

India could contribute to international agencies working with displaced Afghans

At a meeting of G-20 (the group of countries of highest GDPs in the world), Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke about the looming humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, especially as winter nears. He also called for the international community to provide Afghanistan with “immediate and unhindered access to humanitarian assistance”.

At the meeting came as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) published a new appeal for funds. A report that shows half of the population (more than 20 million people) is in need of “lifesaving humanitarian assistance”, and the UN has received only 35% of the funds needed for its relief operations.

As a result of the Taliban takeover, most direct aid to the Afghan government has dried up; its reserves have been frozen by the U.S., making it impossible for salaries to be paid. The Taliban government’s refusal to allow women to work and its stopping girls from schooling have made the situation more dire.

While recognition of the Taliban and any governmental engagement is a long way off, the world is faced with the stark choice on how to ensure Afghanistan does not suffer further. At the summit, the EU (European Union) committed \$1.15 billion for Afghanistan and neighbouring countries where refugees have fled, while other countries including the U.S. and China pledged \$1.1 billion at a donor conference in Geneva last month. India has not announced any monetary or food assistance yet.

The PM’s words are a welcome sign that the Government remains seized of the welfare of ordinary Afghans even as New Delhi has closed its embassy but maintains only a limited exchange with Taliban officials in Doha.

India is not ready for sending directly any assistance to the new regime. There can be many reasons. Like:-

- *Taking over of Afghanistan by Taliban.*
- *Giving support to Taliban by Pakistan.*
- *Maintaining links with terror groups including those that target India by new Taliban Govt.*
- *Government should increase its participation in this matter.*

But India could contribute to international agencies that are working with displaced Afghans, particularly for about one million children at the risk of starvation. It could also help Iran and the Central Asian states that are housing refugees with monetary assistance.

The Government could also consider liberalising its visa regime for Afghans, which at the moment has cancelled all prior visas to Afghan nationals, and is releasing very few E-Visa for Afghans desperate to travel here. As a goodwill gesture, India could once again send food aid, including wheat, grain, fortified biscuits and other packaged food, directly to Kabul.

Clearly, the imperative to act is now, at what the UN Secretary General has called a “make or break” moment for the Afghan people, and to heed the warning that if the international community, which includes a regional leader like India, does not help stave off the unfolding humanitarian crisis, not only Afghans but also the rest of the world will pay a “heavy price”.

Committed To Excellence

Expected Questions (Prelims Exams)

Q. For which issue was the meeting of G-20 countries held recently?

- (a) Taiwan-China dispute
- (b) Humanitarian aid in Afghanistan
- (c) Kenya-Somalia conflict
- (d) None of the Above

Expected Questions (Mains Exams)

Q. Should India continue to provide humanitarian aid to the people of Afghanistan, especially refugees, whatever India's stand on the newly formed government in Afghanistan? make a comment.

(250 Words)

World

Committed To Excellence

Note: - The question of the main examination given for practice is designed keeping in mind the upcoming UPSC main examination. Therefore, to get an answer to this question, you can take the help of this source as well as other sources related to this topic.