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Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and President of Uzbekistan Islam Abduganievich Karimov during a joint press interaction in the Uzbek capital of Tashkent on April 26. (Photo: Press Information Bureau)

P rime Minister Manmohan Singh visited Germany and the key Central-Asian nation of Uzbekistan, from April 22 to 26.

Prime Minister Singh arrived in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, on April 25 on a 24-hour state visit — the first by an Indian head of government to this resource-rich country in the last 13 years.

He was received at the airport by Uzbek Prime Minister Shavkat Mirziyayev and Foreign Minister Ganiyev Majidovich.

The Prime Minister and Uzbek President Islam Abduganievich Karimov held talks for nearly 90 minutes on April 26 on a wide array of bilateral and global issues, including terrorism, trade, energy security, the situation in Afghanistan and regional stability.

India and Uzbekistan also signed seven accords in the fields of energy, education, agricultural research, business and mineral

prospecting. In a significant boost to India's energy diplomacy, Karimov said that he was willing to offer India oil exploration

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blocks on a joint management basis in the ratio of 50:50.

Ways to counter "international terrorism in all its manifesta-

tions" by attacking its source of financing dominated discussions between the two leaders.

"Both our countries face the common threats of terrorism, fundamentalism and religious extremism and President Karimov and I have resolved to continue to work together to combat these dangers," Prime Minister Singh told reporters at a joint press interaction with Karimov.

"The two sides emphasised the need for expeditious adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism within the framework of the U.N.," said a Joint Statement issued at the end of the talks that referred to "the similarity or coincidence on global and regional issues".

Karimov underlined the need for combating drug trafficking in Afghanistan, which he said was the fountainhead of terrorist financing in the entire region.

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AGREEMENTS SIGNED BETWEEN INDIA AND UZBEKISTAN

Trade

■ MoU on establishing the Uzbekistan-India Entrepreneurship Development Centre in Tashkent.

■ MoU between State Trading Corporation of India and the State Joint Stock Company of Uzbekistan.

Energy

■ MoU between the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas of India and the National Holding Company Uzbekneftegaz of Uzbekistan on Cooperation in the field of Oil and Natural Gas.

■ MoU between GAIL (India) Limited and Uzbekneftegaz.

Agriculture

■ Work Plan for 2007 under the MoU for Cooperation in the field of Agricultural Research and Education between the Department of Agricultural Research and Education of the Ministry of Agriculture of India and the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources of Uzbekistan.

Mineral prospecting

■ MoU on Cooperation between the Ministry of Coal and Mines of India and the State Committee of Uzbekistan for Geology and Mineral Resources.

Education

■ MoU between Delhi University and Tashkent State Institute of Oriental Studies.