

Iran-India-Pakistan Gas Pipeline Project

By [Global Research](#)

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While the US establishes a nuclear cooperation agreement with India, which potentially threatens Iran, the Delhi government is also negotiating with Moscow on the Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline project.

“Russia can help in pipeline project”

Amit Baruah

NEW DELHI: New Delhi is hopeful that “ways and means” can be found to involve Moscow in the construction of the proposed Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline project, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said after talks with Russian Premier Mikhail Fradkov here on Friday.

1. Mr. Fradkov pointed to Russia’s “ample experience” in building pipelines. “If there are suggestions, we will certainly consider them,” he said about its involvement in the project.

Taking questions, Dr. Singh thanked Moscow for agreeing to supply uranium fuel for the safeguarded reactors of the Tarapur atomic power station, stressing that India looked forward to working with Russia bilaterally and multilaterally.

Senior officials said enhanced civilian nuclear cooperation figured in the talks between Dr. Singh and Mr. Fradkov even as Russia was awaiting the U.S. Congress approval of the New Delhi-Washington nuclear deal and the lifting of curbs by the Nuclear Suppliers’ Group.

According to the officials, no separate agreement was necessary for Moscow to supply fuel to Tarapur, which comes under a safety clause Russia invoked. It has already informed the NSG of its decision to supply the fuel.

Pointing out that energy security would be the theme of the G-8 summit being hosted by Russia in St. Petersburg in July, Dr. Singh said there was a substantial increase in nuclear cooperation between the two countries and described the Koodankulam plant in Tamil Nadu as a “flagship project.”

On the gas pipeline from Iran, he said India was desperately short of hydrocarbons and was interested in entering into both bilateral and multilateral arrangements to address the issue. Both Dr. Singh and Mr. Fradkov stressed the importance of building business-to-business links for India and Russia to enjoy a healthy trade relationship. Dr. Singh said they had set a trade target of \$10 billion for the next five years.

A joint study group was set up to chart a future comprehensive economic cooperation

agreement, he said. Private sector partnership was the way forward in trade and investment matters.

Visa will be made easy

After Dr. Singh expressed a hope that Indian businesspersons would find it easier to travel to Russia, Mr. Fradkov gave an assurance that he would issue appropriate instructions for this to materialise.

At the same time, he wanted the visa issue dealt with as a comprehensive package so that Russian concerns over illegal immigration were also addressed.

Describing his two-day visit as a "success," Mr. Fradkov said he was hopeful of India and Russia being able to carry forward their strategic partnership.

"We are trying to overcome the inertia in our trade and economic relations," he told presspersons.

Calling for joint ventures, he said aircraft servicing, construction of airports and roads, space, nuclear energy and information technology would be the areas to focus on.

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