

Medvedev Looks to Join Projects to Power South Asia

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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This electricity-producing dam outside Dushanbe could soon supply India. **Denis Grishkin**

DUSHANBE, Tajikistan — Russia is ready to invest "hundreds of millions of dollars" to join high-voltage power line and gas pipeline projects in Central Asia, President Dmitry Medvedev said in the Tajik capital.

Pakistan, Afghanistan and Tajikistan "welcome Russia's interest" in a gas pipeline project across the countries to India, according to a joint statement signed by Medvedev and the countries' leaders in Dushanbe. The statement also called for accelerated construction of the CASA-1000 power project.

Afghan President Hamid Karzai's government is seeking to develop the country as a bridge for energy supplies from Central Asia's hydro-electrical and gas resources to the power-hungry economies of Pakistani and India. The United States has supported the efforts, seeking to stabilize the country before pulling out its major combat forces, a step it plans for 2014.

Tajikistan seeks to export electricity to Afghanistan through a 220-kilovolt power line that will form the backbone of the CASA-1000 project. Afghan officials have said the line will be extended to Pakistan, whose 180 million people face electricity shortages of 3 to 4 gigawatts per day, leading to blackouts that have lasted for 12 hours in cities, sparking protests and riots.

In December, Karzai, Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari and the officials from India and Turkmenistan signed an agreement to build a 1,700-kilometer gas pipeline from Turkmenistan's gas fields to India. The TAPI project faces war zones and insurgency along the route through Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Deputy Prime Minister Igor Sechin told reporters in October that Gazprom might join the TAPI venture. Turkmenistan's Foreign Ministry at the time accused Russia of interfering in the country's attempt to develop international energy ties and said it had no agreement with Russia about the pipeline.

Medvedev is holding a summit with Zardari, Karzai and Tajik President Emomali Rakhmon.

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