ECONOMIC TIMES, Delhi, 11.3.2024
Page No. 1, Size:(21.39)cms X (14.14)cms.

PROMOTERS LOOK TO OPTIMISE RESOURCES AND MANPOWER

AG&P Pratham, Think Gas Set for $1.1-billion Merger

I-Squared and AG&P's holding to get diluted; Osaka Gas consortium's stake to increase

Kalpana Pathak & Reghu Balakrishnan

Mumbai: Global infrastructure investor I-Squared Capital-backed city gas distribution companies in India — AG&P Pratham and Think Gas Distribution — are set to merge, according to two industry executives aware of the development. The combined entity will be valued at over $1.1 billion, acquiring the heft that will help it compete with rivals. It will be a stock-for-stock merger — a share of one company for each of the other.

Currently, I-Squared holds 100% stake in Think Gas Distribution and 73% in AG&P Pratham, the India arm of Singapore-based Atlantic Gulf & Pacific (AG&P) City Gas. About 21% is held by AG&P and 6% by Japan's Osaka Gas-led consortium. Since both companies are in CGD business, promoters have decided to consolidate operations.

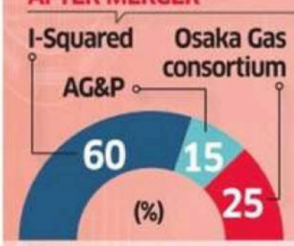
Sumitomo Corp's Entry ▸▸ 16

In The Pipeline

I-Squared Capital holds 100% in Think Gas and 73% in AG&P Pratham

About 21% in AG&P Pratham is held by AG&P and 6% by Osaka Gas-led consortium

AFTER MERGER



Osaka Gas and Sumitomo Corp to invest **$200-250m** in new entity

INDIA FOOTPRINT

Think Gas holds 7 licences to operate in 13 districts

AG&P Pratham holds 12 licences to exclusively develop CGD infra in 37 districts

COMPETITORS: Mahanagar Gas, Gujarat Gas, Indraprastha Gas, Gail Gas, Adani Total Gas and Torrent Gas

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Sumitomo Corp's Entry

▸▸ From Page 1

This is aimed at optimising resources and improving utilisation of manpower.

CGD refers to the transportation or distribution of natural gas to consumers in domestic, commercial, industrial and transport sectors through a network of pipelines.

The size of the combined entity will help it take on competitors like Mahanagar Gas, Gujarat Gas, Indraprastha Gas, Gail Gas, Adani Total Gas and Torrent Gas among others.

Osaka Gas and Sumitomo Corp will invest $200-250 million of primary capital in the company as growth capital, said one of the persons cited above.

After the merger, I-Squared Capital will hold over 60% stake in the combined entity. AG&P will hold up to 15% and the Osaka Gas and Sumitomo-led consortium will hold 25%.

In January, the companies had applied to the European Commission in Brussels for merger approval. That was granted in February, said the people cited above.

India, the fourth biggest buyer of liquefied natural gas, wants to increase the share of natural gas in the energy mix to 15% by 2030 from 6% now and the CGD network will play a key role in reaching this target. The use of natural gas will also help reduce the carbon footprint and address climate change challenges. The infrastructure to support this growth is also being put in place. By 2030, the country will have 17,500 compressed natural gas stations and 120 million piped natural gas connections, union minister for petroleum and natural gas Hardeep Singh Puri said on March 6.

Under the 12th and latest CGD bidding round, state-run Oil India, Bharat Petroleum and Hindustan Petroleum among others won licences to building gas infrastructure in the Northeast and Jammu & Kashmir. The round covered 103 districts. The government has decided to spend Rs 41,000 crore to build infrastructure in six northeast states and the two union territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.

AG&P, Think Gas, I-Squared Capital, Osaka Gas and Sumitomo didn't respond to queries.

Osaka Gas is Japan's second-largest gas supplier and the first Japanese company to invest in the city gas sector in India through AG&P City Gas. Sumitomo is a global trading and investment company. AG&P Group has a presence in engineering, procurement, and construction, city gas distribution businesses, and LNG terminals.

In 2021, Osaka Gas, through affiliate Osaka Gas Singapore and Japan Overseas Infrastructure Investment Corporation for Transport & Urban Development (JOIN), invested up to $120 million in Singapore-based AG&P City Gas.

"With the formation of a new entity, there will be a pan-India presence. The management will become one and the AG&P's managing director will be the managing director of the combined entity," said one of the persons cited, adding that the companies have agreed to the deal in principle and are awaiting regulatory approvals.

In May 2023, ET had reported that Sumitomo, Mubadala Investments and Tokyo Gas were in the race to acquire a 30% stake in Think Gas. The report had also included talk about a merger proposal.

Think Gas holds seven licences to operate in 13 districts in India across the states of Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh and supplies natural gas to the domestic, commercial, industrial and automotive sectors. The company was established in 2018.

AG&P, or Atlantic Gulf and Pacific Co., is headquartered in Singapore and develops LNG import and regasification facilities as well as CGD networks. In India, its city gas distribution arm AG&P Pratham holds 12 licences to exclusively develop CGD infrastructure in 37 districts covering 8% of India's land mass and spread across five states — Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Rajasthan.

BUSINESS LINE, Delhi, 11.3.2024
Page No. 10, Size:(22.60)cms X (7.73)cms.

Aramco profit falls on lower oil prices; company sees 'healthy' Chinese demand

Reuters
Dubai

Saudi Aramco Chief Executive Amin Nasser said on Sunday the oil giant was looking at further opportunities to invest in China, where he said oil demand was robust and growing.

"So far we are in the early part of 2024, demand is healthy and growing in China," Nasser said on a media call following the release of Aramco's results that showed net profit falling to $121.3 billion from a record $161.1 billion in 2022 on lower oil prices.

BRIGHTER PROSPECTS. Saudi Aramco Chief Executive Amin Nasser put demand for 2024 at 104 million barrels as opposed to an average of 102.4 million barrels in 2023
REUTERS

"We see that in terms of their offtake from the different producers around the world," he said. Aramco has invested in Chinese refineries with crude supply deals attached and is in talks for more, with a focus on converting liquids into chemicals. Nasser said the country's refineries were some of the most fully integrated and had the highest conversion rates. "We are currently looking at some opportunities for investment in China." Nasser sees the global oil market remaining healthy throughout 2024. "We expect it to be fairly robust, we are looking at growth of about 1.5 million barrels," Nasser said.

Nasser put demand for 2024 at 104 million barrels as opposed to an average of 102.4 million barrels in 2023.

OUTPUT GROWTH

Aramco aims to grow its gas production by 60 per cent by 2030 from 2021 levels. Aramco may partner with MidOcean Energy — in which it agreed last year to take a strategic minority stake — to invest in liquefied natural gas (LNG) projects in geographical areas besides Australia, Nasser said. "We are partnering with MidOcean in Australia and we might partner with them in other enclaves depending on the opportunities," he said.

Nasser also said Aramco was interested in investing in LNG opportunities in the US but said he could not reveal further details. "We are in discussion with a number of companies."

Sources told Reuters last week that Aramco is in talks to invest in phase 2 of Sempra Infrastructure's Port Arthur LNG project in Texas, which represents a proposed expansion to the already producing first phase. Discussions are also still ongoing for a tie-up with French carmaker Renault and China's Geely for a 15 per cent to 20 per cent stake in their joint-venture for combustion and hybrid engines, Nasser said.

A $31-billion boost to Saudi budget

Bloomberg

Aramco raised its dividend despite a retreat in energy prices and lower production, a boost for Saudi Arabia as it faces a widening budget deficit. The total payout of about $31 billion for the fourth quarter to investors and Saudi Arabia's government, including a special component, rose from the previous quarter's level even as lower oil output pushed net income down 25 per cent year-on-year. The world's biggest crude oil exporter provides much of the Saudi government's income via generous dividends.

The distribution is becoming ever more vital as Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman pursues expensive projects such as the futuristic project of Neom, the purchase of high-profile footballers and stakes in sporting leagues, while looking to diversify the economy from oil. The budget shortfall, however, is starting to bite. The Saudi government is predicting a deficit every year until 2026, pushing it to delay past 2030 some of the projects that it launched as part of its economic transformation plan. It also ordered Aramco last month to halt the expansion of its production capacity, helping free up spending for other areas.

The suspension is likely to reduce Aramco's capital investments by about $40 billion between this year and 2028, the company said. Capital expenditure rose about 28 per cent to just short of $50 billion last year, and is expected to be $48 billion to $58 billion in 2024.

FINANCIAL EXPRESS, Delhi, 11.3.2024
Page No. 2, Size:(2.80)cms X (3.72)cms.

INDIAN OIL SET TO JOIN HIGH TABLE OF F1 FUEL PRODUCERS

AFTER DELIVERING back-to-back innovations in fuel grades, Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) has now set sight on the Grand Prix and will in next three months start producing fuel used in adrenaline-pumping Formula One or F1, motor racing. The firm's refinery at Paradip in Odisha will in three months produce the petrol used in F1 car racing, its chairman Shrikant Madhav Vaidya said.

ASIAN AGE, Delhi, 11.3.2024
Page No. 7, Size:(4.64)cms X (9.88)cms.

IOC to produce fuel for Formula One motor race

New Delhi, March 10: After delivering back-to-back innovations in fuel grades, Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) has now set sight on the Grand Prix and will in next three months start producing fuel used in Formula One (F1), motor racing.

The firm's refinery at Paradip in Odisha will in three months produce the petrol used in F1 car racing, said IOC chairman Shrikant Madhav Vaidya.

IOC will be the first Indian company and only a handful globally that will produce fuel used in F1 racing.

Vaidya said the company expects to get its Formula 1 fuel certified in around three months, after which it will start competing with other global majors like Shell to supply it to the F1 teams.

F1 fuel is essentially high-octane petrol and the standards are heavily regulated by global motor sport governing body Federation Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) on various counts, including permissible additives and blending agents.

IOC had in October last year helped India join a select league of nations when it began producing highly specialised 'reference' petrol and diesel that are used for testing automobiles.

There are only three suppliers of reference fuels globally including US giant Chevron. IOC's Paradip refinery in Odisha is producing 'reference' grade petrol and its Panipat unit in Haryana produces similar quality diesel.

Prior to this, Indian automobile manufacturers had to use imported reference fuel for testing cars and motorcycles. Now, IOC is supplying them the same grade fuel at much cheaper cost.

Vaidya said IOC has entered the racing fuels segment with its high-octane 'Storm' petrol for motorcycle racing.

IOC will be the official fuel partner for the Federation Internationale De Motocyclisme (FIM) Asia Road Racing Championship (ARRC) for three years - 2024 to 2026, supplying 'Storm' petrol across all ARRC race rounds. *— PTI*

INDIAN EXPRESS, Delhi, 11.3.2024
Page No. 19, Size:(8.20)cms X (19.20)cms.

MNRE to discuss specialised cylinders for hydrogen storage with stakeholders

AGGAM WALIA
NEW DELHI, MARCH 10

Gas cylinders are typically categorised into four types, depending upon the materials used. *Reuters*

THE MINISTRY of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) plans to convene a meeting with relevant stakeholders to discuss the development of specialised cylinders for green hydrogen storage. The decision was made after manufacturers of commercial vehicles, including heavy duty and long haul trucks, flagged challenges related to high-pressure storage cylinders in the adoption of green hydrogen as a sustainable fuel in the transport sector.

Commercial vehicle manufacturers identified the higher cost of green hydrogen fuel cells as another challenge in a meeting with MNRE on January 25. The proposed meeting is likely to include manufacturers of specialised cylinders for compressed and liquified natural gas, some of whom have already commenced research and development on cylinders for hydrogen, which is stored at a much higher pressure.

Gas cylinders are typically categorised into four types, depending upon the materials used. Type 1 and Type 2 are suitable for storage, while Type 3 is preferred for storage and transportation, and Type 4 is recommended for on-board storage. Unlike compressed natural gas (CNG), which is stored at a pressure of around 3,600 psi, the pressure at which hydrogen is stored ranges between 5,000-10,000 psi. The MNRE has indicated a meeting with industry stakeholders for the development of Type 3 and Type 4 cylinders to address challenges related to high-pressure hydrogen cylinders, according to the minutes of the meeting on January 25 obtained by *The Indian Express* through Right to Information (RTI).

A vehicle can be powered by hydrogen in two ways– burning it in an internal combustion engine or using a fuel cell to convert it into electricity to charge on-board batteries. While both Type 3 and Type 4 cylinders are reinforced with carbon fibre, which makes them light and ideal for use in vehicles, Type 4 cylinders are even lighter as they are lined with a polymer as opposed to the aluminium lining in Type 3 cylinders.

Currently, most cylinders manufactured in the country are designed to carry CNG, and because hydrogen is stored at a much higher pressure, CNG cylinders cannot carry hydrogen without technical modifications. Even then, hydrogen will have to be blended with CNG in specific proportions. For cylinders to carry a high mass of hydrogen, the carbon fibre needs to be stronger than that used in CNG cylinders and involves a slightly more complex manufacturing process. At present, these factors add to the overall cost of producing high-pressure Type 4 hydrogen cylinders, a key barrier to the adoption of hydrogen as a transport fuel as identified by stakeholders. However, with fiscal incentives and a rise in demand for hydrogen-powered vehicles, the cost of producing hydrogen cylinders may come down in future. Domestic companies involved in the manufacturing of CNG cylinders have also set their eyes on the hydrogen market. Confidence Petroleum India Limited, a leading company in the supply of gas cylinders, announced plans to manufacture and launch Type 4 cylinders for hydrogen storage last month. Others like Time Technoplast Limited, INOX India Limited, and Indoruss Synergy Private Limited are among a growing club of cylinder makers who have allocated capex to develop technologies and produce Type 4 cylinders for green hydrogen. Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL), a large central public sector undertaking (CPSU), is working on setting up a Centre of Excellence in Karkhiyaon, Varanasi for hydrogen storage cylinders, cylinder testing facilities, and electrolysers necessary for hydrogen production, in collaboration with the Ministry of Heavy Industries. Alongside research on hydrogen storage, BHEL has also been developing hydrogen fuel cell technologies. During the ministry meeting on January 25, representatives from original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) interested in hydrogen-powered large commercial vehicles like Volvo Eicher, Ashok Leyland, and Tata Motors, also flagged the high cost of hydrogen fuel cells. A representative from Bosch, which started volume production of fuel cell modules in 2023, was also present in the meeting. Bosch has also developed its own hydrogen combustion engines that can be used to retrofit diesel buses and trucks. Just last month, Reliance Industries, a representative of whom attended the ministry meeting, announced plans to retrofit 5,000 trucks with hydrogen combustion engines in the coming few months.

YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW
AN EXPRESS RTI APPLICATION

The meeting was held to discuss pilot projects for the use of green hydrogen in the transport sector, scheme guidelines for which were published on February 14. Like battery electric vehicles (BEVs), hydrogen-powered vehicles have zero tailpipe emissions, making hydrogen a suitable fuel for the clean energy transition, provided it is produced with renewable energy. Unlike EV batteries, however, hydrogen ICE or hydrogen fuel cells are comparatively lighter. This factor makes hydrogen-powered vehicles an attractive alternative to BEVs, especially for heavy duty trucks as they have lesser weight and provide higher payload capacity.

FULL REPORT ON
www.indianexpress.com

MINT, Delhi, 11.3.2024
Page No. 9, Size:(5.74)cms X (9.25)cms.

MRPL gets ONGC's first 98/2 block oil

First oil from state-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation's (ONGC) just-started KG deepsea oilfield has gone to its subsidiary Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd (MRPL) for processing into fuels like petrol and diesel, the two firms said.

ONGC in January started oil production from its Krishna Godavari basin KG-DWN-98/2 (KG-D5) block, lying in Andhra offshore. The field is producing some 12,000-12,500 barrels of oil per day currently, using a floating production and storage offloading (FPSO). The oil is stored on the FPSO, and once it reaches a critical level, it is transferred to a ship, which carries it to a refinery.

MRPL received the first cargo, loaded on a ship Swarna Sindhu on 9 March. Crude oil was loaded on the ship in the Bay of Bengal, and it travelled around the southern tip of India to reach Mangalore on the west coast.

The ONGC subsidiary was also the first to receive oil produced from the firm's Sudan property in 2003. **PTI**

PIONEER, Delhi, 11.3.2024
Page No. 10, Size:(4.25)cms X (21.95)cms.

ONGC first oil from 98/2 block goes to MRPL

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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"The first crude oil cargo from #ONGC Deepwater Krishna Godavari basin has reached ONGC subsidiary @Ongc_Mrpl Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Limited," ONGC said in a post on X.

MRPL received the first cargo, loaded on a ship Swarna Sindhu on March 9. Crude oil was loaded on the ship in the Bay of Bengal, and it travelled around the southern tip of India to reach Mangalore on the west coast.

The ONGC subsidiary was also the first to receive oil produced from the firm's Sudan property in 2003. It also received its first oil from the Russian far-east field of Sakhalin-1 in 2006 and the waxy crude Cairn's Rajasthan block started producing in 2009.

ASIAN AGE, Delhi, 11.3.2024
Page No. 7, Size:(2.30)cms X (9.84)cms.

ONGC PROCESSING KG BASIN PRODUCE AT SUBSIDIARY MRPL

New Delhi, March 10: First oil from state-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation's (ONGC) just-started KG deepsea oilfield has gone to its subsidiary Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd (MRPL) for processing into fuels like petrol and diesel, the two firms said.

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MRPL managing director M Shyamprasad Kamath said this crude oil production results from ONGC Group's commitment and technical capabilities to contribute to the nation's energy self-dependence. — *PTI*

ONGC'S FIRST OIL FROM 98/2 BLOCK GOES TO MRPL

FIRST OIL FROM state-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation's (ONGC) just-started KG deepsea oilfield has gone to its subsidiary Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd (MRPL) for processing into fuels like petrol and diesel, the two firms said.

ECONOMIC TIMES, Delhi, 11.3.2024
Page No. 8, Size:(7.05)cms X (8.06)cms.

Success Formula: Indian Oil Set to Produce Fuel for F1

New Delhi: After delivering back-to-back innovations in fuel grades, Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) has now set sight on the Grand Prix and will in next three months start producing fuel used in adrenaline-pumping Formula One or F1, motor racing.

The firm's refinery at Paradip in Odisha will in three months produce the petrol used in F1 car racing, its chairman Shrikant Madhav Vaidya said.

IOC, the country's largest oil firm controlling roughly 40 per cent of fuel market share, will be the first Indian company and only a handful globally that will produce fuel used in F1 racing.

Vaidya said the company expects to get its Formula 1 fuel certified in around three months, after which it will start competing with other global majors like Shell to supply it to the F1 teams.

F1 fuel is essentially high-octane petrol and the standards are heavily regulated by global motor sport governing body Federation Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) on various counts, including permissible additives and blending agents.

IOC had in October last year helped India join a select league of nations when it began producing highly specialised 'reference' petrol and diesel that are used for testing automobiles. –PTI

MINT, Delhi, 11.3.2024
Page No. 4, Size:(23.44)cms X (7.98)cms.

Volume growth concern blown out for Mahanagar Gas investors

Dipti Sharma
dipti.sharma@livemint.com

Mahanagar Gas Ltd's (MGL) shares plummeted 12% last week on volume growth concerns. The city gas distributor's stock took a beating following minister of petroleum and natural gas Hardeep Singh Puri's comments. Puri stated that the benefits of gas sector reforms haven't fully reached consumers, despite strong profits by city gas distributors. The government may consider drastic measures to ensure that the consumer benefits, notwithstanding opposition from the industry, Puri added.

A section of analysts argued that it is premature to conclude that the government will regulate either pricing or returns of city gas distributors.

Instead, it probably reflects the government's commitment to increase gas volumes, and enhance penetration in India to over 15% by 2030, up from the current 6%.

MGL had projected volume growth without anticipating any significant impact on margins in the near future. However, it's understandable if investors are concerned about potential margin erosion, considering MGL's relatively higher margins.

Waning

Ebitda of Mahanagar Gas is likely to moderate in FY25

Note: Ebitda is earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortization; E is estimate

Source: Company, Motilal Oswal Financial Services

PRANAY BHARDWAJ/MINT

For perspective, in the December quarter (Q3FY24), MGL's Ebitda margin stood at ₹13.3 per standard cubic meter (scm). The company has recently cut compressed natural gas (CNG) prices by 3.5% to pass on lower spot LNG prices. This should normalize margin to some extent. CNG volumes formed nearly 72% of MGL's overall sales volume in Q3.

Nuvama Institutional Equities analysts said: "After the price cut, CNG's competitiveness on petrol/diesel rises to 50%/35% (from 48%/33%), which should boost volumes further." MGL reduces margins as volumes increase—evident during Q2FY24, wherein they reduced margins by 9%, which enhanced volumes by 8%, the brokerage added.

As such, any significant downside in earnings for MGL looks unlikely. Though, Motilal Oswal Financial Services is already building in an Ebitda margin of ₹12.5 per scm for both FY25 and FY26.

Despite the recent losses, MGL's shares are up by about 10% so far in 2024. The stock trades at 11 times estimated FY25 earnings, indicating that there may be some more steam left. Potential expansion into geographical areas (GA) can act as a long-term growth driver for MGL.

"Penetration of 35-40% in GA I and II and 15-20% in GA III implies tremendous scope for growth over coming years," said Nuvama analysts. That said, slowdown in CNG conversions and aggressive electric vehicle adoption are some risks to MGL's growth.

DAINIK JAGRAN, Delhi, 11.3.2024
Page No. 4, Size:(18.53)cms X (9.17)cms.

आज अमित शाह करेंगे पीएनजी सुविधा का शुभारंभ

राज्य ब्यूरो, नई दिल्ली: केंद्रीय गृह एवं सहकारिता मंत्री अमित शाह सोमवार को दिल्ली ग्रामोदय अभियान के तहत यहां के 41 गांवों में पीएनजी सुविधा का उद्घाटन करेंगे। साथ ही वह 383 करोड़ रुपये की लागत से 178 गांवों में होने वाले विभिन्न विकास कार्यों का शुभारंभ करेंगे। यह कार्यक्रम द्वारका के यशोभूमि केंद्र में होगा। कार्यक्रम में एलजी वीके सक्सेना भी मौजूद रहेंगे। दिल्ली ग्रामोदय अभियान की शुरुआत एलजी सक्सेना ने दिसंबर 2023 में की थी। इसका मकसद ग्रामीणों के साथ विचार-विमर्श करके गांवों की विकास योजना तैयार करना और उन्हें क्रियान्वित करना है। इस अभियान के तहत दिल्ली विकास प्राधिकरण (डीडीए) 800 करोड़ रुपये से ज्यादा की लागत से काम कर रहा है।


अमित शाह

JANSATTA, Delhi, 11.3.2024
Page No. 11, Size:(6.51)cms X (11.22)cms.

ओएनजीसी के 98/2 ब्लाक से कच्चे तेल की पहली खेप मैंगलोर रिफाइनरी पहुंची

नई दिल्ली, 10 मार्च (भाषा)।

गहरे समुद्र में स्थित ओएनजीसी के केजी बेसिन ब्लाक में खोजे गए कच्चे तेल की पहली खेप शनिवार को इसकी सहायक कंपनी मैंगलोर रिफाइनरी एंड पेट्रोकेमिकल्स लिमिटेड (एमआरपीएल) में पहुंची। दोनों कंपनियों ने संयुक्त बयान में यह जानकारी दी। ओएनजीसी ने जनवरी में आंध्र प्रदेश के पास अपतटीय क्षेत्र में स्थित कृष्णा गोदावरी बेसिन के ब्लाक केजी-डीडब्ल्यूएन-98/2 (केजी-डी5) से तेल उत्पादन शुरू किया था। कृष्णा गोदावरी घाटी में स्थित ब्लाक केजी-डीडब्लूएन - 98/2 से कच्चे तेल की पहली खेप स्वर्ण सिंधु नामक जलपोत से मैंगलोर लाया गया। प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी ने इस जलपोत को दो मार्च को हरी झंडी दिखाकर रवाना किया था।

VIRAT VAIBHAV, Delhi, 11.3.2024
Page No. 15, Size:(8.12)cms X (16.07)cms.

ओएनजीसी के कच्चे तेल की पहली खेप मैंगलोर रिफाइनरी पहुंची

एजेंसी ■नई दिल्ली

गहरे समुद्र में स्थित ओएनजीसी के केजी बेसिन ब्लॉक में खोजे गए कच्चे तेल की पहली खेप शनिवार को इसकी सहायक कंपनी मैंगलोर रिफाइनरी एंड पेट्रोकेमिकल्स लिमिटेड (एमआरपीएल) में पहुंची। दोनों कंपनियों ने संयुक्त बयान में यह जानकारी दी। ओएनजीसी ने जनवरी में आंध्र प्रदेश के पास अपतटीय क्षेत्र में स्थित कृष्णा गोदावरी बेसिन के ब्लॉक केजी-डीडब्ल्यूएन-9812 (केजी-डी5) से तेल उत्पादन शुरू किया था। कृष्णा गोदावरी घाटी में स्थित ब्लॉक केजी-डीडब्ल्यूएन - 9812 से कच्चे तेल की पहली खेप स्वर्ण सिंधु नामक जलपोत से मैंगलोर लाया गया। प्रधानमंत्री नरेन्द्र मोदी ने इस जलपोत को दो मार्च को हरी झंडी दिखाकर रवाना किया था। ओएनजीसी ने सोशल नेटवर्किंग मंच एक्स पर पोस्ट किया, कृष्णा गोदावरी बेसिन में स्थित ओएनजीसी के गहरे पानी वाले ब्लॉक से कच्चे तेल की पहली खेप ओएनजीसी की सहायक कंपनी एमआरपीएल तक पहुंच गई है। यह परियोजना अधिकतम उत्पादन स्तर हासिल करने पर भारत के तेल और गैस उत्पादन में सात प्रतिशत की वृद्धि करेगी। ओएनजीसी के केजी ब्लॉक केजी-डीडब्ल्यूएन-9812 ने जनवरी में तेल उत्पादन शुरू किया था। यह क्षेत्र वर्तमान में प्रति दिन लगभग 12,000-12,500 बैरल तेल का उत्पादन कर रहा है।

BUSINESS STANDARD HINDI, Delhi, 11.3.2024
Page No. 12, Size:(14.82)cms X (27.28)cms.

चुनाव करीब तो लगी परियोजनाओं की झड़ी

आदर्श आचार संहिता से पहले अनेक बुनियादी परियोजनाएं शुरू कर रही सरकार

बीएस संवाददाता

लोक सभा चुनाव करीब हैं और जल्द ही आदर्श आचार संहिता भी लागू होगी, ऐसे में केंद्र के पास काफी कम वक्त बचा है जिसके चलते प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी ने पिछले हफ्ते 2.3 लाख करोड़ रुपये की मेगा परियोजनाओं को हरी झंडी दिखाई। इन परियोजनाओं में राष्ट्रीय राजमार्ग, रेलवे, सहायक बुनियादी ढांचे, बिजली उत्पादन एवं ट्रांसमिशन, हवाईअड्डे और केंद्र के स्वामित्व वाले बंदरगाहों का विकास भी शामिल हैं।

इनमें से करीब 38,000 करोड़ रुपये की परियोजनाओं को मंजूरी दी जाएगी जबकि करीब 61,000 करोड़ रुपये की परियोजनाओं का शिलान्यास किया जाएगा। प्रधानमंत्री द्वारा घोषित की जाने वाली ज्यादातर परियोजनाओं के शुरुआत होने में ही काफी लंबा वक्त लगेगा जैसे कि राष्ट्रीय राजमार्ग, जल विद्युत परियोजना, बिजली ट्रांसमिशन और बंदरगाह आदि।

सोमवार को प्रधानमंत्री राष्ट्रीय राजधानी में ही करीब 1 लाख करोड़ रुपये की राजमार्ग परियोजना को हरी झंडी दिखाएंगे जिसमें 19 किलोमीटर का द्वारका एक्सप्रेसवे शामिल है जिसे केंद्र सरकार की महत्वाकांक्षी मेगा परियोजना भारतमाला योजना के तहत बनाया जाना है। पिछले अगस्त में केंद्र के लिए यह परियोजना विवाद का सबब बनी जब नियंत्रक एवं महालेखापरीक्षक (सीएजी) ने परियोजना की लागत बढ़ने पर मंत्रालय की आलोचना की थी जिसे ऑडिटर के मुताबिक 250 करोड़ रुपये प्रति किलोमीटर के हिसाब से बनाया जा रहा है।

सूत्रों का कहना है कि केंद्र मंगलवार को करीब एक दर्जन नई वंदे भारत ट्रेन लॉन्च करने की योजना बना रही है। अधिकारियों के मुताबिक प्रधानमंत्री अन्य रेल परियोजनाओं में गुजरात के अहमदाबाद में वेस्टर्न डेडिकेटेड फ्रेट कॉरिडोर (डब्ल्यूडीएफसी) के परिचालन नियंत्रण केंद्र का उद्घाटन भी कर सकते हैं।

सरकारी अधिकारियों के मुताबिक बुधवार को केंद्रीय मंत्रिमंडल की आखिरी बैठक हो सकती है और इस हफ्ते में मध्य में आदर्श आचार संहिता लागू हो सकती है। कैबिनेट के एजेंडा में 76,000 करोड़ रुपये की विवादास्पद वधावन बंदरगाह परियोजना शामिल है और अधिकारियों का कहना है कि आदर्श आचार संहिता के लागू होने से पहले इस परियोजना के लिए मंत्रिमंडल की मंजूरी मिलने के लिए कोशिश की जा रही है। इस बंदरगाह के चलते पारिस्थितिकी तंत्र और स्थानीय आजीविका के नुकसान को लेकर कई सक्रिय कार्यकर्ताओं की तरफ से एतराज जताया जा रहा है। पिछले हफ्ते मोदी ने आजमगढ़ में करीब 34,000 करोड़ रुपये, अरुणाचल प्रदेश में 65,000 करोड़ रुपये (पीएम उन्नति योजना सहित), असम में 17,500 करोड़ रुपये, तेलंगाना में 62,800 करोड़ रुपये और कोलकाता से 15,000 करोड़ रुपये की विभिन्न रेल एवं शहरी परिवहन परियोजना को हरी झंडी दिखाई और शिलान्यास किया जिसमें दिल्ली-मेरठ क्षेत्रीय रैपिड ट्रांजिट सिस्टम (आरआरटीएस) शामिल है। मोदी ने ऊर्जा क्षेत्र से जुड़ी तेल एवं गैस क्षेत्र की परियोजनाओं का उद्घाटन 2 मार्च को किया जिसकी लागत करीब 1.62 लाख करोड़ रुपये है। ये परियोजनाएं बिहार, हरियाणा, आंध्र प्रदेश, महाराष्ट्र, पंजाब और कर्नाटक से जुड़ी हैं। इनमें से प्रमुख प्रधानमंत्री द्वारा कच्चे तेल के पहले टैंकर को हरी झंडी दिखाना है जो ओएनजीसी के कृष्णा गोदावरी (केजी) बेसिन के ब्लॉक से मिली है। उत्पादन बढ़ने के साथ ही इस परियोजना से देश के तेल एवं गैस उत्पादन में 7 फीसदी की बढ़ोतरी होगी। इसी दिन मोदी ने आईओसीएल के बरौनी रिफाइनरी के विस्तार के लिए भी शिलान्यास किया जिसकी लागत 11,400 करोड़ रुपये से अधिक होगी। शनिवार को भी अपनी असम यात्रा के दौरान प्रधानमंत्री ने गुवाहाटी प्राकृतिक गैस को ले जाने वाली पाइपलाइन का उद्घाटन किया।

हालांकि चुनाव से पहले की जाने वाली महत्त्वपूर्ण घोषणा शुक्रवार को ही कर दी गई जब प्रधानमंत्री ने अंतरराष्ट्रीय महिला दिवस के मौके पर रसोई गैस सिलिंडर की कीमतों में 100 रुपये की छूट की घोषणा की।

बिजली के क्षेत्र में भी मोदी ने पिछले हफ्ते सोमवार को 32 परियोजनाओं का उद्घाटन किया। इनमें से ज्यादातर विभिन्न राज्यों में सौर बिजली परियोजना, ट्रांसमिशन परियोजना और कुछ ताप विद्युत परियोजना शामिल है। बिजली मंत्रालय ने अपने बयान में कहा कि इन विकास परियोजनाओं की लागत 56,000 करोड़ रुपये है। प्रधानमंत्री ने पूर्वोत्तर राज्यों को लक्षित करते हुए भी कई परियोजनाओं की आधारशिला रखी जिनमें मणिपुर, मेघालय, नगालैंड, सिक्किम, त्रिपुरा और अरुणाचल प्रदेश की करीब 55,600 करोड़ रुपये की लागत वाली परियोजनाएं शामिल हैं। उन्होंने देश के लिए सेला टनल समर्पित करते हुए शनिवार को करीब 10,000 करोड़ रुपये की उन्नति योजना की शुरुआत की।

प्रधानमंत्री ने जिन बड़ी परियोजनाओं की आधारशिला रखी है उनमें अरुणाचल में 28 गीगावॉट की दिबांग पनबिजली परियोजना है जिसकी अनुमानित लागत 31,875 करोड़ रुपये है। यह परियोजना 2011 से कई पर्यावरणीय चिंताओं को लेकर स्थानीय लोगों द्वारा किए जा रहे प्रदर्शन के चलते लंबित थीं।

(साथ में ध्रुवाक्ष साहा, शुभायन चक्रवर्ती और श्रेया जय)

प्रधानमंत्री ने रविवार को आजमगढ़ में विभिन्न परियोजनाओं का उद्घाटन किया

12 हवाईअड्डों के नए भवन चालू

दीपक पटेल

प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी ने रविवार को देश की 12 एयरपोर्ट परियोजनाओं का उद्घाटन किया और तीन का शिलान्यास किया। लगभग 9,800 करोड़ रुपये की लागत से तैयार इन परियोजनाओं के शुरू होने से विमानन ढांचा काफी मजबूत हो जाएगा। आजमगढ़ में एक रैली को संबोधित करते हुए प्रधानमंत्री ने देश को 2047 तक विकसित बनाने की प्रतिबद्धता दोहराई। यहीं से उन्होंने वर्चुअल इन परियोजनाओं को देश को समर्पित किया।

जिन परियोजनाओं का प्रधानमंत्री ने रविवार को उद्घाटन किया, उनमें पुणे, कोल्हापुर, ग्वालियर, जबलपुर, दिल्ली, लखनऊ, अलीगढ़, आजमगढ़, चित्रकूट, मुरादाबाद, श्रावस्ती और आदमपुर एयरपोर्ट के नए टर्मिनल भवन शामिल हैं। इन 12 एयरपोर्ट टर्मिनल भवनों के विकास पर 8,903 करोड़ रुपये की लागत आई है और इन पर वार्षिक स्तर पर 6.15 करोड़ यात्रियों के आवागन में सुविधा होगी। प्रधानमंत्री ने इस मौके पर कडपा, हुबली और बेलागावी में हवाई अड्डों के नए टर्मिनल भवनों की आधारशिला भी रखी। एयरपोर्ट अथॉरिटी ऑफ इंडिया (एएआई) इन विकास परियोजनाओं को 908 करोड़ रुपये की लागत से पूरा करेगा। इनका काम पूरा होने के बाद तीनों टर्मिनल भवनों से हर साल लगभग 95 लाख यात्रियों को सुविधा मिलेगी। आजमगढ़ में रैली को संबोधित करते हुए प्रधानमंत्री मोदी ने कहा, 'पहले चुनाव के दौरान घोषणाएं होती थीं। कोई उनसे इन घोषणाओं पर अमल के बारे में नहीं पूछता था। चुनाव के दौरान वे आते थे और शिलान्यास का पत्थर गाड़ जाते थे। बाद में वह पत्थर भी खो जाता था। ऐसे राजनेता होते थे। आपको इन परियोजनाओं के शिलान्यास को लोक सभा चुनाव की नजर से नहीं देखना चाहिए। यह विकास की यात्रा है। वर्ष 2047 मेरा उद्देश्य भारत को विकसित राष्ट्र बनाना है।'