

Committed to security of Indians, says Karzai



WARM WELCOME: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh shakes hands with President of Afghanistan Hamid Karzai in New Delhi on Thursday. — AFP

ASHOK TUTEJA/TNS

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 3

Afghan President Hamid Karzai today reassured Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of his government's commitment to provide adequate security to around 4,000 Indians working in the embattled nation and keep New Delhi in the picture over the proposed Taliban integration process.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh met Karzai at his residence here and discussed a wide range of bilateral issues, including India's developmental

assistance and various new projects New Delhi proposes to undertake in the war-torn country.

The PM is learnt to have voiced India's apprehensions over the ongoing dialogue for reintegrating the "moderate" Taliban into the mainstream of the Afghan society and Pakistan's attempt to meddle in the integration process to further its own strategic interests.

The two leaders also discussed the prospective security situation in view of the proposed phased withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan that is expected

to begin in July, sources said.

The leaders of the two countries, both of which accuse Pakistan of harbouring militants behind terror attacks on their countries, discussed "the common threat faced by both societies from terrorism", a joint statement issued by the two sides said. The two leaders agreed that this ran counter to the aspiration of their people.

They also "agreed that the strategic partnership between India and Afghanistan is a positive factor for peace and stability in the region", it added.