

Update on Afghanistan – India relations

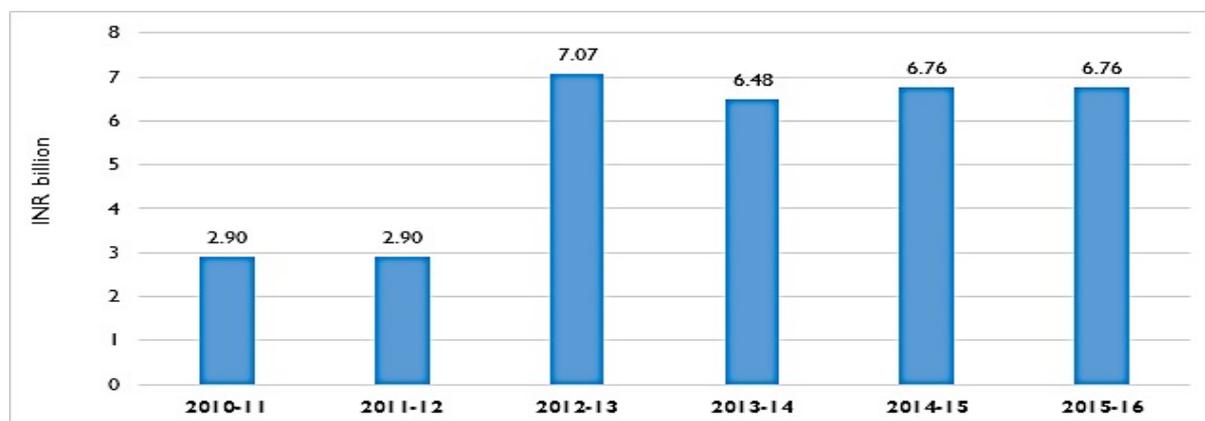
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President Ashraf Ghani’s visit to India: Deepening economic cooperation and development assistance

- During Afghanistan President Ghani’s visit to India, talks are likely to be held for a tripartite agreement between India, Afghanistan and Iran for using and trading goods through the Chabahar port.[5] New Delhi’s plans to build a road-rail network from Chabahar port to the Zaranj-Delaram road in Afghanistan is likely to be taken up during the talks.[6]
- An India-Afghan Motor pact could also be agreed upon, allowing road connectivity projects between Kabul and India in the future. The pact will pave way for road links to Central Asia and Russia.
- The Afghan government is expected to sign a treaty with the Indian government on intelligence sharing. The Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty will help improve intelligence agency coordination between the two countries.
- It is also expected that the Afghanistan President will convince India’s BCCI to allocate a home ground for Afghanistan to play international matches and to allow Afghan cricket players to use India’s training and technical facilities.
- India’s grant and loan-based allocations towards Afghanistan remain unchanged between FY 2014-15 and FY 2015-16. India’s commitments to Afghanistan stand at INR 6.76 billion (US\$ 110.8 million).

Figure 1: Indian Grant and Loan-based Commitments to Afghanistan in INR Billion (between 2010-11 and 2015-16)



Source: Calculations by the Indian Development Cooperation Research (IDCR) initiative at the Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi, based on publically available data from the Union Budget 2014-15, Ministry of Finance, Government of India

Sports Cooperation

- In 2014-15, India spent INR 1.1 million on arranging a visit of a sports delegation from Afghanistan. [1]
- In July 2014, India committed a US\$ 1 million grant to construct a cricket stadium in Afghanistan's southern province of Kandahar. [2] The grant was made under the Indian government's Small Development Project (SDP) scheme. [3]
- In May/ June 2014, Afghanistan had submitted a request for availing technical expertise and facilities for training Afghan cricketers in India. However, as of April 2015, neither the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) nor the Indian government have responded to Afghanistan's request.

Security Cooperation

- India continues its commitment to building capacity within the Afghanistan National Army (ANA) and the Afghanistan National Police (ANP). In FY 2014-15, India committed nearly INR 600 million towards these efforts, training nearly 850 ANA personnel at various Indian military institutes. Extending its security cooperation, India also provided medical treatment to ANA members and supplied three helicopters to Afghanistan in FY 2014-15.

Infrastructure development

- India has committed nearly INR 1.26 billion in FY 2015-16 to build two power substations in northern and central Afghanistan. The substations will supply power to Kabul through the Pul-e-Khumri transmission line, which was also constructed with the help of Indian grants.
- As India seeks to broaden its development partnerships, it is interesting to note that in FY 2015-16, India has committed INR 500 million to improve the public transport network in Afghanistan. As a part of this initiative, India has agreed to supply 1000 buses and upgrade a bus depot in Kabul.

Rural and community development

- Commitments to Small Development Projects in Afghanistan aimed at rural development, improving health and sanitation and small-scale infrastructure have increased from INR 590 million in FY 2014-15 to 1.5 billion in FY 2015-16.

Educational assistance

- In 2015/16, India committed INR 60 million to help upgrade infrastructure at the Afghanistan Agricultural National Sciences and Technological University (ANASTU) in the southern Afghan city of Kandahar. The ANASTU was jointly inaugurated in February 2014 by Afghanistan's then President Hamid Karzai and India's External Affairs Minister at the time Salman Khurshid. India has already provided technical books, interactive CDs, farm equipment and lab instruments to the University.[4] Regular tele-conference lectures have also been organized by India for students at ANASTU.
- India has also pledged assistance to help set up the Afghanistan National Institute of Mines. The Indian School of Mines at Dhanbad will oversee the establishment of the university. In FY 2015-16, India has committed INR 10 million to help prepare a detailed project report for setting up the mining institute.
- India's efforts to training Afghan students through the Indian Council for Cultural Research (ICCR) scholarships have grown stronger over the last year. In FY 2014-15, India spent INR 550 million for nearly 1000 ICCR scholarships. In FY 2015-16, Indian commitments increased to INR 770 million for the ICCR scholarship scheme.

Disclaimer: The values quoted in this article are based on initial calculations by IDCR from publicly available data sources and/or from IDCR's interactions with officials from the Government of India. These values are believed to be accurate, but not guaranteed. They may change as IDCR identifies and addresses discrepancies in the publicly available data. When quoting from this article, please indicate the date it was last updated.

END NOTES

[1] Information on the details of the sports delegation is unavailable.

[2] <http://www.ndtv.com/india-news/india-bats-for-afghanistan-announces-1-million-to-build-cricket-stadium-647262>

[3] "India grants US\$ 1 million for Afghanistan stadium", ESPNCricinfo, 9 August 2014, available at <http://www.espncricinfo.com/afghanistan/content/story/768373.html>

[4] "ANASTU India furthers assistance in southern Afghanistan", Press Release, Embassy of India at Kabul, available at <http://eoi.gov.in/kabul/?3832?000>

[5] "PM Modi, Afghan Prez to hold bilateral talks on Tuesday", Zee News, April 27 2015, available at

http://zeenews.india.com/news/india/pm-modi-afghan-prez-to-hold-structured-bilateral-talks-on-tuesday_1585945.html

[6] “India to sign deal with Iran on Chabahar port project soon”, Hellenic Shipping News, 27th April 2015, available at <http://www.hellenicshippingnews.com/india-to-sign-deal-with-iran-on-chabahar-port-project-soon/>