

Republic Day celebrations at Indian Embassy in Kabul

Celebrating the 58th Republic Day of India, Embassy of India, Kabul, held the traditional flag hoisting ceremony on January 26 on the embassy premises. On this ceremonious occasion, Ambassador Rakesh Sood unfurled the National Flag and read out the President's address to the nation delivered on the eve of Republic Day.

Defying the sub-zero temperature of Kabul and chilly winds, members of the Mission, Indian personnel working with various Indian assistance projects and other Indian nationals resident in Kabul enthusiastically attended the function and sang the National Anthem. Altogether around 100 persons attended the ceremony.

Similar flag hoisting functions were also held at the Indian Consulates General in Herat, Jalalabad, Kandahar and Mazar-e-Sharif



Ambassador Rakesh Sood reading out the extracts of the President's address to the nation at the Indian Embassy in Kabul on Republic Day.

to celebrate Republic Day.

The local community of Indians attended the ceremonies at the respective Consulates. ■

HIGHLIGHTS OF PRESIDENT KALAM'S ADDRESS TO THE NATION

Today, the youth are asking me, "What I can give to India?" This shows that the nation is on a positive growth trajectory. My topic of this address will be "What can I give to my nation?"

Ambience in the Nation 2007

In the Indian history, our nation has come across a situation, all at a time, an ascending economic trajectory.

Ambience in 2020

If we perform in an integrated way with development politics as the focus, in mission mode with transparency, I visualize even before the year 2020, a prosperous India is possible.

Reaching the unreached

The Government has doubled the credit availability to the agriculture sectors in 2005-06 keeping 2004-05 as a base. Corporate sector may also think of reaching the unreached as an essential component of "Corporate Social Responsibility".

National Security

Our Armed Forces and Paramilitary Forces, day or night, are awake guarding our borders in the land, air and sea and remain vigilant to counter any threat and facilitate unhindered progress of national development. We cherish the valour, commitment and devotion to duty of these gallant personnel of our Armed Forces.

Conclusion

Developed India by 2020 is a mission of a billion people. Every one of us has a role to play. It will be a reality if everyone "Give - What I can give", through individual, societal and nationwide participation in a national movement facilitated by the Government.

India donates \$3mn of military equipment

In a well-attended function on December 11, 2006 held at Logistics Depot of Afghan National Army (ANA) in Khoja Bogra, Kabul, Ambassador of India Rakesh Sood handed over military equipment worth \$3 million to Afghan Minister of Defence Gen. (Rtd) Abdul Rahim Wardak.

The military equipment donated by India included 2,500 units of Bullet Proof Jackets, 2,500 units of Bullet Proof Helmets, 150 Bullet Proof Observation Towers (Machan), 1,000 sets of Laser Aim Points, 15,000 units of Spool Plastic with punched tape. Other items were Wire Cutters, Mine Detectors, Magnetic and Non-magnetic Long Prodders.

Addressing the gathering on this occasion, Ambassador Sood highlighted the historically close and friendly ties between India and Afghanistan. He elaborated on the wide-ranging and extensive nature of India's assistance to Afghanistan, now around \$700 million, including training courses for Afghan Army officers in India. Receiving the equipment, Afghan Defence Minister Wardak talked about enduring bilateral relations and conveyed deep appreciation of the Government of Afghanistan to India for donating the much-needed

military equipment for the use by the Afghan Army. After the formal handing over of the equipment, Ambassador Sood and Deputy Defence Minister Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, Baz Mohammad Jawhari, had a joint press conference and provided details of the donated equipment.



Afghan Defence Minister Abdul Rahim Wardak, right, and Ambassador of India Rakesh Sood, left, signing the documents on donation of the military equipment.

As part of its assistance to Afghanistan in the defence sector, worth around \$10 million, India had earlier provided 300 vehicles, 25 tons of winter clothing, 277 packages of medicines and musical instruments. In terms of human

resources development, five ANA officers completed successfully their training courses in India in 2006. At present, 21 ANA officers are attending various training programmes in India. During 2007, 49 more ANA officers are scheduled to receive training in various defence establishments in India.

Deputy Minister of Defence (Acquisitions, Technology and Logistics) Baz Mohammad Jawhari, Chief of Operations of ANA Lt. Gen. Sher Mohamad Karimi, Commander of Combined Security Transition Command (CSTC-A) Major General Robert Durbin and senior officials of the Ministry of Defence of Afghanistan attended the function. ■