

## Why Effort to help Afghanistan is Falling Short

### Why in news?

The grim situation in Afghanistan is getting worse with the fall of the US-backed government and the Taliban takeover.

### What is the issue?

- Aid groups and international agencies estimate about 23 million people, more than half the country, face severe hunger and nearly 9 million are on the brink of starvation.
- People have resorted to selling possessions to buy food, burning furniture for warmth and even selling their children.
- The US government has announced 308 million dollar in humanitarian aid to Afghanistan and is working with the UN and organisations such as the World Bank to provide additional help.

### How did conditions in Afghanistan get so bad so fast?

- **Poor employment-** Even before the Taliban takeover in August, more than half the people were surviving on less than 2 dollar a day.
- Most government employees had not been paid.
- Since then, about half a million Afghans have lost their jobs, including many women pushed out of the workforce by the Taliban.
- **Withdrawal of US-** The withdrawal of the US meant an end to the military and other support that made up about half of the economy.
- **Economic crisis-** About 80% of the entire budget of the US-backed Afghan government came from international donor funds.
- Afghans can get only limited amounts of money because of a currency shortage.
- Those living abroad are having trouble sending help to family back in Afghanistan, because banks are reluctant to do business in a country whose leaders are under US sanctions.
- **Pandemic-** The effects of the Covid-19 pandemic aggravated the situation.
- More than half of all children under 5 were expected to face acute malnutrition, according to the UN.
- **Drought-** The country was suffering through a prolonged drought where agriculture makes up 25% of GDP.

### What has the US done so far to help?

- **Humanitarian assistance-** The US is the largest provider of humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan and is contributing to a UN effort to raise more than 5 billion dollars.
- President Joe Biden said the US would continue to provide humanitarian aid to Afghanistan which was set in motion after a peace deal signed with the Taliban under President Donald Trump.
- **Sanctions-** But the US has not recognised the new government or lifted sanctions on the Taliban which created a perception that sending money or doing business in Afghanistan is off-

limits.

- There is nearly 7 billion dollar in Afghan funds at the Federal Reserve Bank in New York that have been frozen since the Taliban takeover.
- **Talks-** The Taliban and Western diplomats have started their first official talks in Europe since the Taliban took over control of Afghanistan.

## Reference

1. <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-effort-help-afghanistan-falling-short-7739806/>

