

India to build Shahtoot dam in Afghanistan

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Union Minister for External Affairs Dr S Jaishankar announced yesterday (24 November) at the Geneva Donors Conference that India will be constructing the Shahtoot Dam on Kabul river in Afghanistan and that the Governments of two nations have recently concluded an agreement for the same.

Dr Jaishankar had also said that the dam's construction would provide safe drinking water to two million residents of Kabul city which is the Afghan capital. The dam would come upon the Maidan river tributary of Kabul river. The conversations for construction of the Shahtoot Dam had begun in 2016.

Key Highlights

- India's development portfolio in Afghanistan has to-date amounted to over USD 3 billion. The minister highlighted that no part of Afghanistan today is untouched by the 400 plus projects that India has undertaken in all 34 of Afghanistan's provinces. More than 65,000 Afghan students have also studied in India.
- EAM also announced launch of phase four of the High-Impact Community Development Projects in Afghanistan, which envisages more than 100 projects worth USD 80 million that India would undertake in Afghanistan.
- Jaishankar emphasised India's long-term commitment to the development of Afghanistan and the benefit of its people as a contiguous neighbor and strategic partner.

- Jaishankar pointed out that Afghanistan's growth has been constrained by its landlocked geography and highlighted India's efforts to provide an alternate connectivity through Chabahar port and a dedicated air freight corridor between India and Afghanistan.
- The MEA said India's humanitarian assistance of 75,000 tonnes of wheat to strengthen food security of Afghanistan during the COVID-19 pandemic has been transported through Chabahar port.
- India has been keenly following the evolving political situation after the US signed a peace deal with the Taliban in February. The deal provided for the withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan, effectively drawing curtains to Washington's 18-year war with Taliban in the country.
- New Delhi has also been maintaining that care should be taken to ensure that any such process does not lead to any "ungoverned spaces" where terrorists and their proxies can relocate.

SOURCE: *Livemint*