

The Daily Star

India promises US\$ 450m aid to Afghanistan

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

India and Afghanistan yesterday agreed to fight terrorism unitedly with a firm resolve and asked the international community to recognize the pernicious effects of religious radicalism and New Delhi announced a fresh package of 450 million dollar of reconstruction projects for war-ravaged Afghanistan.

After his talks with visiting Afghan President Hamid Karzai, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh termed the terror attack on Indian embassy in Kabul last month as an attack on Indo-Afghan friendship and vowed not to allow the incident from dissuading New Delhi from continuing its recon-

struction of the war-torn country. India, which has already committed 750 million dollars of reconstruction projects in Afghanistan, yesterday announced a fresh assistance.

After his talks with Afghan President Hamid Karzai against the "backdrop of serious threat posed by terrorism to security and stability of Afghanistan, India and the region", Singh said the two leaders agreed to fight the menace "unitedly and with firm determination".

Addressing mediapersons along with Karzai, Singh said the two leaders decided that they will not allow terrorism to stand in the way of the boosting the friendly relations between their countries.

"We have decided not to allow

terrorism to come in our way. We have agreed to unitedly fight terrorism", Singh said and noted that Karzai's visit to India was taking place at a "critical juncture" in India, Afghanistan and the region.

"The attack on our embassy in Kabul on July 7 has tragically shown that terrorism has no barriers and is not bound by restraints," Singh said adding "it was an attack on the friendship between India and Afghanistan".

Condemning the embassy attack in Kabul as well as recent serial bombings in Indian cities of Bangalore and Ahmedabad, Karzai said Afghanistan and India face the same challenge of terrorism and "cold-blooded murderous activities".

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"We have decided not to allow

Afghanistan to resume talks with Pakistan

THE DAWN, Kabul

Afghanistan accepted Pakistan's offer on Sunday to resume talks which the Kabul government had boycotted after accusing its neighbour of being behind a series of attacks.

Afghan President Hamid Karzai and Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani talked on the sidelines of the Saarc summit in Colombo on Sunday, their first meeting since July 15.

"At the suggestion of Pakistan, the Afghan side agreed to re-engage on all bilateral and multilateral forums," presidential palace statement said.

Myanmar PM to attend Olympics

AFP, Yangon

Myanmar's Prime Minister Thein Sein will attend the opening ceremony of the Olympics, state media announced yesterday but gave no details on his trip.

The government mouthpiece New Light of Myanmar said that General Thein Sein would leave "in the near future" to attend the opening ceremony Friday.

Myanmar's secretive junta rarely gives any information about the travels of top officials.

China is one of the military regime's few allies and a major trading partner.

The opening on August 8 marks the 20th anniversary of a national pro-democracy uprising in Myanmar.

former central bank governor Burhanuddin Abdullah over the alleged embezzlement of 31.5 billion rupee (3.4 million dollars) in bank funds in 2004.

Hamka Yandhu, one of two lawmakers charged in connection with the scandal, named the ministers as being among a group of MPs who were sitting on a committee that was considering changes to the central bank law.

He alleged that the two ministers received illegal payments to influence them to approve an amendment to the law.

The ministers were mentioned in testimony last week at the trial of

and they have not been charged with a crime.

"If the legal process proves they are guilty, I will remove them," the president told reporters after meeting the ministers at the presidential palace. "I'm not in a position to suspend their mandates as ministers."

National Police Chief General Sutanto and Attorney General Hendarman Supandji joined the president at the meeting, the Antara news agency reported.

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