

Afghanistan receives team from National Defence College



India's National Defence College (NDC) team members with President Hamid Karzai and Ambassador Rakesh Sood.

Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai praised the Indian education system and called for deeper interaction between India and Afghanistan to help continue the exchange of ideas and enrich the experiences of each other in various fields. Karzai was talking to a group of students from India's National Defence College (NDC), at the presidential palace. "I am a product of the Indian education system," Karzai said. Welcoming the NDC team to Afghanistan, he fondly remembered his student days at Shimla in India.

The 14-member team from NDC was on a five-day visit to Afghanistan from September 2, as part of a study tour to SAARC member countries.

The team also called on Defence Minister General Abdul Rahim Wardak, who spoke

about the emerging role of Afghan security forces and the challenges faced by them. He hoped that the team's visit would lead to better understanding of each other.

The NDC team also interacted with ISAF, Kabul Military Training Center (KMTC), Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A), United Nations Assistance Mission for Afghanistan (UNAMA) and Afghanistan National Army (ANA).

The team also had a meeting with the Governor of Balkh Province, Noor Mohammad Atta, and visited the famous Blue Mosque in the city of Mazar-e-Sharif.

Established in 1960 in New Delhi, NDC is modelled after reputed institutions, such as the National War College of Washington, Royal College of Defence Studies of London,

and National Defence College of Canada.

In the past two years, two Afghan army officers have attended the prestigious NDC course.

The NDC team leader, Yoginder Kumar, said, "This is the first visit by a team from NDC to Afghanistan, after its admission into SAARC."

"Our meetings with Afghan dignitaries and interactions with ISAF and UNAMA provided us valuable insights. Each member of the team was touched by warmth and hospitality shown by the government of Afghanistan."

Captain Chaiwat Muangnoi of Thailand Navy, a shy and quiet member of the team, was enthusiastic, when he said: "For me, the visit to Afghanistan was an experience, with unforgettable impressions." ■