

## India backs Kabul's peace offer

India welcomed Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani's outreach to the Taliban at the Second Kabul Conference on Wednesday. Representing India at the conference, Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale met Mr. Ghani as well as Foreign Minister Salahuddin Rabbani and National Security Advisor Hanif Atmar, the Ministry of External Affairs said.

"The Foreign Secretary conveyed that India welcomed the Afghan government's call to armed groups to cease violence and join national peace and reconciliation process that would protect the rights of all Afghans, including the women, children and the minorities," an MEA statement said.

"There can be no compromise with terrorism and action must be taken against those who continue down the path of violence and those who finance them and provide safe havens and sanctuaries," it added.

A senior official told *The Hindu* that India backs the peace talks, but wants action against any members of the Taliban and their sponsors who don't join the process. The government's position is consistent with India's support to an "Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan-controlled reconciliation process, within the framework of the Afghan Constitution and the internationally accepted red lines".

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