

ONGC eyeing a greater role in transnational pipeline projects

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Looking for a larger role in the global oil and gas scene, ONGC wants to participate in transnational hydrocarbons pipeline projects.

The company, which has an understanding with Russia's Rosneft for oil and gas explorations in offshore Arctic, now wants to tap opportunities in direct transportation of hydrocarbons from Russia and Central Asia to India.

DK Sarraf, Chairman and Managing Director, ONGC, said, "Our team is working with Rosneft to look for real opportunities in exploration. The process of zeroing down on an asset will start now. But the more important thing that will happen is direct transportation of hydrocarbons from there to India... it could be a pipeline from Russia, Kazakhstan to India."

"We will be interested in participating in such a pipeline," he told *Business Line*. According to Sarraf, the ideal situation would be to have a stake in an exploration and production asset, coupled with a transportation net-

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work, that will bring fuel to the country.

This is in sync with the next five year's goal set by the Ministry for Petroleum & Natural Gas. The Ministry, in its presentation to the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has proposed a target of at least one transnational pipeline to bring gas from Iran, Oman or Central Asia.

TAPI project

Interestingly, both Kazakhstan and Russia have been wooing India. ONGC Videsh has been working as a participant in Sakhalin-1 as also through its acquired company Imperial Energy in Tomsk.

The Kazakh Government wants India to participate in upcoming projects and joint ventures and transnational oil pipeline. These countries are closely watching the

multi-million dollar transnational Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline project.

Asked what could be the possible routes that India could consider, those within the Ministry said there were three options — a network up to Chabahar (Iran) and then by tankers to India; by land following the TAPI route; and by land via Kashmir.

The \$7.6-billion TAPI project is to transport gas from Turkeministan. The envisaged 1,080 km pipeline (144 km in Turkmenistan, 735 km in Afghanistan and 800 km in Pakistan) will have a capacity to transport 90 mmscmd of gas — 38 mmscmd each for India and Pakistan — and the remaining 14 mmscmd for Afghanistan.