

India moves to revive TAPI gas pipeline

Power point: India wants to secure gas from Galkynysh in Turkmenistan | Photo Credit: [REUTERS](#)

India will host the next steering committee meeting of the proposed 1,814 kilometre-long Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline, senior officials on both sides confirmed.

The decision was made during the sixth joint Inter-Governmental Committee (IGC) meeting on trade, economic, scientific and technological cooperation.

The meeting was followed by a meeting between visiting Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Turkmenistan Rashid Meredov and Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas Dharmendra Pradhan.

“I strongly believe in this project, and this is the position of Turkmenistan,” Mr. Merodov said at a small interaction.

“It is not just a commercial project, but one which will be a good foundation for providing peace and security in the region,” he added.

In Beijing's shadow

Mr. Pradhan said India's commitment to TAPI — first proposed in 1995 — “remains strong”, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi had made the proposal to hold the TAPI steering committee meet in Delhi when he met the Turkmenistan President in Ashgabad last year, which he has now accepted. The last steering committee meeting, scheduled to be held annually, which is supposed to be held took place in April 2016.

Officials told *The Hindu* that the pipeline, that had its ground-breaking ceremony in December 2015, has seen flagging interest since then for a number of reasons. India's effort is to tap Turkmenistan's Galkynysh gasfields, which are the fourth largest in the world.

The move is also an effort by the government to stave off any Chinese interest in the project, given that Turkmenistan is a close partner of China in its Belt and Road initiative across Central Asia, and Beijing is the largest buyer of its gas. Even the Galkynysh gas basin is being developed under a loan from the Chinese Development Bank (CDB).

When asked by *The Hindu* on apprehensions about China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which India has refused to join, affecting India's interests, Mr. Meredov said it was important to have a “united approach” on connectivity and economic cooperation in Eurasia.

“We must be practical in the implementation of strategic economic projects. China has the BRI, we have similar ideas, India has similar ideas,” he explained.

Responding to Indian sovereignty concerns about the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which passes through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, Mr. Meredov said Turkmenistan was “open to all economic cooperation, which is how all such projects should be seen. India is and will be one of the most important countries for Turkmenistan.”

Says BJP will campaign against corruption, law and order problems and lack of development work

in Himachal Pradesh

The process of holding the requisite Board Meetings and Shareholder Meetings has been completed in phases in September 2017.

Ruben George is staying at Ram Nath Kovind's house at Kalyanpur, near Kanpur

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