

India participates at Tokyo JCMB Meeting on Afghanistan

India took active part at the 7th Joint Co-ordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB) Meeting in Tokyo on February 6. The Indian delegation was led by Jayant Prasad, Indian Ambassador to Afghanistan, supported by Piyush Shrivastava, Deputy Secretary dealing with Afghanistan affairs in the Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi. Prior to the JCMB meeting, the Indian delegation also participated in the Political Directors Meeting on February 5.

The coordinated efforts of the international community towards bringing back Afghanistan from decades of destruction to the path of peace, stability and development resulted in the adoption of the Afghanistan Compact in London in January 2006 with a life span of five years until March 2011.

The first meeting of the JCMB was held on April 30, 2006 as a central mechanism between the Afghan Government and the international community to help resolve strategic issues, lend greater coherence to aid efforts, and provide high-level political support for implementation of the Afghanistan Compact.

The Tokyo JCMB provided an occasion for all stakeholders to review the progress, identify the challenges constraining development, and reconsolidate efforts in meeting these challenges towards a holistic and coordinated reconstruction of Afghanistan.

Countering the narcotic trade was the principal theme of the conference.

Discussions also focused on security, governance, rule of law, human rights, economic and social development, and aid co-ordination.

It was noted that the narcotics industry posed the single biggest threat to Afghanistan's stability, linked to insecurity and terrorism undermining the rule of law. The JCMB endorsed the prioritised counter narcotics implementation plan.

India impressed on alternative development strategy, food security and agricultural revival, as the key to weaning away poppy growing farmers from the narco trade.

Ambassador Prasad offered assistance in introducing a price support and seed subsidy system, which has proved very successful in India.

Another highlight of JCMB-VII was the recognition that terrorism continued to pose

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a serious challenge to security and development of Afghanistan.

The Political Directors' Communiqué listed out measures for meeting challenges and consolidating the gains already made in Afghanistan including reconfirmation of the Afghan lead in implementation of the Afghanistan Compact; prioritised sequencing of Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS); renewal and enhancement of regional consensus and redress of cross-border issues; as well as coordinated devel-

Key features of Indo-Afghan partnership

India offers expert assistance to Afghanistan in education, health, telecommunications, transport and civil aviation, agriculture and irrigation, industry, power generation and transmission, as well as information and broadcasting

Special focus on capacity and human resource development

Training of Afghan students and public officials in India to help drive capacity building programmes in Afghanistan

Deputation of Indian civil servants under the India-Afghanistan-UNDP Memorandum of Understanding for Capacity for the Afghan Public Administration programme.

opment of a comprehensive politico-military strategy.

India demonstrated its full commitment to rebuilding Afghanistan. The Indo-Afghan \$950-million partnership today fully embraces a multi-dimensional co-operation programme being undertaken in virtually all parts of the country covering education, health, telecommunications, transport and civil aviation, agriculture and irrigation, industry, power generation and transmission, as well as information and broadcasting.

In the advanced phase of its development programme, India has been according special focus on capacity and human resource development which has been identified as the top developmental priority by the Afghan government and is a vital cross-cutting issue in the Afghanistan Compact.

From 2001, around 3,000 Afghans have been sent for training or studies to India under various capacity building programmes. These trained professionals are expected to become the vanguard in tackling the mammoth challenge of institution building in Afghanistan.

Besides, since 2006, India has embarked upon an ambitious annual programme of training 500 Afghan public officials (through short-term courses in a number of fields) and 500 students at the graduate and post-graduate levels in India.

A number of Indian civil servants have also been deputed under the India-Afghanistan-UNDP Memorandum of Understanding for Capacity for Afghan Public Administration (CAP) programme envisaged to build capacity in various Afghan ministries.

The diverse assistance programme is being undertaken in partnership with the Afghan government, in total alignment with ANDS priorities, and with focus on local ownership of assets.

India remains committed to working with the Government and the people of Afghanistan, as well as the international community for socio-economic uplift of Afghanistan and peace and stability of the region. To this end, India shall continue to actively participate within the JCMB framework for the achievement of the Compact benchmarks in the most productive manner.