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President Karzai's India Visit

Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh with the President of Afghanistan, Hamid Karzai, in New Delhi on April 10.

India and Afghanistan on April 10 deepened their political and economic ties by signing three accords on education exchange, rural development and quality control, and pushed for greater two-way trade.

The three memorandums of understanding (MoUs) were signed at Hyderabad House in New Delhi in the presence of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Afghan President Hamid Karzai, who arrived in India on April 9 on a five-day state visit.

Suresh Pachouri, Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs, received Karzai, who was accompanied by a high-powered delegation, including 10 ministers. Karzai's meeting with Prime Minister Singh was on April 10, during which they discussed a whole range of bilateral and regional issues, including ways to strengthen cooperation for fight-

ing terrorism and boosting stability in the region. After the meeting, India expressed concern at the "increased terrorist activities" in Afghanistan and pledged another \$50 million for

PRESIDENT KARZAI EXPRESSED HIS GRATITUDE TO INDIA FOR "GOING OUT OF ITS WAY TO HELP US IN REBUILDING LIVES IN AFGHANISTAN AND IN STRENGTHENING INFRASTRUCTURE AND INSTITUTIONS OF DEMOCRACY."

the reconstruction of the conflict-steeped country.

The additional assistance takes India's total contribution to \$650 million for Afghanistan's reconstruction in a slew of projects

ranging from roads and infrastructure to grass-roots development.

"We discussed the security situation in Afghanistan and expressed concern at the increased terrorist activities in some parts of the country," Prime Minister Singh said in his opening remarks at a joint press conference after the talks.

The leaders called for cooperation between India, Afghanistan and Pakistan to fight the "menace of terrorism" that is affecting the entire region.

"India has been a victim of terrorism for nearly 20 years. Both India and Afghanistan have suffered due to terrorism. Even Pakistan is not immune to terrorism," said Manmohan Singh.

"I very much hope that all of us in this region will join hands to fight this menace," said President Karzai.

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AGREEMENTS SIGNED

MoU on Cooperation in Education

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) on cooperation in education was signed between Human Resource Minister Arjun Singh and Afghan Foreign Minister Abdullah Abdullah, on behalf of his country's Ministry of Higher Education. A Joint Working Group will be constituted to implement this accord. The pact envisages all-encompassing cooperation between the educational institutions of the two countries and includes exchange of research material, publications, educational literature and teaching aids; organisation of training programmes for educational administrators and teachers; and exchange of scholars, teachers, academic, experts and students.

MoU on Rural Development

A MoU on rural development was signed by Rural Development Minister Raghuvaran Singh and his Afghan counterpart Mohammad Hanif Atmar to promote technical cooperation in the development and maintenance of rural connectivity and rural water supply.

MoU on Cooperation on Standardisation

MoU on cooperation on standardisation was signed between Swayam Prakash Sharma, Director General of the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), and Abdul Hai Khurasani, Charge d'Affaires of the Afghan Embassy to enhance and strengthen technical cooperation in the field of standardisation.