



## Ahead of poll dates, fuel prices cut by ₹2/litre

**New Delhi:** Govt-run fuel retailers Thursday slashed prices of petrol and diesel by Rs 2 per litre, marking the first cut in rates in almost two years, reports **Sanjay Dutta**. The cut, effective from Friday, comes barely a day or two before the 'model code of conduct' is expected to come into force with the announcement of LS polls by the EC.

The cut in pump prices follows recent reductions in the prices of CNG and LPG, supplied as kitchen fuel to households. "By reducing the prices of petrol and diesel by Rs 2, PM Narendra Modi has once again proved that the welfare and convenience of his family of crores of Indians is always his goal," oil minister H S Puri said on X.

► **Cut in fuel prices, P 11**



## CHHATTISGARH BPCL to set up 2 CBG plants in Raipur, Bhilai

State-run Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) on Wednesday signed a tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Chhattisgarh Biofuel Development Authority (CBDA) and the state municipal corporations of Raipur and Bhilai for the production of compressed biogas (CBG). BPCL will set up

CBG plants in Raipur and Bhilai. About 200 to 250 metric tonnes of municipal solid waste will be used in the production of biofuel every day. BPCL will invest ₹100 crore in the two plants, the spokesperson said, making the total capacity of each plant to 100-150 tonnes per day (TPT).

The construction of the plant would create direct and indirect employment of about 60,000 man-days per year in the state.

**R KRISHNA DAS**

### Crude oil up as IEA sees tighter market

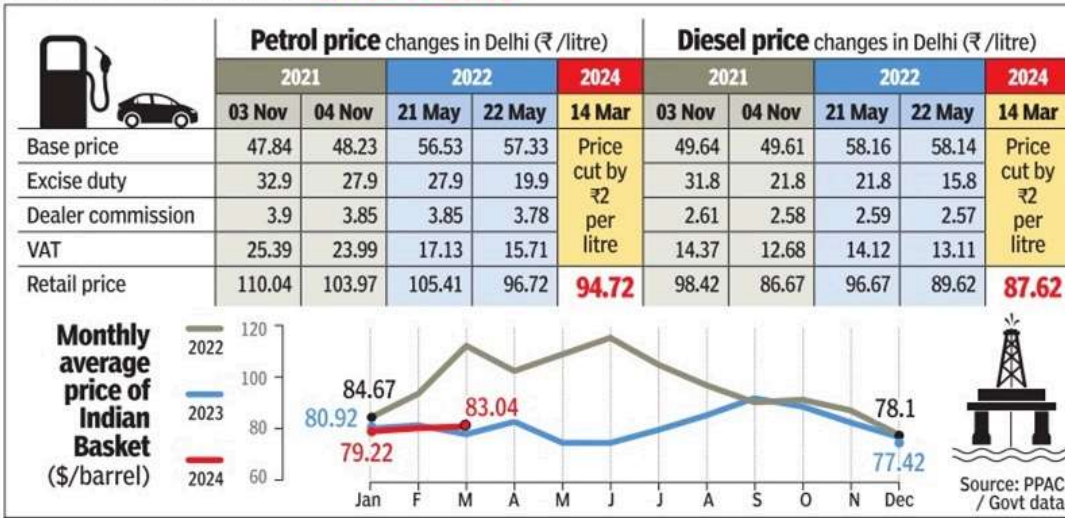
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**London:** Crude oil prices extended gains as International Energy Agency's (IEA) latest oil market report revised upwards the demand growth forecasts and cut its projection for non-OPEC supply in 2024. Brent crude futures for May rose 72 cents to \$84.75 a barrel, while US WTI was up 83 cents at \$80.55. REUTERS

# Cut in fuel prices will boost consumer spending: Oil min

## FIRST PRICE CUT IN 2 YEARS



Sanjay.Dutta@timesgroup.com

**New Delhi:** Govt-run fuel retailers on Thursday slashed prices of petrol and diesel by Rs 2 per litre. In a separate post on X, the oil ministry said the latest reduction will “boost consumer spending and reduce operating costs for over 58 lakh heavy goods vehicles running on diesel, 6 crore cars and 27 crore two-wheelers”. Petrol and diesel prices have remained frozen since May 22,

2022 when the Centre last reduced excise duty on them. This was the second excise duty reduction in seven months that had followed a similar move on Nov 4, 2021.

The two reductions together had brought down the excise duty on petrol and diesel prices by a total of Rs 13 and Rs 16 per litre, respectively. After the second duty cut, BJP-governed states also implemented matching cuts in VAT to soften the impact of global oil prices.

Technically, fuel retailers are free to decide retail prices of petrol and diesel. But in practice, govt informally casts a long shadow. The recent fall in oil prices had turned petrol and diesel profitable for retailers but they were waiting for a signal. That is how prices have been held steady since the last reduction in 2022 even though fuel had switched between becoming loss-making and profitable proposition for various stretches of time in between.



# Despite shrinking discounts, Russian crude flow to India may continue

**SUBHAYAN CHAKRABORTY**  
New Delhi, 14 March

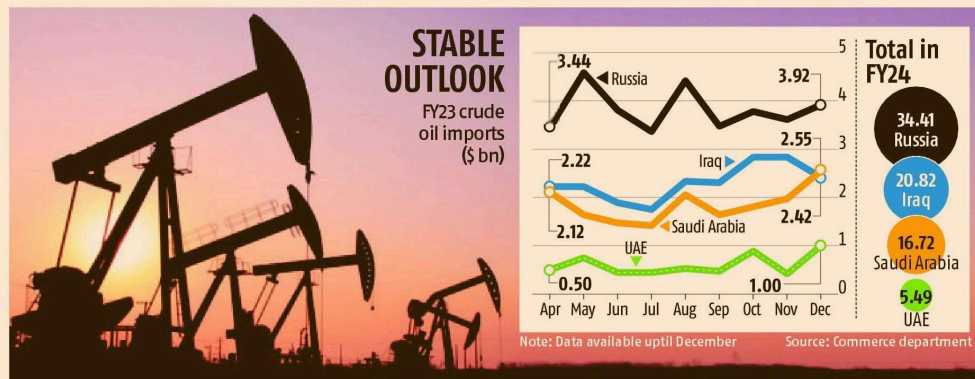
Despite discounts on Russian crude oil — which fell to the lowest since the Ukraine war began — and the rising sanctions, import volumes from the country will remain stable for now or at least till July, said refinery officials.

“There is an appetite for Russian crude, and shipments are not expected to taper off beyond this point unless something major happens. Talks are on, and buying will continue,” an official at a major refinery said.

The sentiment was echoed by another official, who pointed out that almost all major refineries have plans to receive Russian crude over the next few months.

Officials added that while Russian shipping fleets remain under sanctions, India is increasingly seeing shipments by tankers aligned with G7 nations.

Over 1.1 million barrels per day (bpd) or 33 per cent of the total seaborne Russian crude exports last month were lifted by tankers flagged, owned or operated by companies based in the G7, the EU, Australia, Switzerland or Norway, or insured by Western



protection and indemnity clubs, according to data from S&P Global Commodities at Sea and Maritime Intelligence Risk.

This compared with 30.1 per cent, or 1 million bpd in January, and shows that G7-linked tankers were coming back to Russia even as tougher due diligence procedures took effect from February, data shows.

Russia remained the single-largest supplier of crude oil for the 17th straight month as of February, estimates made

by London-based commodity data analytics provider Vortexa show.

Russia's share of India's crude oil imports rose to 32 per cent in February from 25 per cent in January and 31 per cent in December. These figures still remain much lower than the historic high of 44 per cent registered in May last year.

### Hurdles remain

Import volumes have dipped in recent months owing to possible problems in

settling payments with Russian suppliers. The import of Russian Sokol grade crude was most impacted as a result.

However, after months of falling imports as a result of US sanctions, the crude grade has again started landing in India in February, refinery officials said. Produced by the Sakhalin-1 project in Russia's Far East, the light sweet grade of crude had increasingly found a market in India in 2023.

However, the crude may face further

hurdles as the US imposed fresh sanctions on Russia's leading tanker group, Sovcomflot, in February.

Announced on the second anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the sanctions were placed after 14 tankers — part of the fleet — were in 'violation' of the G7's \$60 a barrel price cap on Russian oil, Washington DC had said.

But Petroleum Ministry officials said any dip in incoming crude volumes is a function of oil prices.

Russian shipments to India rose to 1.41 million bpd in February compared to 1.2 million bpd in January, according to Vortexa.

Imports had stood at 1.32 million bpd in December, and 1.48 million in November.

Lower incidence of discounts has also played a part in falling imports. Discounts have ranged between \$3 and 4 per barrel in recent months.

As a result of the changing trade, India had gone for increased sourcing from Iraq in January and Saudi Arabia in February.

“Imports from Middle East suppliers are expected to remain on an upward trajectory for the next few months,” another official said.

## Elections, harvesting activities to raise diesel demand: S&P Global

The upcoming Lok Sabha elections and rise in harvesting activities will expand the demand for gasoil (diesel) in India by 75,000 barrels per day (bpd) during April–June, S&P Global Commodity Insights said in a report on Thursday. Diesel demand had risen by 60,000 bpd in the first 3 months of 2024, the report said. According to the report, overall demand for oil products rose by 132,000 bpd or 2.4 per cent in February, as compared to the same period last year. Demand for the product in February was also up by 256,000 bpd, with a rise in consumption of all products except fuel oil and other minor products. LPG and diesel recorded the highest year-on-year (Y-o-Y) growth as household consumption remained robust due to cooler weather in northern India, while the consumption of diesel rose in line with the receding winter and increasing mobility, the report said.

SUBHAYAN CHAKRABORTY



# Disinvestment policy to be reviewed by new govt

**Rajeev Jayaswal**

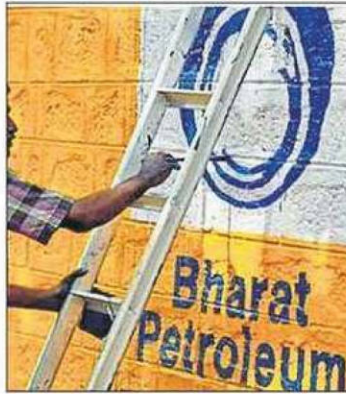
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**NEW DELHI:** The new government formed after the general elections will review the existing disinvestment policy in the light of changed economic and geopolitical circumstances, which will include re-examination of the Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd's (BPCL) strategic sale, on hold since May 2022 after an unsuccessful attempt, two officials said on Thursday.

This is one of the reasons why disinvestment has no specific estimate in the interim budget for 2024-25, unlike in the past, one official with direct knowledge of the matter said requesting anonymity.

"A considered view will be taken only after the new government is formed and proposals for the full budget (2024-25) are discussed," another official added. A full budget is expected by July.

The full budget for FY25 is expected to be presented by the new government at the centre after the general elections. An interim budget is a vote on account, presented in an election year to cover expenditure for a brief period to keep the government functioning. Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented the



**This will include review of BPCL's strategic sale, on hold since May 2022.** REUTERS

interim budget on February 1, 2024, which had no specific mention of disinvestment estimates under the head of non-debt capital receipts.

While budget estimates for 2023-24 (presented in Parliament on February 1, 2023) had a specific number of ₹51,000 crore as disinvestment receipts, the same was missing in the revised estimate for the same fiscal year. "This is a change in approach from sell-off to wealth management. The approach is to optimise values of public assets," the second official said.

As for now, the government's disinvestment policy is the same as was mentioned in the budget for 2021-22 that was presented by the finance minister

on February 1, 2021. Based on the New Public Sector Enterprise Policy for Aatmanirbhar Bharat (approved by the cabinet, on January 27, 2021 and notified on February 4, 2021), a disinvestment road map has been provided for all non-strategic and strategic sectors. The policy advocates maintaining bare minimum presence of the public sector in strategic areas while privatising the rest. It divides the strategic sectors into four areas -- atomic energy, space and defence; transport and telecommunications; power, petroleum, coal and other minerals; and banking, insurance and financial services.

Under the policy, blue-chip public sector company Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) also figured in the list for sale. After more than two years of efforts, also during the peak period of the Covid-19 pandemic, the department of investment and public asset management (DIPAM) on May 26, 2022 put on hold its sell-off plan mainly because of a poor response.

"The proposed disinvestment of BPCL was a cabinet decision, hence it cannot be shelved. Its fate will be decided after elections by the new regime," the first person said.



# Ethanol Ambitions

Bioenergy stands as a pivotal force in India's pursuit of sustainable development, offering multifaceted benefits beyond energy production, contributing to the circular economy, and promoting an environmentally conscious lifestyle (LiFE). In addition, it unlocks carbon credit potential and drives decarbonisation efforts, making a significant contribution to achieving Nationally Determined Contributions for emission reductions. This aligns with climate goals, enabling India to make tangible strides in mitigating climate change impacts globally



The Global Biofuel Alliance, announced at the G20 summit on 9 September 2023 in New Delhi, has the potential to generate opportunities worth billions of US dollars in the coming years. The global ethanol market was valued at \$99.06 billion in 2022 and is predicted to grow at a CAGR of 5.1 per cent by 2032, surpassing \$162.12 billion by 2032. According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), there is a 3.5-5x biofuels growth potential by 2050 due to Net Zero targets, creating a significant opportunity for India.

Sustainable Biomass in many varieties, with its vast indigenous yearly availability, will lead to the indigenous production of enough biofuel energy, supporting additional revenues for agricultural growth, environmental sustainability, pollution abatement, and financial security supplementing and slowly replacing fossil fuels. Technological cooperation must be made within G20 partners for the success of the Biofuel Alliance.

India proposed collaboration on biofuels within the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) to ensure energy security, affordability, and accessibility through sustainable biofuels. This IPEF was launched jointly by the US and other partner countries in the Indo-Pacific region, including Japan, Australia, and seven Asian members.

India also emphasized technology transfer through joint ventures in the clean energy pillar. This proposal was supported by the G20 countries and 12 global organisations, including the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, International Energy Agency, International Energy Forum and others. This will help G20 nations reduce their dependence on fossil fuels; their overall imports of fossil fuels can be reduced by billions of US dollar within the next 3-5 years, helping them meet sustainable development and carbon emission reduction goals.

Biogas can generate an opportunity of 200 billion, considering the least investment required, compared to other energy generation options and easy availability of raw-materials. Bio energy/ Biogas in principle, has the potential to replace fossil

fuels completely, especially to decarbonize the transport sector. This initiative will also align with India's ambitious goal of achieving Net Zero by 2070.

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The government has undertaken important initiatives such as the National Bioenergy Programme, SAMARTH Scheme, and SATAT (Efficient Bioenergy technologies), among others.

Augmenting Farmers' Livelihoods: Farmers, being the backbone of societies, are benefited by agricultural growth. Bioenergy initiatives offer farmers a pathway towards enhanced livelihoods by providing opportunities for additional income streams. Through the cultivation of biomass feedstock such as agricultural residues, energy and protein rich crops, and organic waste, farmers can diversify their revenue sources while contributing to the renewable energy sector.

Moreover, the establishment of bioenergy facilities in rural areas stimulates local employment and entrepreneurship, thereby uplifting rural communities by reducing migration to large cities and thus augmenting their standard of living.

Enhancing Energy Security: Substantial and ever growing crude oil imports contribute to major dependency and cause a drain on India's dollar

resources. A paradigm shift that sees Biomass as the new crude oil is needed as Bioenergy serves as the cornerstone of fortifying India's energy security by reducing reliance on fossil fuel imports and broadening the energy portfolio. As a locally sourced renewable resource, bioenergy mitigates vulnerabilities linked to geopolitical tensions and fluctuating global energy markets as well as the vicissitudes of the oil cartel. Additionally, decentralized bioenergy facilities enable communities to tap into local resources, strengthening energy resilience at the grassroots level. There is a need to set up Bio Compressed Plants and world-class-sized bio-refineries in almost all states in India. India needs ethanol for the E20 and E30 target.

Ethanol blend to partly decarbonize diesel is also being adopted, creating a sizable additional demand. Ethanol is also the basic and main feedstock for SAF and renewable diesel via ATJ pathway. There is scope for over 50 large bio-refineries (1000-1500 KLPD standard size in the USA and EU) to reach the E30 programme and meeting diesel and SAF demand. To reach the Government's target of E30 by 2030, we would need 18 million tons of ethanol for blending in gasoline and more ethanol if 5 per cent blending in diesel and SAF production is adopted. The current production is around 4 million tons, leaving a wide gap. India's gasoline consumption would reach 60 million tons/year by 2030. Biofuels alone will not replace other energy sources but will have a major role. Being high-octane and clean burning, they would cut down PM2.5 emissions and pollution in India's major cities by making gasoline and diesel more clean burning.

Over 800 biomass power projects have been installed with a combined capacity of 10,632 MW for power generation and

140 tons/day for compressed biogas production. The country is also developing a market for bio-products like biomass pellets. Government initiatives, with a mandate for a minimum 5 per cent utilization of biomass in thermal power plants, and the STAT scheme, which promotes the use of CBG in transportation, along with amendments to the National Policy on Biofuels in 2018, contribute to this growth.

The national policy on biofuels now allows a wider range of feedstock for biofuel production with immediate aims for a 20 per cent blending of ethanol in petrol by 2025-26. The 2023 Indian budget proposed the establishment of 500 new waste-to-wealth plants under the Govardhan Scheme, including 200 CBG plants. The focus is on diversifying to advance feedstock to minimize land use for price and other environmental factors. Technologies like cellulose ethanol and biomass waste Fischer-Tropsch are being developed to expand non-food crop biofuel production.

But there are challenges.

\* The government's plan recognizes feedstock availability as the first challenge for ethanol-blended fuel. There is an urgent need for second[1] generation feedstock from non-food sources, such as cellulose. Also, the maize route for ethanol production needs to be accelerated.

\* Bioenergy growth needs consistent government policies.

\* Only a few states in India, like UP, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Punjab, and Haryana, are major agricultural producers. In view of this, extensive infrastructure is needed for the storage, transportation, and distribution of ethanol throughout the country.

\* Modifying petrol pumps to use E20 at all locations throughout the country.

Bioenergy systems exemplify circular economy principles by efficiently utilizing organic waste streams like agricultural residues and forestry waste for renewable energy production, minimizing waste generation, conserving resources, mitigating pollution, and fostering sustainable production and consumption patterns. Bioenergy emerges as a transformative agent poised to reshape India's socio-economic landscape.



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# Govt-run oil firms fulfil 94% of goal to provide free LPG connections

**Rajeev Jayaswal**

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**NEW DELHI:** State-run oil companies have already distributed over 94% of the 7.5 million free cooking gas connections it was to deliver to poor households following a September 2023 Cabinet decision – way ahead of the envisaged deadline of March 31, 2026 – two officials aware of the matter said.

Till March 12, public sector oil marketing companies (OMCs) distributed more than 7.08 million connections to poor households, and this number is expected to touch the target by the end of this financial year, the officials added, requesting anonymity.

The government could consider raising the 7.5 million target once the number is achieved, they indicated.

The Union Cabinet on September 13, 2023 extended the second version of Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY or Ujjwala 2.0) for the release of 7.5 million new liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) connections over three financial years – 2023-24, 2024-25 and 2025-26.

This target was over and above the 96 million PMUY households that had already availed the benefit.

“Cumulatively, OMCs have now already crossed 10.30 crore (103 million) connections under the scheme and they are expected to achieve the target of 10.35 crore (96 million crore plus 7.5 million) connections well in advance – by the end of 2023-24

**TILL MARCH 12, PUBLIC SECTOR OIL MARKETING FIRMS DISTRIBUTED MORE THAN 7.08 MN CONNECTIONS TO THE POOR HOUSEHOLDS**

or by early 2024-25,” one of the officials cited above said.

The Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, or Ujjwala, was first launched in Ballia in Uttar Pradesh by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on May 1, 2016 to provide clean cooking fuel to 80 million poor households.

The target was achieved on September 7, 2019, six months ahead of March 31, 2020 deadline. Ujjwala 2.0 was then launched from Mahoba in Uttar Pradesh in August 2021 with an initial target of 10 million connections, which was achieved by January 2022. Subsequently, the government extended it to six million more connections, which was achieved by December 2022. In September 2023, another extension was given to the scheme to cover 7.5 million additional households.

Cooking gas is a politically sensitive fuel in India. Last week, with the 2024 general elections set to be announced any day now, OMCs reduced cooking gas rates for all customers by ₹100 per 14.2 kg cylinder as the Prime Minister’s gift to 320 million households on the International Women’s Day.



# Gulf Oil Lubricants Looking at Buyouts to Boost EV Infra Play

## Hinduja co eyeing charge point operators, cos in intelligent grid tech: Gulf Oil Int'l CEO

[Shally.Mohile@timesgroup.com](mailto:Shally.Mohile@timesgroup.com)

**Mumbai:** Gulf Oil Lubricants, the Hinduja Group Company, is looking to buy charge point operators (CPOs) and companies in the intelligent grid technology space as part of a strategy to become a leader in the EV charging ecosystem, as electrification makes gradual but steady strides in the world's third-largest auto market, Mike Jones, CEO, Gulf Oil International, told ET.

The intelligent or smart grid technology is a combination of hardware chargers and software embedded in bi-directional (the charging allows the car to send energy to various recipients). Smart grids are electricity networks that use digital technologies, sensors, and software to better match the supply and demand of electricity in real time.

"We are looking at the complete value chain. From manufacturing to research and technology. We started from one end of the value chain by manufacturing EV chargers and now looking to move to the rest as we want Gulf to be around for another 100 years," said Jones.

Muted sales of lubricants globally and an end of ICE (internal combustion engine) vehicles announced by various developed countries as they make the switch from fossil fuel to electric and the need for a charging infrastructure in the nascent EV markets has prompted lube companies to enter the space.

Jones was quick to add that India has been outperforming the global lube markets expanding at 2 to 3 times the global average. Therefore, with the core lubricant business "doing extremely well in India — its biggest market and glo-

bally, Gulf "has the luxury" to spend heavily in the EV infra landscape and build its R&D capabilities. It plans to invest a third of what it has invested in the last three years in the EV business, he said.

India, which is the largest lube market for the firm, will be the "centre of excellence" for Gulf Oil International's EV charging business and will serve as a manufacturing and export hub. Starting from exports to Europe over the next six to eight months, Gulf plans to ship



the made-in-India chargers to 100 countries where the UK-based firm is present, said Jones.

"A high brand recall which Gulf enjoys among the consumers, its ongoing relationship with various automakers and a strong network of 10,000 outlets makes it a logical extension for the company to diversify into EV infra space," added Ravi Chawla, MD Gulf Oil Lubricants.

In addition to buying 51% in Tirex in August 2023, Gulf Oil invested in Indra Renewables and in ElectreeFi, an EV SaaS player which provides charging management software (CMS) services to automakers in India.

## IEA RAISES OIL DEMAND OUTLOOK BUT LAGS OPEC



THE INTERNATIONAL Energy Agency raised its view for oil demand growth by 110,000

barrels per day (bpd) from its previous month's forecast as Houthi attacks disrupt Red Sea shipping, but its view remains far below that of producer group OPEC. The IEA, which represents industrialised countries, has predicted that oil demand will peak by 2030 as the world shifts to cleaner energy. OPEC sees a slower shift and expects oil use to keep rising for the next two decades.







# India's Diesel Exports to Europe See a Big Jump in February

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**New Delhi:** Diesel exports to Europe quadrupled in February over the previous month as enhanced margins on the fuel lured more Indian cargoes into the continent.

Indian refiners exported 204,000 barrels per day (bpd) of diesel to Europe in February, up from 56,000 bpd in January, says energy cargo tracker Vortexa. The sharp rise in supplies to Europe increased India's overall exports of diesel to 600,000 bpd in February, up from 450,000 bpd in January. No diesel was exported to the US and supplies

to other destinations remained steady in February. "The east-west arbitrage re-opened in February, partly supported by more European refiners heading into maintenance. India's diesel exports to the US have traditionally been minimal due to ample supplies in the US," said Serena Huang, an analyst at Vortexa. Amid the threat of Houthi attacks on ships, a large share of diesel exports to Europe was diverted to transit via the Cape of Good Hope, avoiding the Red Sea and the shorter Suez Canal.

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# L&T bags major gas pipeline project in West Asia

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
New Delhi, March 14

**LARSEN AND TOUBRO (L&T)** on Thursday announced bagging a major order gas pipeline project in the West Asia region. The scope of work comprises Engineering, Procurement, and Construction (EPC) of two new pipelines along with associated work parallel to the existing pipeline corridor, the infrastructure major said in a statement.

The major onshore gas pipeline project has been received by the company's hydrocarbon vertical L&T Energy Hydrocarbon—LTEH, it said.

Subramanian Sarma, whole-time director & senior executive vice president (Energy), L&T, said, "This is the largest cross-country pipeline EPC project awarded to us till date and we are excited to bring our expertise to this strategic project." The company did not provide any financial details of the project.

As per its classification, a major category order is valued in the range of ₹5,000 crore to ₹10,000 crore. L&T is a \$23 billion Indian multinational engaged in EPC Projects, hi-tech manufacturing, and services.



## Oil and gas cos operate on 6,639 sq km of land but unwilling to pay even .6% of profit as tax: Assam

**New Delhi:** Assam on Thursday informed SC that Union-controlled oil and gas firms in the past 12 years have earned a cumulative net profit of over Rs 3.3 lakh crore but are unwilling to part with even 0.6% of that amount towards their tax dues to the state, chargeable on 6,639 sq km of land used by them, which is more than the size of Goa, reports **Dhananjay Mahapatra**.

Responding to Oil India's challenge to Assam Taxation (on Specified Lands) (Amendment) Act, 2004 for including coal, crude oil, natural gas and limestone bearing lands within the state tax regime, Assam govt through Rakesh Dwivedi told SC that Rs 1,894 crore, including interest on principal tax, is due from Oil India and ONGC from 2005 till 2022.

Though SC segregated

petitions related to taxation on oil- and natural gas-bearing lands from mineral-bearing lands, Assam said the principal dues of Oil India and ONGC is only 0.6% of the net profit after tax, that is surpluses of Oil India and ONGC of 12 years. While the companies are reluctant to pay 0.58% of their net profit to the state, they paid Rs 17.7 lakh crore dividend to the Union govt during 2011-2023, Assam said.

# Oil demand grew 2.4% in Feb: S&P Global

**Our Bureau**  
New Delhi

The demand for oil products in February increased by 1,32,000 barrels per day (b/d) or 2.4 per cent year-on-year (y-o-y), and by 256,000 b/d month on month, with consumption of all products rising except for fuel oil and some other minor products.

S&P Global Commodity Insights said that LPG and gasoil/diesel recorded the highest y-o-y growth as household consumption remained robust amid cooler weather in the North while diesel consumption increased, in line with the receding winter and increasing mobility.

Fuel oil consumption remained moderated as utilities and industries increased the usage of alternate sources, offsetting the impact of rising bunkering demand, it added.

Diesel consumption in



## GROWTH DRIVER

- India's February oil demand rose 2.4% y-o-y to 1,32,000 barrels per day, led by LPG and gasoil
- The oil demand is expected to grow by 2,06,000 b/d in 2024

February rose by 2.6 per cent on-year and 1,26,000 b/d on-month, as winter fog receded and mobility picked up the momentum.

Further, with normalisation of weather, industrial and construction activities saw an uptrend leading to higher gasoil use, S&P Global Commodity Insights Senior Analyst-South Asia Oil Markets Himi Srivastava said.

The truck drivers' strike in January had also led to lower demand in that month which improved in February show-

ing a higher on-month increase, she added.

"Overall, the gasoil demand is expected to remain elevated in Q1 and register a growth of 60,000 b/d on year while the Q2 is expected to see an increase of 75,000 b/d on the back of harvesting activities picking up, along with the election period in India.

For 2024, diesel/gasoil will remain the most consumed fuel in the country and is also expected to be the largest contributor to growth,"

Srivastava said. Total jet fuel and kerosene demand was at 2,02,000 b/d in February, up by 16,000 b/d on-year as strength in air traffic continued after a slight drop in January due to unfavourable weather.

"According to AirNav Radar Box, India's flight departures during February increased by 3.1 per cent on-month and were up by 4.8 per cent on-year. This year began on a good note from a domestic passenger footfall perspective with close to 5 per cent y-o-y in January, which is 3 per cent higher than the 2019 level as well.

In Q1, we expect jet/kerosene consumption to grow by 19,000 b/d year on year," she said.

Overall, India's oil demand is expected to grow by 206,000 b/d in 2024. Gasoil and gasoline will be the highest contributors, together accounting for 65 per cent of the growth.





# Petrol, diesel prices cut by ₹2/litre ahead of polls

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**NEW DELHI:** State-run oil marketing companies slashed pump prices of petrol and diesel by ₹2 per litre from Friday, continuing a spree of pre-election incentives to consumers that saw reductions in the rates of cooking gas and compressed natural gas for automobiles earlier this month.

The news of slashing deregulated

petrol and diesel rates was broken on social media platform X by the petroleum ministry late on Thursday night. In Delhi, one litre of petrol will be sold for ₹94.72 and diesel at ₹87.62 from 6am on Friday. Rates will vary from city to city due to differences in local levies. The ministry, however, said that the oil marketing companies (OMCs) informed it about the move to

**continued on →15**

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**FUEL RATES**

revise fuel rates.

In a post on X, petroleum minister Hardeep Singh Puri said in Hindi, "By reducing the price of petrol and diesel by ₹2, the country's accomplished Prime Minister Shri @narendramodi Ji has once again proved that the welfare and comfort of his family of crores of Indians is always his goal." It is expected that some BJP-ruled states, such as Rajasthan, may cut value-added tax (VAT) on petrol and diesel as was promised by the PM during the recent assembly polls, a government official said, requesting anonymity.

Auto fuel rates were changed for the first time after they were kept frozen for almost two years since April 6, 2022. HT on Sunday reported about an imminent automobile fuel price cut after the CNG rate was slashed by ₹2.50 a kg in regions such as Bengaluru, Patna, Ranchi and the Taj Trapezium Zone. Consumer prices of various types of fuel came down after Prime Minister Narendra Modi on March 8 announced a reduction in cooking gas price by ₹100 per cylinder as a gift to 320 million households on International Women's Day.

"Reduction in petrol and diesel prices will boost consumer spending and reduce operating costs for over 58 lakh heavy goods vehicles running on diesel, 6 crore cars and 27 crore two-wheelers," the oil ministry said on X. It said the reduced fuel prices will benefit citizens through a higher disposable income, controlling inflation, lowering the input costs of farmers, boosting tourism and enhancing profitability for the logistics, manufacturing, and retail sectors.

One executive of an oil marketing company (OMC) said, "The price cut was imminent

due to decent profits earned by OMCs, but the timing and quantum were to be decided by the competent authority." The executive requested anonymity. India's fuel retail business is dominated by three state-run OMCs with over 90% market share – Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL).

The three oil marketers have posted about ₹70,000 crore net profit in the first three quarters of the current financial year, as against a combined net profit of ₹1,137.89 crore in the entirety of 2022-23, and are expected to make significant profits even in the three months to March as average international crude oil rates are more or less stable, another official said, requesting anonymity. IOC pumps of Delhi had kept prices of petrol at ₹96.72 per litre and diesel at ₹89.62 until Friday morning.

While India's monthly average crude oil import cost (Indian basket) ranged between \$74.98 a barrel in May 2023 and \$93.5 per barrel in September 2023 in the current financial year. After the September peak, it fell to \$77.42 in December 2023, \$79.22 in January 2024, and \$81.62 in February 2024, according to official data. The average price of the Indian basket was \$83.04 a barrel in about first two weeks of March 2024.

OMCs froze petrol and diesel rates on April 6, 2022, to check international oil price volatility and the central government reduced excise duty twice (by ₹13 on petrol and ₹16 on diesel) to protect Indian consumers when average crude oil purchase prices of the Indian basket surged from \$73.30 a barrel in December 2021 to \$112.87 a barrel in March 2022, and further to \$116.01 a barrel in June 2022.

**REVISED FUEL PRICES EFFECTIVE MARCH 15**

# Petrol, diesel prices cut by ₹2 ahead of LS polls

**ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU**  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 14

AHEAD OF the likely announcement of the general election schedule, the government on Thursday announced that oil marketing companies (OMCs) will slash petrol and diesel prices by Rs 2 per litre each. After a two-year-long hiatus in rate revision by the state-owned oil companies, petrol in the national capital will now cost Rs 94.72 a litre, down from Rs 96.72 per litre, and diesel prices will be Rs 87.62 against Rs 89.62.

"Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have informed that they have revised petrol and diesel prices across the country. New prices would be effective from 15th March 2024, 06:00 AM," the oil ministry said.

"Reduction in petrol and diesel prices will boost consumer spending and reduce operating costs for over 58 lakh heavy goods vehicles running on diesel, 6 crore cars and 27 crore two-wheelers," the ministry said.

Petrol in Mumbai will cost Rs 104.21 a litre from Friday, Rs 103.94 in Kolkata and Rs 100.75 in Chennai. A litre of diesel will be priced at Rs 92.15 in Mumbai, Rs 90.76 in Kolkata and Rs 92.34 in Chennai. Rates differ from state to state, depending on the incidence of local taxes. Local sales tax or VAT is the highest among metros in BJP-ruled Maharashtra and lowest in Delhi.

Reduced petrol and diesel prices will benefit the citizens



The state-owned fuel retailers froze petrol and diesel prices for the past two years. Reuters

through more disposable income, boost for tourism and travel industries, control over inflation, increased consumer confidence and spending, reduced expenses for businesses dependent on transportation, enhanced profitability for logistics, manufacturing, and retail sectors, and reduced outgo for farmers on tractor operations and pump sets, the ministry added.

Last week, Rs 100 per cylinder reduction in cooking gas LPG price was announced, which brought down the rates of LPG for common users to Rs 803 per 14.2-kg cylinder and that for the poor, who got free connections under the Ujjwala scheme, to Rs 503 after accounting for Rs 300 per bottle subsidy that the government gives.

International oil prices have been turbulent in the last couple of years. It dipped into the negative zone at the start of the pandemic in 2020 and swung wiktly in 2022 - climbing to a 14-year

high of nearly \$140 per barrel in March 2022 after Russia invaded Ukraine, before sliding on weaker demand from top importer China and worries of an economic contraction. The three state-owned fuel retailers - Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) froze petrol and diesel prices for the longest duration in the last two decades.

The three firms, which control roughly 90 per cent of India's fuel market, had till now resisted calls to revert to daily price revision and pass on softening in rates to consumers on grounds that prices continue to be extremely volatile - rising on one day and falling on the other - and that their past losses have not been fully recouped. But the financial numbers of the first three quarters showed them reporting bumper profit totalling over Rs 69,000 crore.

(With PTI inputs)



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*(With PTI inputs)*





## Petrol, diesel prices cut by Rs 2 per litre

**NEW DELHI:** Petrol and diesel prices were cut by Rs 2 per litre each as state-owned oil companies ended a nearly two-year-long hiatus in rate revision, just hours before the general election schedule is announced.

The revised price will be applicable from 6 am on Friday, March 15, the oil ministry said on Thursday evening.

Petrol in the national capital will now cost Rs 94.72 a litre compared to Rs 96.72 per litre currently while diesel prices will be Rs 87.62 against Rs 89.62 at present.

The government had nearly a decade back freed petrol and diesel prices from its control and the rates till now were fixed and announced by oil companies.

But on Thursday, the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas took to X to announce the rate revision that came just hours before the schedule for the general elections was due to be announced that would set in motion a poll code, which bars making announcements

**Continued on P4**

## Petrol, diesel prices

that could lure voters. The price cut came a week after a Rs 100 per cylinder reduction in cooking gas LPG price was announced. That reduction brought down the rates of LPG for common users to Rs 803 per 14.2-kg cylinder and that for the poor, who got free connections under the Ujjwala scheme, to Rs 503 after accounting for Rs 300 per bottle subsidy that the government gives.

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AGENCIES



**EYES WIDE SHUT** 

# Ujjwala Burning Bright?



**Neeraj Kaushal**

On March 7, GoI announced the extension of ₹300 per LPG cylinder subsidy to poor women under PM Ujjwala scheme. This scheme is expected to benefit nearly 100 million families and cost GoI ₹12,000 crore. There is no doubt that this is an election-time revadi.

Liberals were upset with the announcement's packaging. They complained that women should get a less sexist gift on International Women's Day. Bhakts were happy because the additional subsidy responded to real needs of women, ironically seeming more liberal than liberals.

Yet, has the scheme been a success? Or is GoI throwing money on a lousy scheme for electoral gains? On the face of it, the scheme reflects an incomprehension of rural India's political economy. The countryside is littered with unused LPG stoves and empty gas cylinders distributed free under the scheme. More than 58% of rural households don't use LPG, even though data shows they have a connection. For these households, the money could have been better spent. We will need more than a subsidy of ₹300, covering about 27% of the cost of a gas cylinder, to incentivise rural households to move to an expensive, even though cleaner, cooking fuel.

Yet, Ujjwala has induced some households to transition from burning shrubs, straw, coal and cow-dung cakes — primary sources of indoor air pollution — to using LPG or PNG as cooking fuel, thereby improving

indoor air quality and reducing premature deaths from indoor pollution.

According to WHO, in 1990, indoor pollution killed 1.9 mn Indians prematurely (2.2 of every 1,000 persons). In 2019, the number was down to 0.6 per 1,000. The decline began before the advent of Ujjwala, but the rate of decline has increased since 2016.

Critics say that most of the transition to LPG is due to rise in prosperity, with India's growing middle class adopting cleaner sources of cooking fuel. They have a point. Yet, Ujjwala has made access to LPG connections easier: Once, a connection had a 3-5-year waiting period. A hefty bribe could get earlier access. In most states, the waiting period is between a week and 15 days.

Ownership of an LPG connection and its occasional use are symbols of prestige in rural India, and, thus, they have been a vote winner in the past. GoI says LPG connectivity is 100%. This data is exaggerated, as many families have multiple connections, and some have none. But access has no doubt dramatically improved. World Bank said access to clean cooking fuel and tech improved from 22% in 2000 to 68% by 2020.

What is troublesome is the fact that many households that have received an LPG connection do not use it. During my field visits across northern rural India,

I found that while most households



**Unhealthy choice**

holds had LPG stoves, a majority did not use them for cooking because, they said, the cost of using LPG was too high. The most recent NFHS confirms these field impressions: only 42% of rural households use LPG or natural gas as their primary cooking fuel. The rest use straws, shrubs, coal and cow-dung cakes.

Even in urban India, less than 100% of households use LPG or PNG as cooking fuel. Around 11% of urban households still use coal, cow-dung cakes, shrubs, straws and kerosene.

The increase in subsidy will bring the cost of a 14.2 kg LPG cylinder down from ₹1,103 to ₹803. This will no doubt benefit families that are using LPG. But would this price be sufficiently low to incentivise families with an LPG connection but cannot afford to buy the gas cylinder to transition to LPG? A few may.

But the majority will not if their alternative sources of cooking fuel — cow pats, straws and shrubs — are free, or nearly free. On the other hand, higher subsidies will create a black market to sell subsidised LPG cylinders at higher rates to restaurants or other commercial users.

The success of PM Ujjwala requires not just easy access to an LPG connection but also an increased focus on transitioning to cleaner cooking fuel: an awareness that LPG stove-use won't only ease cooking for women — whose discomfort is sadly not a pressing concern in many households — but improve air quality, and, in turn, the entire family's health. Focusing on this narrative is essential to transition to cleaner cooking fuels in India successfully.

*The writer is professor of social policy, Columbia University, US*



# ‘World oil output to fall in Q1; OPEC+ to continue with supply cut in 2024’

**ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi**

THE world oil production is projected to fall by 870 kb/d (thousand barrel per day) in the first quarter of 2024 compared to the fourth quarter of 2023 on account of heavy weather-related shut-ins and new curbs from OPEC+, according to the International Energy Agency (IEA) oil marketing report.

The report also noted that the global market is anticipated to face a deficit throughout the year. Additionally, OPEC+ voluntary cuts will remain in effect through 2024, adjusting the market balance from a surplus to a slight deficit.

“Global oil demand is forecast to rise by a higher-than-expected 1.7 mb/d in Q124 due to an improved outlook for the United States and increased bunkering,” the report reads.



“From the second quarter, non-OPEC+ is set to dominate gains after some OPEC+ members announced they would extend extra voluntary cuts to support market stability. Global supply for 2024 is forecast to increase 800 kb/d to 102.9 mb/d, including a downward adjustment to OPEC+ output,” the report reads.

According to the IEA report, trade flow disruptions also

boosted bunker fuel use. Longer shipping routes and faster vessel speeds saw Singapore bunkering reach all-time highs. That, along with surging US ethane demand for its petrochemical sector, underpins a slight upward revision to global oil demand expectations for this year by 110 kb/d compared to last month’s report. “World oil demand growth is now forecast at 1.3 mb/d in 2024, down sharply from last year’s 2.3 mb/d expansion,” IEA said in its monthly report.

Iran, which last year ranked as the world’s second-largest source of supply growth after the United States, is expected to increase production by a further 280 kb/d this year. Output policy for the remainder of the OPEC+ bloc will be revisited when ministers meet in Vienna on June 1 to review market conditions.



वसुंधरा सेक्टर एक में गुरुवार को पाइप लाइन ठीक करता कर्मी। • हिन्दुस्तान

## गैस लाइन में लीकेज से हड़कंप

ट्रांस हिंडन। वसुंधरा सेक्टर एक की एलआईजी कॉलोनी में गुरुवार दोपहर इंद्रप्रस्थ गैस लिमिटेड (आईजीएल) की लाइन में लीकेज से हड़कंप मच गया। कंपनी की टीम ने करीब 20 मिनट में ठीक कर दिया। ट्रांस हिंडन आरडब्ल्यूए फेडरेशन के अध्यक्ष कैलाश चंद्र शर्मा ने बताया कि निगम के कर्मचारी नाली बना रहे हैं। खुदाई के दौरान लाइन में लीकेज हो गया।



## चुनाव से पहले ₹ 2 सस्ता हुआ पेट्रोल, डीजल

नई दिल्ली, (पंजाब केसरी): केंद्र सरकार ने लोकसभा चुनाव से पहले पेट्रोल-डीजल के दाम 2 रुपये कम किए हैं। पेट्रोलियम एवं प्राकृतिक गैस मंत्रालय ने अपने एक्स अकाउंट पर पोस्ट किया, "ऑयल मार्केटिंग कंपनियों (ओएमसी) ने देशभर में पेट्रोल और डीजल की कीमतों में संशोधन किया है। नई कीमतें 15 मार्च, 2024 की सुबह 6 बजे से प्रभावी होंगी।" केंद्रीय पेट्रोलियम मंत्री हरदीप सिंह पुरी ने अपने एक्स अकाउंट पर पोस्ट किया, "पेट्रोल-डीजल के दाम 2 रुपये कम करके देश के पीएम मोदी ने एक बार

फिर साबित कर दिया कि करोड़ों भारतीयों के अपने परिवार का हित और सुविधा सदैव उनका लक्ष्य है।" उन्होंने अपनी पोस्ट में लिखा, "वसुधा का नेता कौन हुआ? भूखंड-विजेता कौन हुआ? अतुलित यश क्रेता कौन हुआ? नव-धर्म प्रणेता कौन हुआ? जिसने न कभी आराम किया, विघ्नों में रहकर नाम किया।"

बता दें कि दिल्ली में पेट्रोल की कीमत 96.72 रुपये प्रति लीटर थी जो अब 94.72 रुपये प्रति लीटर हो गई है। इसी तरह मुंबई में प्रति लीटर 106.31 रुपये की जगह नई कीमत 104.21 रुपये प्रति लीटर की गई है।



# नाली की खुदाई से फटी गैस की पाइपलाइन

■ एनबीटी न्यूज, वसुंधरा : सेक्टर-1 एलआईजी में नाली निर्माण के लिए खुदाई के दौरान आईजीएल गैस कनेक्शन की लाइन फट गई, जिससे भयंकर गैस रिसाव होने लगा। रिसाव होने से वहां मौजूद लोगों में अफरातफरी मच गई। ट्रांस हिंडन आरडब्ल्यूए फेडरेशन के अध्यक्ष कैलाश चंद्र शर्मा ने आईजीएल कंट्रोल रूम में कॉल कर तत्काल आईजीएल टीम को बुलवाकर लाइन ब्लॉक करवाकर ठीक करवाई। उपस्थित रेजिडेंट्स ने फेडरेशन और आईजीएल टीम का आभार व्यक्त किया। फेडरेशन सचिव ऋचा त्यागी ने आईजीएल टीम से नाली व सड़क निर्माण तक कॉलोनी में निगरानी के लिए कर्मियों की संख्या बढ़ाने की मांग की ताकि इस तरह की घटना दोबारा न हो। मौके पर आदेश त्यागी, वाई पी जौहरी, सुनील कुमार, सुशील सिंह,



वसुंधरा सेक्टर 1 एलआईजी  
एरिया में हुआ गैस रिसाव

उर्मिला शर्मा, ऋचा त्यागी, सविता यादव,  
मेनका और नीता जैन मौजूद रहे।

## पेट्रोल व डीजल की कीमतों में दो रुपए प्रति लीटर की कटौती

नई दिल्ली (एसएनबी)। सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र की पेट्रोलियम विपणन कंपनियों ने लोकसभा चुनावों की घोषणा करीब आने के बीच बृहस्पतिवार शाम को पेट्रोल और डीजल की कीमतों में दो-दो रुपए प्रति लीटर की कटौती कर दी। नई दरें शुक्रवार सुबह छह बजे से लागू हो जाएंगी।



पेट्रोल	डीजल
दिल्ली-94.72	87.62
मुंबई-104.21	92.15
कोलकाता-103.94	90.76
चेन्नई-100.75	92.34

पेट्रोलियम मंत्रालय ने कहा कि पेट्रोल और डीजल की खुदरा कीमतों में संशोधन करने का फैसला किया गया है। इन पेट्रोलियम उत्पादों की कीमतें करीब दो साल से स्थिर बनी हुई थीं। यह कदम आम चुनाव की तारीखों का ऐलान करीब होने के बीच उठाया गया है। ऐसी संभावना है कि निर्वाचन आयोग जल्द ही चुनाव की तारीखों की घोषणा कर सकता है।

इस कटौती के बाद राष्ट्रीय राजधानी में पेट्रोल की कीमत अब 94.72 रुपए प्रति लीटर होगी, जो फिलहाल 96.72 रुपए प्रति लीटर है। वहीं डीजल 87.62 रुपए में मिलेगा, जो अभी 89.62 रुपए प्रति लीटर है। सरकार ने लगभग एक दशक पहले पेट्रोल और डीजल की कीमतों को अपने नियंत्रण से मुक्त कर दिया था और पेट्रोलियम कंपनियां ही कीमतें तय करती आ रही थीं। लेकिन बृहस्पतिवार को पेट्रोलियम एवं प्राकृतिक गैस मंत्रालय ने कीमतों में कटौती की घोषणा सोशल मीडिया मंच 'एक्स' के जरिये की। इसके एक हफ्ते पहले घरेलू रसोई गैस एलपीजी की कीमत में 100 रुपए प्रति सिलेंडर की कटौती की घोषणा की गई थी।



# पेट्रोल, डीजल के दाम दो रुपए प्रति लीटर घटे

जनसत्ता ब्यूरो  
नई दिल्ली, 14 मार्च।

सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र की पेट्रोलियम विपणन कंपनियों ने लोकसभा चुनावों की घोषणा करीब आने के बीच गुरुवार शाम को पेट्रोल और डीजल की कीमतों में दो-दो रुपए प्रति लीटर की कटौती कर दी।

पेट्रोलियम मंत्रालय ने कहा कि पेट्रोल और डीजल की खुदरा कीमतों में संशोधन करने का फैसला किया गया है। इन पेट्रोलियम उत्पादों की कीमतें करीब दो साल से स्थिर बनी हुई थीं। यह कदम आम चुनाव की तारीखों का ऐलान करीब होने के बीच उठाया गया है। ऐसी संभावना है कि



**दिल्ली** में पेट्रोल की कीमत अब 94.72 रुपए प्रति लीटर, डीजल 87.62 रुपए में मिलेगा।

निर्वाचन आयोग जल्द ही चुनाव की तारीखों की घोषणा कर सकता है। इस कटौती के बाद राष्ट्रीय राजधानी बाकी पेज 8 पर

## पेट्रोल, डीजल के दाम दो रुपए प्रति लीटर घटे

में पेट्रोल की कीमत अब 94.72 रुपए प्रति लीटर होगी, जो फिलहाल 96.72 रुपए प्रति लीटर है। वहीं डीजल 87.62 रुपए में मिलेगा, जो अभी 89.62 रुपए प्रति लीटर है।

सरकार ने लगभग एक दशक पहले पेट्रोल और डीजल की कीमतों को अपने नियंत्रण से मुक्त कर दिया था और पेट्रोलियम कंपनियां ही कीमतें तय करती आ रही थीं। लेकिन गुरुवार को पेट्रोलियम एवं प्राकृतिक गैस मंत्रालय ने कीमतों में कटौती की घोषणा 'एक्स' के जरिए की। इसके एक हफ्ते पहले घरेलू रसोई गैस एलपीजी की कीमत में 100 रुपए प्रति सिलेंडर की कटौती की घोषणा की गई थी।

उस कटौती से आम उपयोगकर्ताओं के लिए एलपीजी की दरें घटकर 803 रुपए प्रति सिलेंडर हो गईं जबकि उज्वला योजना के तहत मुफ्त

कनेक्शन पाने वाले गरीबों को यह सिलेंडर 503 रुपए का हो गया। पेट्रोलियम मंत्रालय ने कहा, 'पेट्रोलियम विपणन कंपनियों (ओएमसी) ने सूचित किया है कि उन्होंने देशभर में पेट्रोल और डीजल की कीमतों में संशोधन किया है। नई कीमतें 15 मार्च 2024 को सुबह छह बजे से प्रभावी होंगी।' स्थानीय करों के प्रभाव के आधार पर अलग-अलग राज्यों में पेट्रोल-डीजल की दरें अलग-अलग होती हैं।

स्थानीय विक्री कर (वैट) भाजपा-शासित महाराष्ट्र के महानगरों में सबसे अधिक जबकि दिल्ली में सबसे कम है। पेट्रोल और डीजल की कीमतों में कमी से नागरिकों को अधिक खर्च-योग्य आय, पर्यटन और बात्रा उद्योगों को बढ़ावा, मुद्रास्फीति पर नियंत्रण और परिवहन पर निर्भर व्यवसायों के खर्च में कमी आएगी।



# पेट्रोल-डीजल दो रुपये सस्ता

**आम चुनाव की घोषणा से ऐन पहले राहत : पेट्रोलियम मंत्री पुरी ने कहा नवंबर, 2022 से पेट्रोल 15 और डीजल 17 रुपये सस्ता कर चुकी सरकार**

अमर उजाला व्यूरो

नई दिल्ली। आम चुनाव की घोषणा से ऐन पहले सरकारी तेल कंपनियों ने पेट्रोल और डीजल के दाम में वृहस्पतिवार को प्रति लीटर दो रुपये कटौती की घोषणा की है। दरों में दो साल की स्थिरता के बाद यह राहत दी गई है। इसके साथ, दिल्ली में शुक्रवार सुबह 6 बजे से पेट्रोल 96.72 रुपये के बजाय 94.72 रुपये लीटर मिलेगा। वहीं, डीजल 89.62 के बजाय 87.62 रुपये लीटर मिलेगा। अन्य शहरों में भी कीमत में इसी अनुपात में कटौती होगी।

केंद्रीय पेट्रोलियम मंत्री हरदीप सिंह पुरी ने सोशल मीडिया पर दाम कटौती की जानकारी दी। पुरी ने दावा किया, इस कटौती से प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी ने फिर साबित किया कि करोड़ों भारतीयों के अपने परिवार का हित व सुविधा ही उनका लक्ष्य है। उन्होंने कहा, नवंबर, 2022 से लेकर अबतक केंद्र सरकार पेट्रोल के दाम में 15, जबकि डीजल के दाम में 17 रुपये लीटर की कमी कर चुकी है। उन्होंने कहा, 1973 के बाद दुनिया में 50 साल का सबसे बड़ा संकट आया। विकसित और विकासशील देशों को पेट्रोल के दामों में 50-72 फीसदी



**सुबह छह बजे से नई दरें लागू**

नई दिल्ली (मूल्य प्रति लीटर)

पेट्रोल ₹ 94.72 डीजल ₹ 87.62

## दूसरे देशों के मुकाबले भारत में दाम कम

पेट्रोलियम मंत्री ने कहा कि 14 मार्च, 2024 को रुपये के आधार पर भारत में पेट्रोल औसतन 94 रुपये प्रति लीटर है। वहीं, इटली में 168.01 रुपये लीटर यानी भारत से 79 फीसदी अधिक, फ्रांस में 166.87 रुपये यानी 78 फीसदी अधिक, जर्मनी में 159.57 रुपये यानी 70 फीसदी अधिक और स्पेन में 145.13 यानी 54 प्रतिशत अधिक है।

डीजल के दामों को देखें तो भारत में औसत कीमत 87 रुपये लीटर है... तो इटली में 163.21 रुपये यानी 88 फीसदी अधिक, फ्रांस में 161.57 रुपये यानी 86 फीसदी अधिक, जर्मनी में 155.68 रुपये यानी 79 फीसदी अधिक व स्पेन में 138.07 यानी 59 फीसदी अधिक कीमत है।

**सरकार के तर्क**



अब 39 देशों से तेल खरीद : पहले हम 27 देशों से कच्चा तेल खरीदते थे। देशवासियों को सस्ता पेट्रोल, डीजल व गैस पहुंचाने के लिए इस दायरे को बढ़ाया गया है। अब हम 39 देशों से कच्चा तेल खरीदते हैं। -हरदीप सिंह पुरी, केंद्रीय पेट्रोलियम मंत्री

त्क की वृद्धि करनी पड़ी। कई पड़ोसी देशों में तो पेट्रोल मिलना ही बंद हो गया। ऐसे वक्त में पीएम मोदी के नेतृत्व के कारण भारत में पेट्रोल के दाम पिछले दार्द वर्षों में 4.65 फीसदी कम हुए हैं।

**15 रुपये महंगा पेट्रोल बेच रहे विपक्षशासित राज्य : पुरी**

पुरी ने कांग्रेस पर निशाना साधते हुए कहा, बात-बात पर पीएम मोदी को और विदेश जाकर भारत की निंदा करने वाले, गरीबों के हित का झूठा दिखावा करने वाले अब भी 15 रुपये महंगा पेट्रोल बेच रहे हैं।

## राजस्थान सरकार ने दो फीसदी घटाया वैट

राजस्थान सरकार ने भी पेट्रोल और डीजल पर मूल्य वर्द्धित कर (वैट) में दो फीसदी की कटौती की है। राज्य में अब 31.04 फीसदी की जगह 29.04 फीसदी वैट लगेगा। वैट में कटौती से पेट्रोल के दाम 5.30 रुपये तक, जबकि डीजल के दाम 4.85 रुपये तक कम होंगे।

■ विधानसभा चुनाव के दौरान पीएम मोदी ने वैट कम करने का वादा किया था। राज्य सरकार ने चुनाव से पहले इसे पूरा किया।

## दावा : बढ़ेगा उपभोक्ता खर्च

पेट्रोलियम मंत्रालय के अनुसार, कीमतों में इस कमी से उपभोक्ता खर्च बढ़ेगा। डीजल से चलने वाले 58 लाख से अधिक भारी माल वाहनों, छह करोड़ कारों और 27 करोड़ दोपहिया वाहनों को परिचालन लागत कम हो जाएगी।

# भारत में बढ़ेगी डीजल की मांग

शुभायन चक्रवर्ती  
नई दिल्ली, 14 मार्च

भारत में आगामी लोक सभा चुनावों और फसल कटाई की गतिविधियां बढ़ने से डीजल की मांग बढ़ेगी। एस.एंड.पी. ग्लोबल कमोडिटी इनसाइट्स ने गुरुवार को जारी एक रिपोर्ट में यह अनुमान पेश किया है। रिपोर्ट के अनुसार अप्रैल से जून के दौरान मांग में 75,000 बैरल प्रतिदिन (बी/डी) तक बढ़त होने की उम्मीद है। रिपोर्ट के अनुसार वर्ष 2024 के पहले तीन महीनों में डीजल की मांग में बढ़त 60,000 बैरल प्रतिदिन हो गई है।

रिपोर्ट के अनुसार फरवरी 2023 की तुलना में इस फरवरी कुल तेल उत्पादों की मांग 2.4 फीसदी यानी 1,32,000 बैरल प्रतिदिन बढ़ गई। सालाना आधार पर एलपीजी और डीजल की मांग अधिक थी। इसका कारण यह था कि उत्तर भारत में ठंडे मौसम के कारण घरेलू ईंधन की मांग जबरदस्त रही थी। इसके बाद कम



■ 2024 के पहले तीन महीनों में डीजल की मांग में बढ़त 60,000 बैरल प्रतिदिन हो गई

■ चुनाव और कटाई गतिविधियों से मांग बढ़ेगी

■ फरवरी में तेल की मांग 2.4 फीसदी बढ़ी

होती सर्दियों और लोगों की आवाजाही बढ़ने के कारण डीजल की मांग बढ़ी। हालांकि फ्यूल ऑयल में सुस्ती कायम रही। इसका कारण उपयोगिता और उद्योगों में वैकल्पिक संसाधनों का इस्तेमाल बढ़ना था।

फरवरी में कुल जेट ईंधन और मिट्टी के तेल की मांग 2,02,000 बैरल प्रतिदिन रही जो सालाना आधार पर 16,000 बी/डी अधिक थी। इस महीने के दौरान हवाई यातायात में वृद्धि हुई जबकि इसमें जनवरी में प्रतिकूल मौसम के कारण गिरावट आई थी। रिपोर्ट के अनुसार भारत से हवाई जहाजों का आवागमन फरवरी में क्रमिक रूप से 3.1 फीसदी बढ़ गया और यह सालाना आधार पर 4.8 फीसदी बढ़ा था।

रिपोर्ट में अनुमान जताया गया है कि साल 2024 में भारत में ईंधन की मांग में 2,06,000 बैरल प्रतिदिन का इजाफा होगा। ईंधन की मांग वृद्धि में 65 फीसदी योगदान डीजल और पेट्रोल का होगा। पेट्रोलियम निर्यातक देशों के संगठन (ओपेक) ने मार्च की मासिक रिपोर्ट में अनुमान जताया है कि 2024 के पहले तीन महीनों में भारत की तेल की मांग 56.4 लाख बैरल प्रतिदिन होगी।





## महानगर गैस लिमिटेड की पहल से स्वच्छ और शाश्वत ऊर्जा का मार्ग प्रशस्त

मुंबई। भारत की सबसे बड़ी सिटी गैस वितरण कंपनियों में से एक, महानगर गैस लिमिटेड (एमजीएल) ने घरेलू और ऑटोमोटिव उपयोग के लिए प्राकृतिक गैस के उपयोग के जरिए शाश्वत ऊर्जा समाधान में अपनी प्रतिबद्धता को आगे बढ़ाते हुए हाल ही में दो प्रमुख कार्यक्रम आयोजित किए। पेट्रोलियम और प्राकृतिक गैस नियामक बोर्ड (पीएनजीआरबी) के सदस्य गजेंद्र सिंह, महानगर गैस लिमिटेड के प्रबंध निदेशक, आशु सिंघल; और महानगर गैस लिमिटेडके उप प्रबंध निदेशक संजय शेंडे, सहित एमजीएल के वरिष्ठ प्रबंधन के साथ दो कार्यक्रमों में शामिल हुए।

सुरक्षित, सुविधाजनक और पर्यावरण अनुकूल पाइपड प्राकृतिक गैस (पीएनजी) के उपयोग और इस बारे में जागरूकता बढ़ाने के लिए इस साल जनवरी से पूरे देश में पीएनजीआरबी द्वारा शुरू राष्ट्रीय पीएनजी ड्राइव के साथ तालमेल बिठाते हुए, एमजीएल ने मुंबई के बाहरी इलाके में लोढ़ा पलावा सिटी, जो एकीकृत स्मार्ट सिटी है, में पीएनजी ड्राइव कार्यक्रम आयोजित किया। एमजीएल द्वारा पीएनजी प्रदान किए जाने वाले विशाल आवासीय परिसर में आयोजित इस कार्यक्रम में निवासियों की उत्साहपूर्ण भागीदारी देखी गई। एमजीएल ने पहले ही टाउनशिप में मजबूत उपस्थिति दर्ज कर ली है।