

Turkmen President Dismisses Head of State Gas Company

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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ASHGABAT, Turkmenistan — Turkmenistan's leader has replaced the head of the state-run gas company, state television reported Tuesday.

President Gurbanguly Berdymukhammedov has appointed Amanali Khanaliyev the new head of Turkmengaz, the state company responsible for gas production and development of reserves.

Khanaliyev, previously head of the Turkmengaz department responsible for building pipelines and infrastructure, replaces Dovlet Mommayev, who had only been in the job since October.

The state television report did not give a reason for the latest change of management.

Baymurad Hojamuhamedov, the deputy prime minister responsible for the energy sector, was quoted in the same report as saying Turkmenistan's production of natural gas and associated

gas rose by 16.5 percent year on year in 2010.

Turkmenistan, a former Soviet republic of 5 million people, has gas reserves surpassed only by Russia, Iran and Qatar. The reclusive state has outlined plans to triple annual output to 230 billion cubic meters over the next two decades.

Hojamuhamedov said Turkmenistan's natural gas exports increased by 33.6 percent year on year in 2010. He did not reveal volumes either for production or exports.

Keen to lessen its heavy dependence on exports to Russia, the country launched a natural gas pipeline to China in late 2009 and has agreed to boost exports to neighboring Iran.

A government source told Reuters on condition of anonymity that European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso would visit Turkmenistan on Jan. 14-15 and that the Nabucco pipeline project, the export route to Europe bypassing Russia, would be high on the agenda.

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