

Pakistan asks for quick action on IPI pipeline, India hopeful

India Friday said it was hopeful of resolving all issues blocking the tri-nation gas pipeline that also involves Pakistan and Iran as Islamabad urged [New Delhi](#) to decide quickly on what it called "the pipeline of peace and new bonding".

"I also urged him to take quick action on the IPI pipeline. This pipeline could be a pipeline of peace and new bonding," Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi said at a joint press conference here after talks with his Indian counterpart Pranab Mukherjee.

"The pipeline is to mutually benefit both India and Pakistan,' he stressed.

"We discussed the pipeline. We are hopeful it will be possible to resolve technical, commercial and other aspects so that it can resolve problems related to energy crisis," Mukherjee said when asked by a Pakistani journalist on India's decision on taking the stalled \$7.5 billion pipeline project forward.

"We are not trying to reinvent the wheel. There is international precedent for ensuring security of the pipeline. The 1960 Indus Water Treaty has, after all, withstood the test of time," Qureshi said when asked about the security of the pipeline that will pass through the violence-prone areas of Balochistan.

"Compared to water, the security issue is chicken feed," he said.

India has sought assurances from Iran and Pakistan on uninterrupted supply of the Iranian gas and security of the pipeline. India has also yet to resolve transit and transportation fee with Pakistan for the pipeline which will go through its territory.

'I am happy to report that as far as Pakistan and India are concerned, we have resolved all bilateral issues. There is no issue whatsoever that needs to be addressed now,' Qureshi, who began his four-day visit to India Friday, said after meeting Petroleum Minister Murli Deora.

Qureshi, who also holds additional charge of the oil ministry, said that his country had no issues with India's demand that Iran hand over custody of the gas at the India-Pakistan border and not at the Iran-Pakistan border, as had been suggested by Tehran, to cut transit risk through Pakistan.

'Pakistan will address the security issue and provide fool-proof security," he said.

"There was political consensus on taking forward the Iran pipeline. We are fully committed to the pipeline. We have already written to the Iranians to convene a trilateral meeting and asked Pakistan to do the same," Deora said.

"Once the dates are fixed, oil secretaries will meet to firm up the agenda for the trilateral meet," he said.

Deora pointed out that Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had described the pipeline as "the pipeline of peace and prosperity."

'Transit fee is a small issue. We have reached an agreement on the principles of charging transit

fee. India remains fully committed to the project,' Deora said.

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