



The Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process

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Why in News

External Affairs Minister of India attended the 9th **Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process** held in Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

He called for a “**double peace**” which means **peace within Afghanistan and peace around Afghanistan** and also said India supports the **Intra-Afghan Negotiations (IAN)**.

Key Points

- **The Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process (HoA-IP):**
 - It was founded in November, 2011 in Istanbul, Turkey.
 - It provides a **platform for sincere and results-oriented regional cooperation by placing Afghanistan at its center**, in recognition of the fact that a secure and stable Afghanistan is vital to the prosperity of the Heart of Asia region.
 - This platform was established to **address the shared challenges and interests of Afghanistan and its neighbors and regional partners**.
 - The Heart of Asia comprises 15 participating countries, 17 supporting countries, and 12 supporting regional and international organizations.
India is a participating country.
 - Since its inception the process has become a cardinal element in regional cooperation and has created a **platform for Afghanistan’s near and extended neighbors, international supporters and organizations to engage in constructive dialogue and to address the existing and emerging regional challenges** through regional cooperation with Afghanistan at its core.

- **Intra-Afghan Negotiations (IAN):**
 - It refers to the **talks between the Afghan government and Taliban insurgents** with the goal of bringing an end to nearly two decades of a conflict that has laid waste to the country and killed tens of thousands of combatants and civilians.
 - The participants of intra-Afghan negotiations will discuss the **date and modalities of a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire**, including agreement over the **future political roadmap** of Afghanistan.
 - The negotiations will cover a variety of issues, including the **rights of women, free speech, and changes to the country's constitution**.
 - The talks would also lay out the **fate of tens of thousands of Taliban fighters** as well as the heavily armed militias belonging to Afghanistan's warlords who have amassed wealth and power since the Taliban were ousted from power in 2001.

- **Regional Connectivity Initiatives:**

During the conference, the Afghanistan President appreciated the number of regional connectivity initiatives including the **Chabahar port project**, as well as the **Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline**.

- **India's Stand:**

- India believes any peace process must be **Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan-controlled**, has to respect the **national sovereignty and territorial integrity of Afghanistan** and preserve the progress made in the establishment of a **democratic Islamic Republic in Afghanistan**.
- The **interests of minorities, women and vulnerable sections** of society must be preserved and the issue of violence across the country and its neighbourhood has to be effectively addressed.

TAPI Pipeline

- TAPI Pipeline, also called **Peace pipeline**, is a 1,814km natural gas pipeline that originates from Turkmenistan and passes through Afghanistan and Pakistan to reach India.
- It aims to monetise Turkmenistan's gas reserves and supply them to neighbouring countries to promote the use of natural gas and improve energy security.
- The project is being developed by **TAPI Pipeline Company (TPCL)**, a consortium established by four individual state-owned gas companies Turkmengaz (Turkmenistan), Afghan Gas (Afghanistan), Interstate Gas Service (Pakistan), and **Gas Authority of India and Indian Oil (India)**.
- The four countries signed an Inter Government Agreement (IGA) and Gas Pipeline Framework Agreements (GPFA) in December 2010 for the development of the pipeline.

Trans-Afghanistan pipeline

Route of the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) natural gas pipeline



Source:TH