

# Delhi, Kabul ink 3 accords

## Better Indo-Pak ties vital for regional peace, says Karzai

PTI, REUTERS, Kabul

Cementing their ties, India and Afghanistan yesterday signed three accords covering areas of education, healthcare and agricultural research.

An agreement in the field of healthcare and medicinal sciences and two Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) on small development projects and cooperation in agricultural research and education were signed in the presence of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Afghan President Hamid Karzai after their talks in Kabul.

According to the agreement in the field of healthcare and medicinal sciences, India would help the war-ravaged country in programmes relating to family welfare, public health and hospitals.

The MoU on small development

projects covered areas like education, healthcare and community development.

The Indian embassy and consulates in consultation with the Afghan government will identify the projects to be covered under the MoU.

Another MoU on agricultural research and education envisages cooperation in the field of horticulture, fisheries and animal sciences. It will also involve exchange of scientists.

India yesterday offered all possible assistance to Afghanistan in effectively dealing with terrorism and rebuilding the war-ravaged country.

"We have discussed terrorist threat worldwide as also in Afghanistan and in India. There is convergence of views that terrorism poses a threat anywhere and everywhere and we have to deal together," Prime Minister

Manmohan Singh said at a joint press conference with Afghan President Hamid Karzai after their one-to-one and delegation-level talks in Kabul.

Singh, who is the first Indian Prime Minister to visit Kabul in 29 years, the last being Indira Gandhi in 1976, said "it is for the Government and people of Afghanistan to indicate what type of assistance they want. We are ready to give it."

On the regrouping of Taliban in Afghanistan, Karzai asserted that terrorist activities would not deter people from participating in the upcoming Parliamentary elections.

"Terrorism had come to Afghanistan three-and-a-half years ago. With the help of the international community and the people of Afghanistan, it was defeated and thrown out...But we see continua-

tion of such activities and we feel very sad about it," Singh said.

Earlier Afghan President Hamid Karzai said yesterday peace between India and Pakistan is vital for the region as he called for the three countries to work together to defeat terrorism.

Karzai discussed regional security and terrorism with Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, who arrived in Afghanistan earlier on Sunday, the first visit to Afghanistan by an Indian prime minister in nearly 30 years.

"Afghanistan is very happy to see a dialogue for better relations between India and Pakistan. Afghanistan is directly effected by friendship between the two countries," Karzai told a joint news conference with Singh.



PHOTO: AFP

Afghan President Hamed Karzai (R) speaks during a press conference while Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh looks on at the Presidential Palace in Kabul yesterday. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh arrived in Afghanistan for the first visit by an Indian leader in 29 years, carrying fresh aid offers and seeking to blunt rival Pakistan's influence.

### Tripura rebels make porn films to raise money

REUTERS, Guwahati

Separatist leaders in a remote northeastern state of Tripura forced their cadre to perform in pornographic films to fund their cause, police said yesterday, but rebels said authorities were trying to malign them.

Police said surrendered rebels of the National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT) confessed that such films were sold in India, and neighbouring Bangladesh and Myanmar.

"We have many pornographic CDs with young women and men featuring in these movies which were handed over to us by some surrendered NLFT cadres," Ghanshyam Murari Srivastava, the police chief of Tripura told Reuters.

However, the rebels denied this. "This is nothing but another propaganda war launched by the police to malign our image," an NLFT spokesman told Reuters.