PM Modi arrives in Afghanistan on first leg of five-nation tour, to inaugurate Afghan-India Friendshi

04/06/2016 21:34 by admin

Herat: On the first leg of his five-nation tour, Prime Minister Modi today arrived in Afghanistanâ€™s Herat, where he will inaugurate India-Afghan Friendship Dam earlier known as Salma Dam, along with President President Ashraf Ghani. This is second visit to Afghanistan in less than six months.

The Afghan-India Friendship Dam, earlier known as Salma dam, in western Herat district is built at a cost of over Rs 1,700 crore under India's development partnership with Afghanistan. The dam on the river Chist-e-Sharif will irrigate 75,000 hectares of land and generate 42 MW of power.

"It is symbol of our friendship and would usher in hope, light up homes, nourish the fertile fields of Herat and bring prosperity to the people of the region," the Prime Minister said yesterday.

The Prime Minister will also hold talks with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani on the current situation in the country and the peace process besides other bilateral and regional issues.

The Herat province lies on the ancient trade routes of the Middle East, Central and South Asia. Roads from Herat to Iran, Turkmenistan, and other parts of Afghanistan are considered strategically important.

Over 1,500 Indian and Afghan engineers were involved in construction of the dam for several years in difficult condition.

Afghanistan is Modi's first stop as part of his five-nation tour which will also take him to Qatar, Switzerland, the US and Mexico.

Modi had visited Kabul on December 25 last year during which he had inaugurated a swanky Parliament complex that was built by India at a cost of USD 90 million.

India has a strategic partnership with Afghanistan and is implementing projects worth USD 2 billion to help rebuild the country's infrastructure.

India has been supporting an Afghan-led, Afghan-owned, broad-based and inclusive process of peace and reconciliation, and advocating the need for a sustained and long-term commitment to Afghanistan by the international community.

- With PTI Inputs