



INDIA WANTS TO CROSS THE THRESHOLD

THE KAS HAS BEEN COMMITTED TO THE SUBCONTINENT FOR FORTY YEARS

India was one of the first countries in Asia where the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung committed itself to development work. A few months after Chancellor Kurt-Georg Kiesinger's visit to New Delhi in 1968, cooperation began with the well-known national Youth Academy Vishwa Yuivak Kendra. The "awakening of the Indian elephant" is not simply due to increased growth rates; it is in the political sphere that India's growing significance is most apparent. During her last visit in 2007 Chancellor Angela Merkel emphasized this by renewing the strategic partnership between both countries. But it is in South Asia that India is increasingly challenged to provide stability and drive continued regional development. At the same time, there are considerable reservations about close cooperation with India; the



sources of conflict go back to the dissolution of the British colonial empire. The conflict over Kashmir has repeatedly taken India and its neighbour Pakistan to the brink of nuclear war. Extremism based on religion or social status has permeated the history of the subcontinent for decades. India is directly affected by the current crises in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and has increasingly become a target for

terrorism. KAS programs in India focus on foreign policy and security issues and have contributed to the good reputation the foundation enjoys among Indian decision makers. Regular talks between NATO and India, on the one hand, and Europe, India and the United States, on the other, as well as between India, China and Germany represent innovative approaches to the processes of building mutual trust and shaping opinions. By cooperating with new partners such as the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, the Energy and Resources Institute or the Indian Council of World Affairs, the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung hopes to find answers to new challenges such as the global financial crisis, terrorism or climate change.

Compared with the press in other Asian countries, the press in India is pluralistic and takes a critical view of political and social developments. While major national newspapers have a considerable influence on public opinion, local and regional newspapers are not yet up to the standards of professional journalism. Thus the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung has been supporting a training and continuing education program for journalists for more than 10 years. A study of values and attitudes held by young Indians as regards family, society and politics, modelled on the German Shell study of youth and extending over a period of several years, was concluded in October 2008. Thus the KAS took up the subject of youth again, which had been on the agenda 40 years ago when activities in India were initiated.

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