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**ANURADHA M CHENOY's** Remerging Russia is an influential and comprehensive account of a new Russia seen in the context of India and the Global South. Cheno, former professor and chairperson at the Centre for Russian and Central Asian Studies of Jawaharlal Nehru University, discusses the recent India-Russia bilateral summit with Aditi Phadnis. Edited excerpts:

## 'Russia-India ties based on mutual need'

### How do you evaluate the overall impact of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Russia?

PM Modi's visit serves the process of multiple and continuous engagements between India and Russia. Though there are no big-bang agreements, several major projects in defence, energy, and trade have been signed and are ongoing. These are not stand-alone dialogues but part of a historical continuity of five decades that are critical for India's international positioning.

Both Russia and India need each other at a time of transition in the international system. These relations give both much-needed leverage vis-à-vis international pressures. If the same agreements had been signed with the US, the Indian elite and media would have been doing a double somersault.

Several analysts believe that there is "drift" and stagnation in Russia-India rela-

tions. This is because India is under pressure from the US on isolating Russia, Iran and China. In other words, the US wants India as a junior partner. Since India wants closer relations with the US, and also France, it still doesn't get how highly uneven the partnership is. To balance this, India needs Russia.

Even after two decades of closer ties with the US, India has not got all what it wanted. This is because the US balances India and Pakistan with an even hand, as it needs the latter for its Afghanistan and West Asia policies.

Perhaps India has learnt that relations with the US will never be one of equals, that it will be used to contain China and advance its interests in the Indo-Pacific region. The US needs India only as one among many agents, to push its global aspirations.

At the moment, India is engaged in a global public relations exercise because of

the changes in the Kashmir policy. Russia can be useful, as it, too, does not have any great regard for human rights. It also has a policy of not intervening in the domestic affairs of allies. Russia will also expect India to support it in Ukraine, Syria and other regions.

Russia also needs India despite strategic tie-ups with China, which uses its financial power to overwhelm an economically slow Russia.

China is moving into Central Asia, especially into Tajikistan, in a big way. They have conducted military exercises, and plan the Belt and Road through here across Russia. China's forays into the South China Sea have come dangerously close to Russian, Indian, Vietnamese, and Malaysian rigs. Russia is concerned about both the US and China here.

In the current cross-cutting international relations, one relation need not be at the cost of others. Unlike what some analysts post, it's not an either/or situation.

Multilateralism and plurality are key. In this context Brazil, Russia, Indian, China and South Africa association (BRICS) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation are useful of coordination.

**All conversations with Russia have the threat of the Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) hanging over them. How do you view the progress on the Triumph S-400 missile that India is looking to purchase from Russia that the US has warned against?**

For defence, India is a seller's market. India is using that to continue its talks on the Triumph S-400 and other purchases. The US would not only like to increase its defence sales to India, but even replace Russia. But India is not and cannot be dependent on the US or any one country.

Its base is made from Russian platforms. So India has the capacity to negotiate with the US for waivers on the basis of its national security. It has managed to get some waivers, but for that India has to pay a price, that the US will extract. You are likely to see Indian defence purchases increase from the US also. But such a steep rise in military equipment will damage Indian social sector expenditure. India needs Russian support for its defence, energy, technological and many other needs. Earlier also, the US had imposed sanctions on India. So, India will have to negotiate harder for its wider interests.

**The fact that the summit was held in the industrial port town of Vladivostok itself makes a statement. How do you see the prospects of energy and trade cooperation between Russia and India?**

India and the ONGC have already made huge investments in Sakhalin I and II. The Russian Far East and development of

Siberia are core to its interest. India giving a line of credit to Russia is of benefit to both. This region is rich in resources and crying for investment. Investments in energy are long term, have risks but also benefits. In this, Indian industry has taken an interest, and is scoping the region. The Chinese are already there. Russia would like further cooperation with India in this region. In this context the International North South Corridor needs to be concretized at a better pace. The logistics agreement with Russia needs to be fast-tracked.

**You have suggested that India and Russia should branch out and develop soft power together - education, culture etc. Has this visit achieved that objective?**

There is base for developing soft power, but this should be allowed more free play and autonomy. Soft power in education and culture and people to people dialogues, cannot be under complete government or bureaucratic control. It needs government encouragement and finance but autonomy in institutions that plan this, as well as public legitimacy. Also one should not underestimate financial power. For example, no one is taking Chinese soft power seriously. So they focus on financial power. India should develop digital power with Russia. India and Russia need to open new areas of exchange from medical to climate collaboration.



**ANURADHA M CHENY**

former professor and chairperson at the Centre for Russian and Central Asian Studies of Jawaharlal Nehru University

**What are your thoughts on the geo-political fallout of the visit: on Afghanistan-Pakistan, China and the US?**

The US has done a deal with the Taliban in Afghanistan, as they start the process of withdrawal. That is in the greatest interest of Pakistan. The attempts by Russia and others to get through a power sharing agreement between the

Taliban and the current regime has been rejected through the use of force by the Taliban. Pakistan and Taliban will use each other. Russia knows that. They have to save their southern rim: Caucasus, Chechnya, etc from state-sponsored illegal networks, including terror and radicalism. Even China is worried on this count. This can be a nightmare for India also. So India has to work with Russia and many others to ensure a peaceful transition.

China never loses sight of its interests and aspirations for regional hegemony. India has to use Russia to put pressure on China. Russia has no option in the current scenario, but to keep their strategic ties with China. At the same time, Russia is wary of China in their Far East, in the Pacific and in the Indian Ocean.

In sum, India needs to further diversify relations with Russia and not get hedged in with unifocal lens of national security. Human security, financial security, and creative options are needed here.

# ED registers case against Rolls-Royce

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**NEW DELHI:** The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has registered a money laundering case against London-based engine-maker Rolls-Royce Plc. and its subsidiary Rolls-Royce India Private Limited for making dubious payments in the form of commissions in return for contracts from three state-run Indian companies, two officials familiar with the development said.

Also named in the case were Ashok Patni, director at Aashmore Private Limited, the Singapore-based company, and unnamed public servants, the officials said on condition of anonymity.

Rolls-Royce allegedly made payments in several tranches to Patni between 2007 and 2011 in bank accounts in Singapore and Hong Kong, which investigators suspect may have been routed to officials of Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) and GAIL India Limited as kickbacks.

ED's case, under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), is based on a first information report registered on July 29 by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), in which the latter invoked charges of corruption and criminal conspiracy for violating the terms and conditions of purchase orders and an Integrity Pact.

The agencies suspect that kickbacks for government servants were camouflaged as "commissions paid to Patni. The true beneficiaries are yet to be identified, said one of the officials cited above.

The anti-money laundering agency has already received relevant documents from CBI and is likely to soon summon executives of Rolls-Royce, HAL, GAIL and ONGC to provide more details of the contracts and the payments.

The second ED official said, "The payments made by Rolls-Royce are suspicious in nature. We will look into all the transactions including those made abroad".

Rolls-Royce provided engine

spare parts to HAL for servicing gas turbines used by GAIL and ONGC, both of which are involved in the oil and gas sector.

When contacted, a spokesman for Rolls-Royce refused to comment on the ED probe.

HT tried to reach Aashmore's office in Singapore on the telephone, but there was no response. Spokespersons for HAL, GAIL and ONGC refused to comment on the investigation.

At the time CBI registered its case, Rolls-Royce had issued a statement saying, "We will not tolerate business misconduct of any sort and we are committed to maintaining high ethical standards and no-one currently working for Rolls-Royce in India played any part in these Energy deals. India is an important market for Rolls-Royce and we have a valued workforce of skilled people in the country."

As part of its money laundering investigation, ED will particularly look into payments worth ₹18.32 crore by Rolls-Royce to Aashmore for 100 purchase orders from HAL between 2007 and 2011.

It is estimated that HAL placed orders worth over ₹4,700 crore with Rolls-Royce between 2000 and 2013.

The London-based firm was not supposed to engage any third-party/intermediary in the supply of materials/spare parts to HAL as per conditions of the purchase order and Integrity Pact but it did so to conceal the illegal payments made to Aashmore, investigators claim.

Similarly, Rolls Royce paid Rs 29.81 crore to Patni's companies between 2007 and 2011 in 38 transactions for 73 purchase orders by ONGC.

Aashmore and another company linked to Ashok Patni — Turbotech Energy Services International Private Limited — made payments of ₹10 lakh as "donation to a cooperative society of ONGC, called ONGC Officers Mahila Samiti, which was unethically accepted by the society", according to the CBI case.

In case of GAIL, the CBI states, Rolls Royce paid 998,584 pounds to Aashmore between 2007 and 2010 for 68 purchase orders.

## **ONGC engineer conferred Master Trainer Award**

Chief engineer of Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd (ONGC) Rituraj Sahu has been felicitated with Master Trainer Award by the minister of skill development. Sahu's honour came for his commendable contribution in area of Apprentices Training.



## ओवीएल से गैस खरीदने को तैयार था ईरान, पर अमेरिकी पाबंदी के कारण बातचीत अटकी

नई दिल्ली, (भाषा)। ईरान ओएनजीसी विदेश लि. से फारस की खाड़ी में स्थित फरजाद-बी फील्ड से उत्पादित गैस खरीदने को राजी हो गया था। लेकिन अमेरिका के ईरान पर फिर से पाबंदी लगाने के कारण बातचीत अटक गयी। कंपनी ने अपनी सालाना रिपोर्ट में कहा है कि ऑयल एंड नैचुरल गैस कॉरपोरेशन (ओएनजीसी) की विदेश इकाई ओएनजीसी विदेश लि. ने 2008 में फारस की खाड़ी में फारसी अपतटीय खोज ब्लाक में उल्लेखनीय मात्रा में प्राकृतिक गैस की खोज की थी। इस

खोज को फरजाद-बी नाम दिया गया। इसमें कहा गया है, दोनों पक्ष एकीकृत अनुबंध के तहत फरजाद-बी गैस फील्ड के विकास को लेकर बातचीत कर रहे थे...हालांकि बातचीत बेनतीजा रही। वित्त वर्ष 2018-19 के दौरान नेशनल ईरानियन ऑयल कंपनी (एनआईओसी) ने गैस फील्ड के विकास का प्रस्ताव किया था। ओवीएल ने कहा, हालांकि ईरान पर 5 नवंबर, 2018 से अमेरिकी पाबंदी के कारण तकनीकी अध्ययन पूरा नहीं हो सका। यह वाणिज्यिक वार्ता के लिये जरूरी था।

## ऑयल कंपनियों ने एयर इंडिया को शुरू की सप्लाई

नई दिल्ली, प्रेटर : सरकारी ऑयल कंपनियों ने एयर इंडिया को बड़ी राहत देते हुए छह एयरपोर्ट पर इसकी ईंधन सप्लाई चालू कर दी है। भुगतान नहीं करने पर इन कंपनियों ने एयर इंडिया को ईंधन की सप्लाई बंद कर दी थी। सरकार के प्रयासों के चलते ऑयल कंपनियों और सरकारी विमानन कंपनी एयर इंडिया के बीच समझौता हुआ है। इस समझौते के तहत एयर इंडिया इन ऑयल कंपनियों को प्रति महीने 100 करोड़ रुपये का भुगतान करेगी। एयर इंडिया पर इन ऑयल कंपनियों का 4,300 करोड़ रुपये बकाया है।

ऑयल कंपनियों की ओर से जारी आधिकारिक वक्तव्य में कहा गया है कि एयर इंडिया कर्ज चुकाने की शर्तों पर राजी हो गई है। इसके बाद शनिवार शाम से एयर इंडिया को ईंधन की सप्लाई शुरू कर दी गई है।

गौरतलब है कि पिछले महीने इंडियन ऑयल, भारत पेट्रोलियम

### राहत

- ऑयल कंपनियों को हर महीने 100 करोड़ रुपये का भुगतान करेगी एयर इंडिया
- विमानन कंपनी पर ऑयल कंपनियों का 4,300 करोड़ रुपये बकाया

कॉरपोरेशन और हिंदुस्तान पेट्रोलियम कॉरपोरेशन ने एयर इंडिया को छह एयरपोर्ट पर ईंधन की सप्लाई बंद कर दी थी। एयर इंडिया अप्रैल से केश एंड कैरी मोड पर है और प्रतिदिन ईंधन बिल के मद में 18 करोड़ रुपये चुका रहा है।

तेल कंपनियां जल्द से जल्द कर्ज का भुगतान चाहती हैं। इसके लिए एयर इंडिया को 90 दिन का क्रेडिट दिया गया है। हालांकि उधारी काफी ज्यादा हो चुकी है। इसे पूरी तरह से चुकाने के लिए एयर इंडिया को कम से कम 240 दिन का समय चाहिए।