

Portrait presented to President Karzai



President Hamid Karzai looking at his portrait.

On the eve of his final departure from Afghanistan, outgoing Indian Ambassador Rakesh Sood presented a portrait of President Hamid Karzai painted by Sandeep Kumar, Minister at the Indian Embassy in Kabul, to Karzai at the Presidential Palace on January 9.

The painting depicts Karzai in his customary green chaupan with his right hand raised to the forehead in salutation in his affable trademark style. Kumar explained that his intention was not to make a portrait depicting the President's features in realistic detail. Rather it was an attempt to project President Karzai's indomitable spirit.

The oil painting, done in impressionist style, with a profusion of burnt brown, viridian green, golden orange, cerulean blue and

violet, is positive in interpretation, sending out a message of hope for the future. The President looks at his audience straight in the eye signifying pride, dignity and self-respect. The right hand is raised in salutation, communicating his greetings to the people of Afghanistan as well as to the outside world, as Afghanistan gains its rightful place in the comity of nations.

The dark brown background is indicative of the challenges faced by the President but this is offset against the golden orange and yellow bursting into the horizon, reflective of light and glory.

While receiving the painting, the President expressed his warm appreciation for the work, welcoming the message of hope and optimism.

The meeting with President Karzai was also an occasion for the Indian Ambassador to introduce the Afghan students of the Indian Cultural Centre (ICC) learning Indian classical music under the guidance of Indian maestro, Ustad Inder Singh Bawra. There are around 70 students at the ICC.

The President expressed his appreciation for the students who, within a period of a few months, had attained an impressive level of understanding in rendering Indian classical ragas.

He encouraged them to continue with the learning and help sustain the rich historical musical heritage of Afghanistan.

The Centre offers free music lessons and all are welcome. ■