

Ground broken for groundbreaking TAPI pipeline

Mary (Turkmenistan): Vice-President Hamid Ansari, Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and the leaders of Turkmenistan and Afghanistan on Sunday broke ground here for the \$7.6-billion TAPI pipeline project, which will provide energy-hungry India gas for 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 at-



VP Hamid Ansari (L), Pakistan PM Nawaz Sharif, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and Turkmenistan President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov press the button to begin the welding process of the TAPI Gas Pipeline

tend the ground-breaking ceremony of the 1800-kilometre TAPI gas pipeline in the presence of Afghan President

Ashraf Ghani and Turkmenistan President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov. They pushed a button which started the

welding process of pipes. They later signed the pipe as well as a document which was put in a capsule and placed under the ground. At the ceremony, held in the Turkmen desert, Berdimuhamedov said he hoped the project gets operational by December 2019. He said the project proved that Turkmenistan could carry such a huge amount of gas to places where it was required.

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 will get 38 mmscmd each, while the remaining 14 mmscmd will be supplied to Afghanistan.

Ansari warned that all stakeholders had to work together to ensure that "negative forces inimical to the success of the project" were addressed in an appropriate manner.