

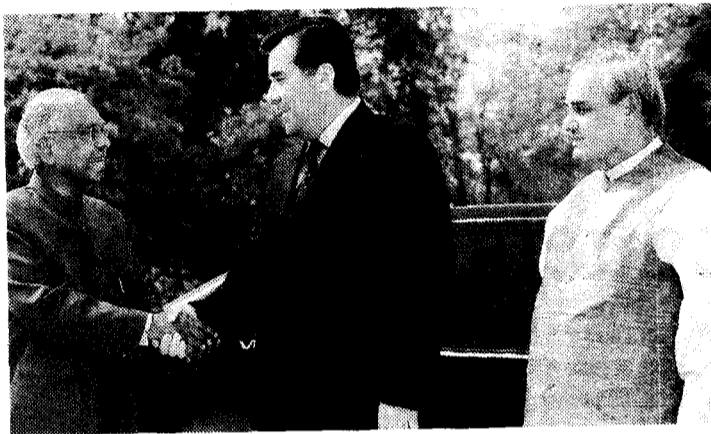
India offers \$5 m grant to Tajikistan

11/5 10-13
By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, MAY 10. India today offered a grant of five million dollars to Tajikistan to tackle the acute drought situation even as bilateral ties were enhanced by the conclusion of five agreements including one on economic cooperation and another for joint action against terrorism and drug trafficking. In a joint declaration on mutual relations, the two countries also charted out the future course of collaboration in a variety of fields.

The declaration was signed by the visiting Tajikistan President, Mr. Emomali Sharifovic Rakhmonov, and the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, who also held talks on the entire gamut of bilateral ties as well as regional and international issues of mutual concern. The offer for the five million dollar grant to enable Tajikistan to buy Indian goods and services was made by Mr. Vajpayee during one-on-one talks with Mr. Rakhmanov. On his part, the Tajik leader said his country fully supported India's aspiration to become a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council.

The two sides also called on the international community to combat terrorism in view of the threats posed to peace and security by this menace. The five



The President of Tajikistan, Mr. Emomali Rakhmonov, being welcomed by the President, Mr. K.R. Narayanan, and the Prime Minister, Mr. A.B. Vajpayee, at the Rashtrapati Bhavan on Thursday. — Photo: V. Sudershan

agreements signed today include a treaty for legal assistance in criminal matters which is expected to be the precursor for jointly tackling the menace of terrorism. The agreement was signed by the Home Minister, Mr. L.K. Advani, and the Tajik Foreign Minister, Mr. Talbank Nazarov. Another agreement for collaboration on drug demand reduction and prevention of illicit trafficking of narcotics drugs, precursors and psychotropic substances and related matters was entered into by the Finance Minister, Mr. Yashwant Sinha, and the Tajik Trade

and Economy Minister, Mr. Hakim Soliev. The third agreement is on long-term cooperation in trade and economy as well as in industry. In addition, a memorandum of understanding has been concluded on technical cooperation while an agreement has also been entered into on air services.

In a meeting with corporate leaders organised by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), Mr. Rakhmanov underlined the potential for greater economic collaboration between the two countries.

THE HINDU

11 MAY 2001

India, Tajikistan sign five agreements

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, May 10. — India and Tajikistan today signed a joint declaration to boost ties and signed five agreements on, among others, combating drug trafficking and enhancing economic cooperation.

The Joint Declaration on Principles of Mutual Relations, signed by the Tajikistan President Mr Emomali Sharifovich Rakhmonov and Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, charts out the course of cooperation in diversified fields.

Besides talks between Mr Vajpayee and Mr Rakhmonov, delegation-level parleys were held on bilateral ties and regional and international issues of mutual concern.

Paving the way for jointly tackling terrorism, a Treaty on Mutual Legal

Assistance in Criminal Matters was signed by the home minister Mr L K Advani and Tajik foreign minister Mr Talbak Nazarov.

An Agreement for Mutual Cooperation for Drug Demand Reduction and Prevention of Illicit Trafficking of Narcotics, Drugs, Precursors and Psychotropic Substances and related matters, was signed by Mr Yashwant Sinha and Tajik minister for trade and economy Mr Hakim Soliev.

The two sides firmed up an agreement for long-term cooperation in trade and industry, besides a memorandum of understanding on technical cooperation and an air services agreement. Mr Rakhmonov, who arrived on a three-day visit yesterday, was accorded a warm welcome this morning by Mr KR Narayanan, Mr Vajpayee, Mr LK Advani and Union ministers at Rashtrapati Bhavan.



The Tajikistan President, Mr Emomali Sharifovich Rakhmonov, and Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee in New Delhi on Thursday. — AP/PTI

Tajiks seek help to fight terrorism

AD-13

By C. Raja Mohan

NEW DELHI, MAY 9. India is likely to expand its assistance to Tajikistan in fighting the menace of narco-terrorism, senior officials of the Ministry of External Affairs suggested here today.

Briefing mediapersons on the eve of the consultations with the visiting Tajik President Mr. Emomali S. Rakhmanov, the MEA officials did not go into the details of proposed cooperation between the two countries in counter-terrorism.

Mr. Rakhmanov, who arrived here today on a three-day visit, would hold wide-ranging consultations tomorrow with the Indian leadership, including the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, and the President, Mr. K. R. Narayanan.

The two sides will sign five agreements, including a broad declaration on political principles of bilateral relations that will set forth the joint opposition of the two countries to international terrorism and religious extremism. An agreement on mutual legal assistance on criminal matters and another on cooperation to battle narcotics trafficking would also be signed.

India views with deep empathy the concerns of Tajikistan, which has emerged as a principal victim of the forces of extremism and

terrorism radiating out of Afghanistan and Pakistan. Tajikistan, which shares a long and porous border with Afghanistan, is going through a difficult economic crisis and trying to overcome the debilitating effects of a prolonged civil war.

As a front line state against the Taliban, Tajikistan bears the brunt of the threats from the forces of narco-terrorism. Mr. Rakhmanov will be looking for greater understanding from India and concrete steps of assistance in facing the threats to the survival of Tajikistan.

There is already some cooperation between the security establishments of the two countries, and this is likely to be deepened after political consultations between the two sides tomorrow.

Both Russia, which already guards the Tajik frontier with Afghanistan, and the United States extend material and financial assistance to this Central Asian nation in fighting narcotics trafficking and terrorism.

Tajikistan, which remains weak and vulnerable, has become an important transit route for the peddlers of drugs and *Jehad* into Central Asia and beyond.

The nature and extent of the assistance will be finalised after the talks between Mr. Rakhmanov and Mr. Vajpayee.

THE HINDU

30 MAY 2001

India, Tajikistan to hold talks on Afghanistan

HD-14

28/4

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, APRIL 27. India and Tajikistan are about to begin intensive discussions on ways to combat the threat of destabilisation from the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. These talks will take place during the visit to India early next month by Tajikistan's President, Mr. Emomali Rakhmanov. Both Tajikistan and India have common concerns about Afghanistan.

Sharing a common border with Afghanistan, Tajikistan is a frontline State which could face the brunt of a drive by Taliban into Central Asia. In case the extremists move into Tajikistan, they could destabilise the entire resource-rich region.

An entry into Tajikistan would mean access to a strategic road which could take the attackers into the famed Ferghana valley. In fact, the sections of the valley which open in neighbouring Uzbekistan have already experienced unrest on account of fundamentalism. There have been numerous reports that an attempt is being made to Islamise the area through the construction

of mosques and other religious institutions which have been funded from abroad. In fact, a grand alliance of fundamentalists bound for the Central Asian Republic of Uzbekistan has been already cemented in Kandahar.

The President, Mr. Rakhmanov, however, has so far resisted fundamentalism, especially by Tajik Islamists. A power sharing accord which accommodates the key extremist group in the country's governance is in existence. Tajikistan has also been reportedly involved in actively supporting the forces of the Northern Alliance, led by Commander Ahmad Shah Massood, which are battling the Taliban.

In its resistance to the Taliban, Mr. Rakhmanov is relying on friends such as Russia, and to a considerable extent, India. Russia, which sees Tajikistan as its first line of defence against fundamentalism, has positioned more than 30,000 troops in the country. India has also provided crucial humanitarian aid, including medical supplies.

Iran is a crucial factor in the internal stability of Tajikistan as well as for fighting the Taliban

across the border. Historically, the Iranians have had an influence on some of the fundamentalist groups which have been operating against Mr. Rakhmanov in Tajikistan. During his four-day stay beginning on May 9, the Tajik President will hold talks with the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, and the President, Mr. K.R. Narayanan.

Yangon Mayor calls on Jagmohan

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, APRIL 27. The Yangon Mayor, Mr. U. Ko Lay, today called on the Union Minister for Urban Development, Mr. Jagmohan, and exchanged views on the patterns of urban development in two countries, particularly the capital cities of Yangon and Delhi.

Welcoming the Mayor, Mr. Jagmohan, said "our relations with Myanmar are rooted in history, religion and culture and a large number of people of Indian origin live in Myanmar. Buddhism provides a very strong link between two countries".

THE HINDU

28 APR 2001