



India-Central Asia Joint Working Group (JWG) on Afghanistan

For Prelims: India-Central Asia Joint Working Group (JWG) on Afghanistan, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, India-Central Asia summit

For Mains: Global Groupings, India and its Neighbourhood, Significance of Central Asia for India, Geopolitical Dynamics of the Region.

Why in News?

India will send its **next consignment of wheat as aid to Afghanistan** under the Taliban regime via [Chabahar port](#). The decision, that was announced at the first meeting of the **India-Central Asia Joint Working Group (JWG) on Afghanistan** in Delhi.

- This comes after the agreement with Pakistan to extend for sending the wheat over the land route expired and **talks on extension have failed**.

What are the Key Points about the JWG?

- The JWG meeting comes a year after the [India-Central Asia summit](#) in January 2022, where the decision to hold a special contact group on Afghanistan was announced.
- The **issues of drugs, the export of terrorism and radicalism, and refugees** has been at the **top of concerns** for neighbouring countries in Central Asia.
 - According to UNODC reports, **opium production is up by nearly a third in the past year**, after the Taliban took control of Kabul.
 - More than **80% of the world's opium and heroin is smuggled out of Afghanistan**, which is a part of [Golden crescent](#).
 - An estimated 3 million people, or nearly one tenth of the population of Afghanistan is addicted to opium.
- The JWG also **emphasised the “importance of formation of a truly inclusive and representative political structure** that extends the equal rights for all Afghans including minorities, women, girls.

What are the Key Outcomes of JWG Meeting?

- The joint statement said that **no terror organizations including UN designated terrorists should be provided sanctuary or allowed to use the territory of Afghanistan**.
- India also agreed to offer:
 - **Customised capacity building courses** for UNODC ([United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime](#)) Officials and stakeholders; and
 - **Cooperation on initiatives to counter drug trafficking** and rehabilitation efforts for Afghan drug users, especially women.

What is India's Previous Assistance Measures to Afghanistan?

- **Food Grains:**
 - In 2022, [India signed an agreement with the United Nations World Food Programme \(WFP\)](#) for the distribution of 50,000 MT of wheat that it has committed to sending to Afghanistan as part of a humanitarian assistance.
 - [India committed to delivering 75,000 MT of wheat to Afghanistan in 2020](#) to combat the global pandemic of COVID-19 and related issues of food security.
 - India distributed **2000 tonnes of pulses** to Afghanistan in 2018 to promote food security, particularly for children during times of drought.
- **Medical Supplies:**
 - India supplied **5 lakh tablets of Hydroxy-chloroquine, 1 Lakh tablets of Paracetamol, and 50,000 pairs of surgical gloves** to the Government of Afghanistan in 2020.
 - India established a **Medical Diagnostic Centre in Kabul in 2015**, providing the latest diagnostic facilities to Afghan children and generating goodwill for India.
- **Infrastructure:**
 - Since 2001, **India has committed USD 3 billion towards rebuilding and reconstruction** of Afghanistan.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Questions (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. What is the importance of developing Chabahar Port by India? (2017)

- (a) India's trade with African countries will enormously increase.
- (b) India's relations with oil-producing Arab countries will be strengthened.
- (c) India will not depend on Pakistan for access to Afghanistan and Central Asia.
- (d) Pakistan will facilitate and protect the installation of a gas pipeline between Iraq and India.

Ans: (c)

- A commercial contract for the development and operations of Chabahar Port was signed between India and Iran in 2016. The contract is for a period of 10 years.
- **Chabahar Port will provide India with an alternative and reliable access route into Afghanistan and also a reliable and more direct sea-route access into the Central Asian region.**
- It will eliminate dependency on Pakistan for access to Afghanistan and Central Asia. **Therefore, option (c) is the correct answer.**

Mains

Q. India's proximity to the two of the world's biggest illicit opium-growing states has enhanced her internal security concerns. Explain the linkages between drug trafficking and other illicit activities such as gunrunning, money laundering and human trafficking. What countermeasures should be taken to prevent the same? (2018)

[Source:TH](#)

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