

Hamid Ansari, others break ground for USD 7.6 bn TAPI pipeline

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Mary (Turkmenistan): Vice President Hamid Ansari, Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and leaders from Turkmenistan and Afghanistan today broke the ground here for the ambitious USD 7.6 billion TAPI pipeline project which will provide energy-hungry India gas to run its power plants.

Ansari flew to the ancient city of Mary, 311 km from the capital Ashgabat, which was part of the old Silk Route, to attend the ground-breaking ceremony of the 1800-kilometre-long TAPI gas pipeline in the presence of Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and Turkmenistan President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow.

They pushed a button which started the welding process of pipes. They later signed the pipe and also signed a document which was put in a capsule and placed under the ground.

At the ceremony in the Turkmen desert, Berdimuhamedow hoped that the project would get operationalised by December 2019. He said the project proves that Turkmenistan can carry such huge amount of gas to places where it is required.

“Today we were participants and witnesses of a historic event. Today marks the start of a project of great scale” the TAPI pipeline,” said Berdimuhamedow. “TAPI is designed to become a new effective step towards the formation of the modern architecture of global energy security, a powerful driver of economic and social stability in the Asian region,” he said.

The TAPI pipeline will have a capacity to carry 90 million standard cubic metres a day (mmscmd) gas for a 30-year period. India and Pakistan would get 38 mmscmd each, while the remaining 14 mmscmd will be supplied to Afghanistan.

Ansari while terming the project as a “reflection of desire” to the old age legacy warned that all stakeholders have to work together with resolve to ensure that “negative forces inimical to the success of the project are addressed in an appropriate manner.

“In doing so, we must recognise that the forces of violence and disruption can no longer be allowed to threaten the quest for economic development and security of our people.” I am confident that with the active engagement of all four governments, and the support of our international partners, we can overcome such challenges.”

He also appreciated the role of ministers and officials who worked hard to achieve the goals and said Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan is an example of new generation of politicians who work hard to make India prosperous.

Ansari said the four nations also need to work together to ensure the technical and commercial viability of the project in its broadest sense.

The international market place for energy works on complex principles. Often these are difficult to fathom. However, given the widespread poverty that exists in our countries, it is essential to ensure that we can make energy available at the least possible cost to the largest sections of our people, he said.

- PTI