
INDIA, AFGHANISTAN SIGN AGREEMENTS TO IMPLEMENT 26 DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

- 15.01.2019

Sputnik (15 January 2019)

India and Afghanistan have signed agreements to implement 26 projects worth \$9.5 million in Afghanistan amid a changing geopolitical scenario in the region. While the US has been urging India to send its armed forces to the war-torn nation, India has reiterated its commitment to complete infrastructure projects it has promised to Afghanistan.

The 26 projects for which agreements were signed on Monday are part of the 577 development projects at a total cost of \$120 million that were to be implemented between 2005 and 2021.

Since the US expedited engagement with the Taliban to end the war that has haunted Afghanistan for decades, pressure has been mounting on New Delhi to change its non-military stance in the land-locked nation. However, on Sunday, Sushma Swaraj, India's Minister of External Affairs reiterated that India would support all efforts for peace and reconciliation "which are inclusive and Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan-controlled".

Earlier this month, after US President Donald Trump, mocked Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi for not doing enough in the direction of restoring safety and security in Afghanistan, the Indian government outlined its contribution of over \$3 billion in the war-ravaged nation.

Under the India-Afghanistan 'New Development Partnership' launched in September 2017, new projects are being taken up including the Shahtoot Dam drinking water project for Kabul, low-cost housing in Nangarhar province, 116 High Impact Community Development Projects and a host of other infrastructure development projects. Over 3,500 Afghan nationals are trained and receive education in India every year, according to the foreign ministry.

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