

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1125

ANSWERED ON:07.03.2007

VISIT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER TO AFGHANISTAN

Nedurumalli Janardhana Reddy Shri ;Pandey Dr. Laxminarayan;Tripathi Shri Chandramani

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Minister of External Affairs has visited Afghanistan recently;
- (b) if so, the details of discussions held and the outcome thereof;
- (c) whether the issues like terrorism and security of Indians working in Afghanistan also came up for discussion;
- (d) if so, the outcome thereof;
- (e) the steps taken by the Government for the safety of Indians;
- (f) whether the Minister of External Affairs has announced enhancement of assistance being provided to Afghanistan ;
- (g) if so, the details thereof including the assistance provided by India during the last two years; and
- (h) the names of sectors for which assistance is being provided?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE)

(a)-(b) External Affairs Minister, Shri Pranab Mukherjee visited Kabul on January 23-24, 2007 to invite President Karzai to the 14th SAARC Summit to be held in New Delhi on April 3-4, 2007. During the visit, EAM called on President Hamid Karzai, Speaker of the Wolesi Jirga Mohammad Yunus Qanooni, Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Relations of the Wolesi Jirga Ustad Rasool Sayyaf and Foreign Minister Rangin Dadfar Spanta. In his interactions with the Afghan leaders, the entire gamut of bilateral relations was discussed. An MoU on Co-operation in the Field of Development in Public Administration was also signed with UNDP and Afghan Government. EAM also handed over the Polyclinic Block of Indira Gandhi Institute for Child Health (IGICH), built with Indian assistance. He also unveiled a plaque naming a street adjacent to Indira Gandhi Institute for Child Health Care (IGICH) as 'Indira Gandhi Road'.

(c)- (e) Issues like terrorism and security of Indians also came up for discussions. Both the sides agreed on the need to eradicate terrorism. Government of India are taking all possible measures to ensure the safety of Indian workers in Afghanistan. The Indian Mission/Posts in Afghanistan issue regular security advisories and updates for the benefit of Indians working in Afghanistan. Indian workers are urged to register themselves with the Indian Embassy or any of the Consulates. They have been instructed to take adequate security measures and inform their employers and the Embassy/Posts in case they perceive any security threat. Government of India is in constant touch with the Government of Afghanistan, at various levels. Government of Afghanistan has assured that it will take all the steps necessary to provide security to Indians in Afghanistan.

(f) As part of India's long-term commitment to the stability, progress and peace in Afghanistan, during the visit of EAM, India announced an additional pledge of US \$100 million. With this additional pledge, India's total assistance pledge for the reconstruction of Afghanistan becomes US \$750 million.

(g) - (h) The Indian assistance to Afghanistan during the financial year was Rs.272.25 crores and for the financial year 2005-06, it amounted to Rs. 383 crores. India's assistance has mainly been in the sectors that have been identified by the Afghan Government as priority areas of development. They are construction, agriculture, industry, telecommunications, information & broadcasting, power, urban development, technical assistance, education and health.