

India signs MoUs on Small Development Projects

In pursuance of the Agreement on US\$ 20 million Small Development Projects scheme signed during Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to Afghanistan on August 28, 2005, the second batch of 11 memoranda of understanding (MoUs) for various projects was signed at the Ministry of Economy on July 1.

The MoUs comprised the projects of construction of 38 schools in Badakshan, Paktia, Paktika, Khost, Kunar, Nangarhar, Nooristan and Nimroz provinces, construction of protection wall in Chaknahor village of Lalpor district of Nangarhar, a girder bridge in Shirzad district of Nangarhar, and setting up of 71 water points in Marawarah district of Kunar. The total amount of these 11 projects is \$ 4.7million.

The MoUs were signed by Sandeep Kumar, Minister at the Indian Embassy, together with Prof. Nazir Ahmad Shahidi, Deputy Minister (Professional), Ministry of Economy, Mohammed Sadeeq Patman, Deputy Minister (Finance and Administration), Ministry of Education and Eng. Raz Mohammad, Deputy Minister (Administration and Finance), Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development.

This was the second batch of MoUs signed. Earlier in phase I, 16 MoUs were signed on April 2 for setting up of four demonstrative nurseries, seven basic health clinics and 219 water points/bore wells covering the provinces of Nangarhar, Khost, Nooristan, Kunar, Paktia, Badakhshan, Nimroz, Paktika and Zabul. These were for \$1.69m. All the projects have been finalised in total accordance with the priorities of the



(From right): Prof Nazir Ahmad Shahidi, Deputy Minister (Professional), Ministry of Economy, Sandeep Kumar, Minister, Indian Embassy, and Mohammed Sadeeq Patman, Deputy Minister (Finance and Administration), Ministry of Education at the MoUs signing ceremony

Afghan government in the various sectors and in alignment with the Afghan National Development Strategy.

The scheme is part of India's overall \$750 million reconstruction programme for Afghanistan. It relates to quick-impact, small-scale projects with less than \$1 million, having short gestation periods of six to nine months, identified at grass-roots levels in consultation with the local government and implemented by local contractors. The objective is to create a sense of partnership and ownership in the local communities, particularly in the vulnerable border districts in the south and southeastern provinces of Afghanistan, which would help in ushering in

development and strengthening the writ of the central government. It is expected that the small development projects will thereby contribute to greater peace, prosperity and security in the region.

In a press conference that followed the signing of the MoUs, Prof. Shahidi, Deputy Minister (Professional) from the Ministry of Economy, which has been designated as the nodal Ministry from the Afghan side for implementation of the MoU on Small Development Projects, appreciated India's assistance, which he said, was very timely and would contribute significantly to the overall reconstruction and development of Afghanistan. ■

Excerpts from the statement of Head of Indian delegation at the Rome Conference

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■ In the justice sector, India has undertaken important training programmes under the Indian Technical Economic Cooperation programme in the field of justice covering legal education, office management, IT, English proficiency, and intellectual property rights. Afghan students have also been sent to law schools in India under our scholarship schemes. Enhancing human capacity development is a key focus of our overall assistance programme, which we strongly believe can become a vanguard in institution building in Afghanistan.

■ India will also be deputing experienced



(From left to right) Minister of State Shri Prakash Jaiswal and Ambassador Rakesh Sood at the Rome Conference.

coaches and mentors for capacity development in the justice sector under the

Capacity for Afghan Public Service project that is being undertaken jointly with the Afghan government and UNDP.

■ India will also be willing to broaden its engagement in the field of technical police training, including the counter narcotics police, with focus on strengthening leverages between police and prosecutors. The induction of a greater number of women in the police sector within the proposed police-judiciary co-operation framework is another area of priority for the Afghan government, and India will be willing to work towards affecting this as well, in coordination with the relevant role players.