

# King Abdullah Dies Aged 90

**Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah has died at the age of 90, and will be succeeded by his 79-year-old half-brother, Prince Salman.**

RIYADH - Saudi King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz died on Friday after devoting his life to leading his oil-rich kingdom toward prosperity, and his half-brother -- former Crown Prince Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud -- received the pledge of allegiance as the country's new king from members of the royal family.

On the same day, Prince Muqrin bin Abdulaziz received the pledge of allegiance as the new crown prince.

"With great sorrow and grief His Highness Salman



bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and all members of the family and the nation mourn the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, who passed away at exactly 1 a.m. this morning (2200 GMT Thursday)," a Saudi Royal court statement said.

Abdullah, born in 1924, was hospitalized in December for pneumonia and had been breathing with aid. On Jan. 2, the Royal Court announced that he was on temporary ventilator for respiratory infection.

Both ...*(More on P4)...*(1)

## Abdullah in Talks with MPs over Nominees with Dual Citizenship



KABUL - There are ongoing negotiations between Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah, President Ashraf Ghani and lawmakers in Parliament over cabinet nominees with dual citizenship, Cultural and Social Affairs Advisor to the CEO, Said Agha Fazel Sancharaki, said on Thursday. If necessary, he says, new nominees will be named.

"Talks are ongoing between the president and CEO with the MPs to find a solution for dual citizenship cabinet nominees," Sancharaki said. "But we respect the decision of the House of Representatives, and if the issue is not resolved, the CEO will agree to it."

Although the joint commission set up to review nominees prior to Parliament's

vote has already rejected nominees holding dual citizenship, if enough MPs cast their votes in favor of the candidates then the commission's decision would be overruled.

"Our evaluation shows that around 11 cabinet nominees have dual nationalities, and based on the amendment of House of Representatives, the joint commission rejected them," said Abdul Qayoum Sajadi, a member of the House's International Affairs Commission.

"Now, if a decision is to be made in this regard, two thirds of the House needs to vote, otherwise, the decision of the commission should be respected."

Many of the cabinet nominees with dual citizenship have taken it upon themselves to ...*(More on P4)...*(3)

## Karimi Vows Quality but Cheap Telecom Services



KABUL - Telecommunications and IT minister-designate Barna Karimi on Thursday said he would complete the national fibre ring project and provide the Afghans high quality telecom and internet services at lower rates.

Explaining his future plans and programmes to Wolesi Jirga members, the cabinet nominee said he, if granted a trust vote, would comprehensively improve the ministry's strategic programmes for the next five years.

He called the telecom sector a job-generating area, saying more than 80 percent of Afghans accessed mobile phone services and that the sector had been a ...*(More on P4)...*(5)

## Saba Identifies Study of Mines as Top Priority



KABUL - Dawood Shah Saba, President Ashraf Ghani's nominee for the minister of mines and petroleum, on Thursday said, if endorsed, he would prevent the illegal extraction of the country's resources.

President Ghani introduced 24 ministers-designate and heads of two independent departments to parliament for a vote of confidence on Tuesday.

The nominees for ministries of public health, mines and petroleum, ...*(More on P4)...*(6)

## Feroz to Crack Down on Spurious Medicine Imports



KABUL - The public health minister-designate on Thursday told lawmakers he would put an end to imports of substandard drugs and improve the situation of hospitals, if given a vote of trust.

President Ashraf Ghani introduced 24 ministers-designate and heads of two independent departments to parliament for a vote of confidence on Tuesday. The nominees for ministries of public health, ...*(More on P4)...*(7)

## Legislators Divided over Dual Nationality Issue

KABUL - Differences emerged on Thursday between Wolesi Jirga members over whether to reject or endorse cabinet nominees keeping dual nationality.

Some lower house members insisted they would not vote for dual citizens in accordance with the law, but others favoured granting the trust vote to such individuals.

Under Article 72 of the



Constitution, a person being appointed as minister must have the citi-

zenship of Afghanistan only. However, the article

adds if a person nominated for a ministerial post holds nationality of another country, the Wolesi Jirga has the right to reject or endorse his/her nomination.

The Wolesi Jirga had previously decided that dual nationals would not be approved because such people promoted the interests of the other country instead ...*(More on P4)...*(2)

## Jawad, Sarabi Appointed as Advisors to CEO



KABUL - Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Dr. Abdullah Abdullah appointed two advisors on Thursday, his office said.

Sayed Tayeb Jawad was appointed as political and international affairs

advisor and Habiba Sarabi as women's and youth affairs advisor. Previously, Jawad has served as Afghanistan's ambassador to the United States of America and Sarabi as Bamyan governor. (Pajhwok)

## Turkmenistan Ready for Enhanced Power Exports

KABUL - President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani and his Turkmen counterpart have stressed the need for cementing economic relations between Kabul and Ashgabat, the Presidential Palace said on Thursday.

Ghani on Wednesday flew to Ashgabat on a two-day visit to meet his Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdimukhamedov and other senior officials on



enhanced economic, trade and cultural links. A statement from the Presidential Palace said

Berdymukhamedov, in a meeting with Ghani, hoped that bilateral trade volume between the two

neighbours, which stood at \$1 billion in 2014, would double this year.

Gas, oil and electricity are principal imports from Turkmenistan. The Turkmen president said his country wanted to increase energy exports to Afghanistan and was currently working on centre for exporting gas to Afghanistan.

A ...*(More on P4)...*(4)

## Neighbours to Burn in Fire They are Stoking: Nabil



KABUL - President Ashraf Ghani's choice for the spy-master on Thursday said, if endorsed, he would formulate a clear policy and enhance recruitment besides building staff capacity.

Two days earlier, the Presidential Palace introduced 24 designate ministers-designate and National Directorate of Security and Central Bank heads to the assembly the Wolesi Jirga for a trust vote. Four ministers presented their plans yesterday and four today. Outlining his priorities before lower house members, Rahmatullah Nabil said the intelligence service had the ability to rout the Taliban, Al-Qaeda, Islamic State and other

Intelligence operatives had made great achievements in combating the enemy

and enjoyed institutional prestige in the region at large, he said, claiming the NDS had also won the trust of Afghans.

"Despite its multiple achievements, terrorism remains a threat to our people. Additionally, new threats are emerging in the region, where some countries are using terror as a policy tool to reach their targets," he explained.

At least 34 political and religious parties, at directives of spy agencies of neighbouring countries, were directly involved recruiting youth for fighting in Afghanistan under different names, Nabil alleged.

"Our loud and clear message to the enemies is that Afghanistan is no longer a weak country and has made ...*(More on P4)...*(8)

## Islamabad Proscribes Haqqani Network, other outfits

KABUL - Faced with increasing terror threats, Pakistan has outlawed the Haqqani network and several other militant organisations, a media report said on Thursday.

The Ministry of Interior in Islamabad had also included the Jamaatud Dawa (JuD) in the list of proscribed organisation, the English-language newspaper Dawn reported.

It quoted an unnamed interior ministry official as saying the United States had long pressed for the ban on the Haqqani network and the Jamaatud Dawa but the decision was delayed.

But after the Taliban attack on the Army Public School in Peshawar, the government moved to take action against all militants without any distinction, the daily reported. Harkat-ul-Jihad Islami, Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, Falah-i-Insaniyat Foundation, Ummah Tameer-i-Nau, Haji Khairullah Hajji Sattar Money Exchange, Rahat Limited, Roshan Money Exchange, Al Akhtar Trust and Al Rashid Trust have also been banned.

US Secretary of State John Kerry, during his recent visit to Islamabad, had praised the decision to slap a ban on the Haqqani network and the Jamaatud Dawa, the newspaper said. ...*(More on P4)...*(9)

## India Gives Afghanistan Duty-Free Market Access

NEW DELHI - India on Thursday offered Afghanistan duty-free access to its market to boost the economy of the war-ravaged Central Asian nation. Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Syed Akbaruddin told reporters: "India provides duty-free access to the Indian market for Afghanistan's exports under the South Asia Free Trade Area (SAFTA)."

India offered to allow Afghan trucks to directly

unload at its integrated check-post in Attari to give a fillip to Afghanistan's exports and to reduce transaction costs, the official said. India and Afghanistan had problems in the area trade through Pakistan.

In Kabul, the Indian embassy said: "We hope this offer will overcome the limitation currently being faced by Afghanistan and also contribute to greater regional integration, an objective pursued by all SAARC members." (Pajhwok)

## NATO Welcomes Bulgarian Involvement in Afghanistan

BRUSSELS - NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg Thursday welcomed Bulgaria's involvement in NATO's new mission to train, advice and assist the Afghan forces during a meeting with Bulgarian President Rosen Plevneliev in Sofia.

NATO ended its combat mission in Afghanistan last December and replaced it

with a non-combat mission of about 12,000 personnel.

According to a NATO press release, Stoltenberg welcomed Bulgaria's continued commitment to the mission in Kosovo; and for enhancing NATO's collective defence by conducting naval patrols in the Black Sea. He and Plevneliev also discussed the importance of ...*(More on P4)...*(10)