over the next 30 days (on page 1A).

**Turkmenistan, Afghanistan Agree on Cooperation**

BAKU - President Ashraf Ghani in his visit to Turkmenistan Tuesday met with his Turkmen counterpart, Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, and agreed to develop cooperation in the energy and transport spheres, RIA Novosti reported.

During the negotiations, Berdimuhamedov said that the trade turnover between the two countries increased $1 billion in 2014, adding that there are all the prerequisites to double this figure in 2015.

Turkmenistan sells petroleum products to Afghanistan through the terminals on Turkmen-Afghan border and carries out the preferential supply of electricity to the northern provinces of the country.

Berdimuhamedov said that currently the construction of another terminal for shipment of petroleum products and a new gas-thermal power station is underway in Turkmenistan, adding that this will allow to significantly increase the volume of supply of energy resources to Afghanistan.

**Pakistan Using Terrorism as Political Tool, Claims Karzai**

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KABUL - In a decree by President Ashraf Ghani, Hekmat Khalil Karzai, cousin of former President Hamid Karzai, has been appointed as the Deputy Foreign Minister on political affairs.

Karzai was appointed based on article 61 of the Constitution following his expertise in the related field, according to the presidential decree.

But according to reports, Karzai was serving in this position informally until a foreign minister was chosen. He is said to have replaced Ehsan Ahmadzai who resigned from his seat.

Served as the head of the political department of Afghanistan’s Embassy in Washington from 2002 to 2004, Karzai is the founder of (More on page 1A).

**Afghanistan Interested in Importing Iranian Gas**

KABUL - Afghanistan has shown interest in importing natural gas from Iran, some senior Afghan officials have told Iranian energy officials.

“The countries’ officials have held talks on export of Iran’s gas to Afghanistan,” but it has not been finalized yet,” International Af- fairs Director of the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) Ali-Akbar Ramazani said on Tuesday, reported Fars News Agency.

(See “More on page 6A”)

**India Responds to the Ongoing Afghan-Pak Transit Issue**

NEW DELHI - India offers to allow Afghan trucks (carrying their export products) to directly load at an Integrated Check Post in Attock. This comes as Afghan traders are facing ongoing transit issues with Pakistan, and both countries are negotiating better implementation of the Afghanistan Pakistan Transit Agreement. Afghan trucks are not being allowed to move to Integrated Check Post, a lawmaker said on Wednesday.

**Revised Budget May be Approved on Monday: Yar**

KABUL - Probleme in the draft budget for the current fiscal year have been addressed and the revised version would be presented before the Wolesi Jirga for a decision on Monday, a lawmaker said on Wednesday.

On Dec. 24, the lower house rejected the proposed accounts by a majority vote, calling the draft budget unbalanced and having serious flaws. Afghanistan’s fiscal year begins on (More on page 4B).