

India-backed Afghan Dam to Put Pak Under Pressure

PROPOSED SHAHTOOT DAM Pak feels New Delhi role in such projects will restrict water flow

New Delhi: India and Pakistan's discord over water will now spill over to Afghanistan as well with Delhi ready to help the Afghan government build a dam on the Kabul river basin.

India at a meeting last week agreed to support the Afghan government build the Shahtoot dam near Kabul, a project which is not likely to go down well with Pakistan and its new dispensation. Islamabad had reservations against all India-funded projects in the landlocked Afghanistan and claims that this dam will restrict the flow of water to Pakistan.

New Delhi has embarked on the new project more than two years after completing the Salma dam at Herat Province in western Afghanistan – the last in a series of major infrastructure projects it had supported to help the reconstruction of the war-ravaged country since 2001.

India's decision to support the

Water Woes

Shahtoot dam construction likely to require around **\$300 million**

Dam to provide potable water to over two million residents of Kabul and irrigate 4,000 hectares of land in Char Aslab & Khalrabad

Kabul river flows into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in Pakistan

Afghanistan fears that signing a treaty with Pak may make it difficult to build irrigation and hydro-electric projects on the Kabul river basin

construction of the Shahtoot dam was formally conveyed to Afghanistan when senior officials of the two governments met in Kabul last week for the second meeting of Joint Working Group on Development Cooperation (JWG-DC), persons familiar with the matter indicated to ET.

The Kabul river originates from Sanglakh Range of Hindu Kush mountain and flows through Kabul, Surobi and Jalalabad in Afghanistan before flowing into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in Pakistan. The Shahtoot dam is proposed to be built in on a tributary of Kabul river in



ARINDAM

LONG-TERM PLAN

 Pak wants to sign bilateral treaty on sharing of Kabul river water

Chahar Asiab district near the capital of Afghanistan.

New Delhi's plan to support Kabul build the Shahtoot dam is likely to trigger protest in Pakistan, which has since long been jittery about India's role in the rebuilding of Afghanistan.

Islamabad believes that the proposed dam, as well as other similar projects on the Kabul river and its tributaries in Afghanistan, will squeeze the flow of water to Pakistan.

Pakistan has been nudging Afghanistan to sign a bilateral treaty on the sharing of water of Kabul river and its tributaries, but it has not yet received a positive response from the Afghan government, which fears that such a treaty might make it difficult for it to go ahead with its plan to build irrigation and hydro-electric projects on the Kabul river basin, hinted Afghan government officials.