

Brief on India – Afghanistan Bilateral relations

India is one of Afghanistan's closest neighbours, sharing a contiguous border and a relationship that spans millennia. The two countries are bound by deep civilisational ties, as well as a shared history through ancient and medieval times. Afghanistan occupies a special place in India's Neighbourhood First policy. The bedrock of this relationship is the strong people-to-people connection between the citizens of both countries, which has laid the foundation for a comprehensive and multifaceted partnership.

Political exchanges

2. India has traditionally enjoyed warm and friendly relations with all governments that have been in power in Afghanistan. Following the political developments of August 2021, India adopted a pragmatic approach to its engagement with the Afghan government, enabling it to continue extending humanitarian assistance and supporting the developmental needs of the Afghan people. India resumed its presence in Afghanistan through the establishment of the Technical Mission of India in June 2022. On 21 October 2025, the Technical Mission was upgraded to the Embassy of India.

3. Since October 2025, four ministerial-level visits from Afghanistan to India have taken place: Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi (9–15 October 2025); Minister of Industry and Commerce Alhaj Nooruddin Azizi (19–25 November 2025); Minister of Public Health Mawlawi Noor Jalal Jalali (6–21 December 2025); and Minister for Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock Mawlawi Attaullah Omari (7–12 July 2026). These visits have further strengthened bilateral engagement and enhanced cooperation in the areas of humanitarian assistance, healthcare, capacity building, public infrastructure, food security, agriculture, trade, and commercial cooperation.

Trade and Commerce

4. Given the geographical proximity and historical linkages, India has been a natural trading partner for Afghanistan and the largest market in South Asia for its products. The total bilateral trade between India and Afghanistan for the year 2025-26 was US\$ 907.85 million with imports from Afghanistan amounting to US\$ 650 million. As per World Bank, in FY 2025-26, India has emerged as Afghanistan's largest export destination, with 44% of Afghanistan's total exports. Major Indian exports to Afghanistan are pharma products, fabric raw material, sugar and sugar confectionery, coffee, tea, spices, roasted chickpeas, filter tobacco, storage batteries, tractors, motorcycle engines, etc. and India imports mainly dried fig, asafatoeda, raisin, apple, pistachio, saffron, green caraway, almonds, garlic, walnuts, etc.

5. India has launched a special Air Freight Corridor on Kabul-Delhi-Kabul route, which aims to further enhance connectivity and facilitate smoother movement of goods between the two countries. In June 2026, Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI)'s Chairman visited New Delhi, where, in addition to participation in "Bharat Buildcon 2026", he held interactions PHDCCI, FICCI and ASSOCHAM.

6. India offers South Asian Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA) zero-duty concession for importing Afghan products. This mainly aims to give trade opportunities to Afghan traders and shows India's commitment to India-Afghanistan commercial relations.

Humanitarian Assistance and Capacity-Building

7. India remains steadfast in its commitment to providing humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan through bilateral channels, UN specialised agencies and institutions. Since August 2021, with a special focus on healthcare, education, and food security, India has supplied 50,000 tons of wheat, 40,000 litres of pesticide, 430 tons of medicines and vaccines, 58.6 tons of other essential relief items, and 116 tons of specialised material for drug treatment centres (DTCs) operated by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). In December 2025, India donated 20 medical ambulances to various hospitals in Afghanistan.

8. Following the earthquakes in August and November 2025, and the subsequent floods in April and July 2026, India provided humanitarian assistance comprising earthquake relief material, food supplies, essential medicines, medical equipment, and other HADR assistance, including kitchen sets, family tents, hygiene kits, tarpaulins, plastic sheets, and sleeping bags. In July 2026, to support the shelter and rehabilitation needs of Afghan returnees, India donated family tents to the Afghan Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation.

9. Since 2023, India has awarded scholarships to 3,000 Afghan students, including 1,000 female students, to pursue online undergraduate and postgraduate programmes at Indian universities. India also continues to support educational institutions in Afghanistan by providing academic books, stationery, toys, IT equipment, winter clothing, and other educational materials.

Development Assistance

10. Since 2005, India and Afghanistan have partnered not only in big projects like Afghan Parliament, Salma Dam, Zaranj-Delaram Highway (218 km), etc, but also in the area of community development through the Small Development Projects (SDP) / High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDP). India's development partnership with Afghanistan includes around 500 projects, spread across each of the

34 provinces of Afghanistan in critical areas of power, water supply, road connectivity, healthcare, education, agriculture and capacity building.

11. Over the past year, India has undertaken several new development projects in Afghanistan based on proposals received from the Afghan side. Some of the notable projects include the construction of five rural health clinics, Oncology Centre and a Trauma Centre, maternity clinics, Thalassaemia Centre, a 30-bed hospital, and residential units for Afghan returnees, among others.

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