

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) heads to the assembly. Religious and Cultural Affairs Commission head Kamal Nasir Osuli said the documents of five ministers-designate were authenticated before they explained their plans to public representatives. Eight of the candidates, who have dual nationality, would be not be given a trust vote and the documents of the rest would be reviewed over the next ...*(More on P4)...(1)*



Parliament Rejects 7 Ministerial Nominees



KABUL - Seven ministerial nominees have been rejected by the Parliament on the charges of dual citizenship, according to the head of the Parliamentary Commission for Foreign Affairs Qadir Zazi. Those rejected include Nurul Haq Ulumi for the Ministry of Interior; Salahuddin Rabbani for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Sayed Saadat Nader for the Ministry of Labors, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled; Ai Sultan Khairi for the Ministry of Information and Culture; Shah ...*(More on P4)...(2)*

Hekmat Karzai Appointed as Deputy Foreign Minister



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 64 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 Ershad Ahmadi who resigned from his seat. Served as the head of the political department of Afghanistan's Embassy in Washington from 2002 to 2005, Karzai is the founder of ...*(More on P4)...(4)*

Pakistan Using Terrorism as Policy Tool, Claims Karzai



KABUL - Stability would continue to elude the region as long as Pakistan did not stop using terrorism as a policy tool, Afghanistan's former president alleged on Wednesday. In an interview with the BBC Pashto Service, Karzai noted Islamabad's decision of conducting operations against all militants without any distinction following the Peshawar school attack. Last month's Taliban assault on the Army Public School left 142 students dead and nearly 250 others wounded, sparking an outrage from military and civilian leaders. However, the ex-president said there had been no perceptible change in Pakistan's on counter-terrorism policy so far. Although civilian leaders desired security in the region, they were powerless, he claimed. "When Pakistan stops using terror as a weapon or a shield, the menace will come to an end the situation will improve automatically," the former president remarked. Asked why Kabul-Islamabad ties remained tense during his 13-year rule, Karzai replied: "Pakistan wanted a relationship that protected its own interest. They asked Afghanistan to compromise its sovereignty..." However, he added: "I have tried a lot to improve relations with Pakistan. As an independent country, Afghanistan still desires sovereign ties with the neighbour." He also took a swipe at the US for leaving Afghanistan high and dry after the Soviet withdrawal, paving the way for ...*(More on P4)...(7)*

Chinese Professor Receives Sayed Jamaluddin Afghan Medal



KABUL - President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani awarded Sayed Jamaluddin Afghan Medal to a Chinese professor who wrote 1st Pashto-Chinese dictionary. The dictionary that is completed in 36 years contains about two million words. President Ghani praised Che Hongcai, a 78 years old professor of Afghan languages at a university in China for his sacrifices and hard work. Che thanked President Ghani for the award. Explaining his work for the dictionary, Che said he and his student Song Qiangmin, who is not alive now worked together for it. He said they wrote this dictionary in a small office with a Pashto typewriter and very little funding. (KP)

Turkmenistan, Afghanistan Agree on Cooperation

BAKU - President Ashraf Ghani in his visit to Turkmenistan Turkmen on Wednesday 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 exceeded \$1 billion



in 2014, adding that there are all the prerequisites to double this figure in 2015. Turkmenistan sells pe-

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-turbine power station is underway in Turkmenistan, adding that this will allow to significantly increase the volume of supply of energy resources to ...*(More on P4)...(3)*

Obama Insists Fewer Troops in Afghanistan

WASHINGTON - Reiterating the end of the combat mission in Afghanistan, United States President Barack Obama during his State of the Union address emphasized on fewer troop presence in the country. "Tonight, for the first time since 9/11, our combat mission in Afghanistan is over," Obama said. "Six years ago,

nearly 180,000 American troops served in Iraq and Afghanistan. Today, fewer than 15,000 remain." Pointing to his recent remarks of bringing the Afghanistan war to a responsible end, Obama declared that the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) have been trained well during the past 13-year mission.



"Instead of Americans patrolling the valleys of Afghanistan, we've trained their security forces [ANSF], who've now ...*(More on P4)...(5)*

India Responds to the Ongoing Afghan-Pak Transit Issues

NEW DELHI - India offers to allow Afghan trucks (carrying their export products) to directly unload at its Integrated Check Post in Attari. This comes as Afghan traders are faced with ongoing transit issues

with Pakistan and both nations are negotiating better implementation of the Afghanistan Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement. Afghan trucks are not being allowed up to Integrated Check Post, A ...*(More on P4)...(8)*

KABUL - Problems 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.

Revised Budget May be Approved on Monday: Yar

On Dec. 24, the lower house rejected the proposed accounts by a majority vote, calling the draft budget imbalanced and having serious flaws. Afghanistan's fiscal year begins ...*(More on P4)...(9)*

