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## Lng Supply: India keen on cross-border pipeline



Our Correspondent, New Delhi

Stressing the need for South Asian regional power co-operation, India yesterday said it was exploring with Bangladesh a proposal for supplying refined-LNG through cross-border pipeline and establishment of an LNG terminal.

"We are working assiduously to promote the sub-region comprising Bhutan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Myanmar and India as an energy hub," Indian Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla said.

He was addressing the inauguration of the South Asia Group on Energy (SAGE), organised by Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), in New Delhi.

Shringla, a former Indian high commissioner to Bangladesh, said be it conventional sources, hydropower, solar, wind or even petroleum products, India was taking the lead to promote a regional approach to its energy needs.

"Being the largest producer and consumer of energy in the region, it is natural for us to be the epicentre for any energy initiative in the region. We have to make energy affordable, accessible and clean," he remarked.

Shringla said energy connectivity is one of the most dynamic sectors of cooperation in Indian's relationship with Bangladesh. "Our cooperation in hydrocarbons' sector is diversifying into the entire value chain of oil and gas sector."

The bilateral hydrocarbon trade stood at \$337.3 million in 2019-20, he said.

He mentioned that India is constructing the India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline from Siliguri of West Bengal to Parbatipur in Bangladesh for supply of high speed diesel and that Indian energy majors ONGC Videsh Ltd and Oil India Ltd have invested nearly \$24.26 million in two shallow water blocks in Bangladesh.

The prime ministers of India and Bangladesh jointly inaugurated the project to import bulk LPG from Bangladesh in October 2019 in a move that increases bilateral trade and ensures sustained and affordable supply of LPG to the northeastern region of India, which is supplied from Chattogram by Bangladeshi trucks to Tripura, Shringla said.

He said Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) is currently undertaking a number of activities in Bangladesh in coordination with Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation and Petrobangla, and a joint venture was formed between IOCL and Beximco in June last year to further expand its downstream business in Bangladesh and other countries.

"A proposal for supplying R-LNG through cross-border pipeline and establishment of an LNG terminal are also being explored," the Indian foreign secretary said.

He said South Asian regional cooperation in energy sector can attract higher investments and usher in complementary infrastructure creation for transmission and transit, avoidance of duplication of generation and distribution infrastructure.

The top Indian diplomat said the primary focus of South Asian regional energy cooperation is on electricity. India is currently supplying 1160 MW of power to

Bangladesh through two existing interconnections and the two countries are in discussion regarding the construction of a 765kV power interconnection through Katihar in India via Parbatipur of Bangladesh to Bornagar in India. Once constructed, it will reinforce interconnection of grids in the region.

India is assisting Bangladesh through concessional credit in construction of transmission lines as well as power evacuation facilities from the upcoming Rooppur Nuclear Plant, Shringla said.

"To translate our vision of enhanced energy cooperation in the region, the most optimal solution is an integrated regional grid," he added.

The diplomat said there were challenges like inadequate transmission infrastructure, unnecessary duplication, lack of guarantee of power availability and offtake, insufficient coordination among national authorities and technical differences.

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