

# India fully committed to rebuilding Afghanistan: Ahamed

**R**epresentatives from more than 60 nations and several international organisations launched the five-year 'Afghanistan Compact' in London on January 31, assuring continued high-level global support for Afghanistan and pledging \$10.5 billion in aid.

India, which contributed \$50 million of this amount, was represented at the conference by Minister of State for External Affairs E. Ahamed. The Indian contribution is in addition to the \$550 million that the country has already pledged for the reconstruction of Afghanistan.

In his speech, Ahamed said that India is fully committed to working with the people and the Government of Afghanistan to rebuild their country after the devastation caused by three decades of conflict.

"Our partnership today embraces a multi-dimensional cooperation programme, including education, health, telecommunication, transport, civil aviation, agriculture and irrigation, industry, power generation and transmission, human resource development and many other areas.

"With the successful presidential and parliamentary elections, Afghanistan has emerged as a democratic nation. One of the contributions we propose to make for the growth of democracy in Afghanistan is the construction of its Parliament building," Ahamed said.

Mentioning that the cost of the building is estimated to be \$66 million, the Minister



Minister of State for External Affairs E. Ahamed

said that it would be completed by 2010.

Referring to problems that still afflict Afghanistan, Ahamed said, "The problems posed by narcotics, terrorism and insecurity in certain regions in the south and south-eastern parts of Afghanistan not only undermine the security of Afghanistan, but also hinder prospects for its economic development. Dealing with such challenges is a collective responsibility of all the countries which are interested in ensuring the long-term stability of Afghanistan as a plural society."

"The 'Afghanistan Compact' provides a framework of partnership between Afghan Government and the international community to carry forward the process of

Afghanistan's state-building and developmental efforts in the next five years as planned in the Afghan National Development Strategy document," he said.

The Minister also said that Afghanistan's recent admission as a member of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) will benefit the country as the regional group moves forward in developing a free trade area.

Stating that the Indian economy is recognised today as one of the engines of global growth, Ahamed said, "Our vision of prosperity, however, is not limited to India. It encompasses our region."

In his speech, Afghan President Hamid Karzai said, "Four years on from the Bonn Conference, the people of Afghanistan have made great strides towards peace, stability and democracy. We owe our successes to the resilience and unfailing determination of the Afghan people as well as the generous support of the international community."

He said that in spite of the many achievements, Afghanistan still has a long road ahead and significant challenges to meet.

In his concluding remarks, he said, "Today the people of Afghanistan are proud that, with your help, we have been able to regain our place in the family of nations as an integral and dignified member."

"On behalf of the Afghan people, I pledge today that we will be a dependable asset to the security of the region and of the world," Karzai said. ■

## KEY TARGETS IN THE FIVE-YEAR 'AFGHANISTAN COMPACT' PLAN

### SECURITY AND DRUGS

- Promotion of security and stability with the help of international security forces.
- Disbandment of all illegal armed groups by the end of 2007.
- Expansion of the Afghan National Army to a ceiling of 70,000 personnel and the national and border police to up to 62,000.
- Reduction by 70 percent of the land area contaminated by mines.
- All unsafe, unserviceable and surplus ammunition to be destroyed and all stockpiled anti-personnel mines to be destroyed by the end of 2007.

### GOVERNANCE, RULE OF LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS

- Restructuring and rationalisation of the government.
- Anti-corruption monitoring mechanism by the end of 2008
- A census by the end of 2008, with single identity document and voter registry by the following year.
- Implementation by the end of 2008 of a plan on peace, justice

and reconciliation to deal with human rights violations during the past 25 years of civil war in the country.

- Stronger female participation in Afghan governance.

### ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

- Access to safe drinking water for 90 percent of villages and sanitation to 50 percent; 40 percent to be connected to a main road.
- The country's ring road will be upgraded and maintained, and by 2008 have connections with neighbouring countries.
- Roads to reach 40 percent of villages.
- Electricity will reach at least 65 percent of households in urban areas and 25 percent in rural areas.
- Basic health services will reach 90 percent of the population, with maternal mortality reduced by 15 percent.
- All children under five to be immunised for preventable diseases and their mortality rates reduced by 5 percent.
- Enrolment in primary schools will be 60 percent and 75 percent for girls and boys, respectively.