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## **SUMMIT OF COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES STARTS IN TURKMENISTAN'S ASHGABAT**

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### **ASHGABAT**

A meeting of the Council of Heads of Government of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) began in the capital of Turkmenistan on Friday.

The heads of the Commonwealth states arrived at the summit in Ashgabat. The council includes the leaders of Turkmenistan, Russia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

The heads of state are expected to tackle the most pressing issues of developing cooperation within the CIS and present their vision of future tasks.

The council will also consider the CIS Executive Secretary Sergei Lebedev's service extension for another three years.

According to Kremlin aide Yuri Ushakov, this was agreed upon by all the CIS members in advance and the leaders would simply formalize this decision.

The issue of the CIS chairmanship next year is also on the summit's agenda. Uzbekistan will chair the intergovernmental organization from January 1, while Turkmenistan and Belarus the previous and the next CIS chairmen will become co-chairs, Ushakov explained.

It is expected that following the talks, the heads of state will sign a number of documents on the fight against terrorism and in the field of economics. After that, an official reception will be held on behalf of the Turkmen president.

The next meeting is scheduled for October 16, which will be held in Uzbekistan's capital of Tashkent.

The Commonwealth of Independent States was created in 1991 to facilitate cooperation between the former Soviet republics.

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