Parliament Approves 9 of 19 Cabinet Nominees

KABUL - The Wolesi Jirga (Lower House of Parliament) approved of only nine out of 19 cabinet nominees on Wednesday, after almost four months of delay. Unlike other Parliament sessions, 245 MPs were present to cast their vote of confidence in favor of the ministerial nominees and the National Directorate of Security (NDS) nominees.

Each cabinet nominee must have attained 122 votes in favor to become a member of the National Unity Government’s cabinet. The results of President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah’s picks are as follows: Introduced by Ghani, None of the nominees were in favor; 80 against, 21 blank, and eight invalid. None of the nominees for the Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs Fais Ali Mohammad Mansori was approved. 168 votes in favor, 51 against, 17 blank, and... (More on P6.)

IS Claims Branch in Pakistan, Afghanistan

KABUL - Even as the Islamic State was in retreat from Kandahar in northern Syria this week, the militant group claimed governing influence further afield.

President Ghani Sets Hotline to Receive Complaints from People

KABUL - A new complaints hotline has been set up by the office of President Mohammed Ashraf Ghani which is apparently aimed at bolstering better governance. In a concise short statement, President Ghani’s office said: “President Ghani’s complaints hotline, please direct your issues to it.”

Distribution of New ID Cards Faces Delay of Reasons Unknown

KABUL - Despite all preparations having been made for the distribution of long-awaited electronic ID cards among the Afghan public, project leaders say some have yet been issued, and the reason for the delay remains unclear. According to the... (More on P6.)

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Iran Has Special Place in Afghan Foreign Policy: Afghanistan

KABUL - Hezmat Khalil Karzai, who has recently been appointed to the post, said in his meeting with Ambassador Mohammad Hana Bahrami that the historical and friendly relations between the two countries in cultural, economic and security fields are of great significance. He appreciated Iran’s contribution to Afghanistan in the past three decades and the Iranian nation’s hospitality for the 4.5 million Afghan refugees, most of whom have been repeatedly extended many times, Karzai said that the bilateral relations with Iran have always been of great importance for Afghanistan. Ambassador Bahrami expressed pleasure with meeting the new... (More on P6.)

Obama ‘Literally Insane’ for Afghan Withdrawal: Graham

WASHINGTON - “His decision to withdraw all of our troops by 2017 in Afghanistan is literally insane in light of...” Senator Lindsey Graham said Tuesday night on Fox News’ “On the Record with Greta Van Susteren.” “All of his military command are saying you should not set a date for withdrawal, you should withdraw based on conditions.” Obama has kept around 10,000 troops in Afghanistan this year even after the combat mission has... (More on P6.)