BUSINESS STANDARD, Delhi, 18.3.2024
Page No. 3, Size:(17.81)cms X (33.80)cms.

CGD entities lag on minimum work plan, says gas regulator

SUBHAYAN CHAKRABORTY
New Delhi, 17 March

Only 12 million cooking gas connections have been extended by city-gas distribution (CGD) entities so far, which is half of their total prorated commitments of 22 million connections, the Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) has said.

In an emailed response to *Business Standard*, PNGRB said that this is the reason for issuing letters to defaulting entities to complete their minimum work programme (MWP) commitments and striving to open up gas infrastructure for common usage.

"The present progress of CGD entities is not in keeping with their commitments. Now, PNGRB is focusing on the rapid development of piped natural gas (PNG) connections, and in this regard, it initiated PNG drives from January 26 to March 31," the regulator said in response to questions regarding its recent decision not to extend infrastructure exclusivity to Mahanagar Gas and Vadodara Gas.

According to existing rules, the MWPs are mandated by PNGRB and techno-commercial feasibility. Apart from providing a minimum number of PNG connections, CGD entities are required to cover all charge areas through pipelines within their marketing exclusivity periods.

In line with the PNGRB Act and regulations framed under it, the regulator takes action if a CGD defaults on its MWP targets.

"PNGRB is mandated to ensure equitable distribution of natural gas across the country. To fulfil its statutory duty, the regulatory body has authorised the whole of India (mainland) for the development of CGD networks. After the awarding of authorisation, the prime function of PNGRB is to monitor the progress committed by CGD entities," the statement added.

Ambitious plans

To ensure the momentum of connections growth remains high and on-ground infrastructure is laid out quickly, PNGRB has been strict in enforcing the MWPs, sources said.

Last year, the ministry informed Parliament that authorised entities have to provide 125 million PNG connections by 2030, including in rural and urban areas based on MWP targets.

Expanding nationwide CGD coverage is part of the government's target of raising India's share of natural gas in its energy basket to 15 per cent by 2030, up from the current 6.8 per cent.

As a result, as many as 300 geographical areas (GAs) covering about 98 per cent of the population and 88 per cent of the total GA of the country spread over around 630 districts in 28 states and Union Territories, including rural areas, have been authorised by PNGRB by May 31, 2023, data from the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas show. This was up from 2.54 million connections across 66 districts in 2013-14.

With the 12th round of CGD bidding concluding, and letters of intent being issued on March 4, 2024, CGD licences for the whole of India, apart from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and Lakshadweep, have now been issued.

TASK CUT OUT

12 mn: Cooking gas connections extended by city-gas distribution (CGD) entities so far

22 mn: Total prorated commitment of connections by PNGRB

125 mn: Total PNG connections authorised entities have to provide by 2030, according to the ministry's response in Parliament

15% by 2030: Government's target of raising India's share of natural gas, up from current 6%

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ILLUSTRATION: AJAY MOHANTY

Climate change: 3 grand challenges

The Indian community needs to develop a shared consensus on three challenges

AJAY SHAH & AKSHAY JAITLY

The path to decarbonisation runs through the electricity sector. Today, this sector accounts for a third of India's carbon-dioxide emission. Growth demands more electricity, and other parts of the economy are steadily switching from fossil fuel to electricity. What will a carbon-free electricity sector in India look like?

Decarbonisation is a difficult problem! The fossil-fuel energy industry and its users have trillions of rupees in assets and many millions of workers. All this capital and labour has normalised a way of life that induces climate change. Unimaginable sums of money and unimaginable inputs of energy are required to break away from these ways and build a new world. If viewed from the central planning lens, obtaining the required change appears simply impossible, and policymakers find it hard to imagine an India without coal, oil, and gas. But once we harness the energy of millions of firms and individuals, and fix up their incentives, it is feasible.

A variety of aspirations have been articulated or agreed upon by the government. We are to get to net zero in 2070. We are to reduce the emission intensity of gross domestic product by 45 per cent from 2005 to 2030. Half the installed capacity in electricity is supposed to become non-fossil fuel. To realise these aspirations, or to pull back the net zero date to an earlier date, requires a strategy.

This is not a cue for engineers to jump in and choose technologies and design business models on how to do energy production or consumption. Such central planning is not useful for two reasons. India is vast and complex, and millions of decentralised optimisations at the level of one person or one firm have to take place to figure out technologies and business models. The threat of climate change triggered a vast scale of research worldwide, the benefits of which accrue to India for free. Researchers worldwide have given us the bounty where solar panels are now cheaper than many plastic panels. The flow of research is far from over. Nobody knows what the technologies and business models of the future will be.

Strategic thinking does not involve determining how solar panels, electric vehicles, or battery technology will be used. It lies in thinking about institutions and incentives through which the vast forces at play are channelled into sensible decentralised problem solving by self-interested actors. Three big challenges stand out. We do not pretend to have the answers, but we think these questions are important. We believe that this quest will lead to the right inquiry and the right reshaping of institutions and incentives.

Challenge 1 — The Union and the state: The electricity sector is a complex interlocking arrangement with prime responsibilities for states and a subsidiary but important role for the Union. What are the good methods for both, how can each play its role, how can each not intrude into the domain of the other?

Lok Sabha elections are not won and lost on electricity issues, but many state elections are. Many states are bedevilled with stolen, free and subsidised electricity, and have often succumbed into overcharging commercial users. While there are now over a dozen distribution companies featuring private participation, the bulk of the distribution remains owned and operated by state governments. The electricity sector imposes inefficiency upon the state economy with a combination of taxation (high prices for some) and subsidies (losses at state public-sector undertakings and on-Budget transfers by state governments). In some states, the fiscal problems associated with electricity have become material for the medium-term fiscal strategy (e.g. Tamil Nadu, *https://xkdr.org/paper/the-electricity-chokepoint-in-tamil-nadu-public-finance).*

Challenge 2 — India and the world: Climate-change issues will increasingly interact with international relations. Indian success in financing its transition to net-zero is essential in the global battle against climate change. People the world over are roused and hawkish on stopping climate change, which is a problem for India as we have overtaken the European Union as the third-biggest emitter in the world. India can achieve a leadership position by proposing concrete, implementable solutions in the field of climate financing, including by taking advantage of the frameworks available under the Paris Agreement and through bilateral arrangement.

Challenge 3 — The state and the market: The problem of climate change will not be solved by the state designing solutions and giving orders to the people. It will be solved by the people doing things on their own while the state addresses the core market failures of the field, e.g. the negative externality of emitting carbon dioxide. The puzzle lies in finding the correct balance. The market failures of this field generate the rationale for the minimal use of the coercive power of the state. And once this is done, there is the incentive compatibility of millions of self-interested people discovering what is best for them. At present, the bulk of the resource allocation decisions in the electricity sector are made by officials, who periodically give out sterile contracts (e.g. long-term power-purchase agreements) to private persons to do well-defined tasks. Such an approach does not harness the creativity, risk-taking, innovation and energy of private persons. The zone of private persons imagining and taking risks is limited to the short-term transactions, which make up only 12 per cent of the electricity market.

Climate change is too important to be left to climate experts. It is a grand problem that cuts across all fields and impinges on the lives of everyone. Many minds are needed in a process of debate, criticism, and invention, to develop a sophisticated consensus on the three challenges. Each of them requires a distinct expertise. And then, interdisciplinary work is required and in it two tests are applied. Are the ideas employed on each of the three challenges consistent with the other two? When the overall strategy is considered in full, how quickly will it be able to mobilise vast resources and vast energies in getting to net zero?

Shah is a researcher at the XKDR Forum and Jaitly is a strategy and policy advisor

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Competition status quo to stay amid PNGRB notice

AMRITHA PILLAY & SUBHAYAN CHAKRABORTY
Mumbai/New Delhi, 17 March

India's natural gas regulator surprised the industry earlier this month with an expiry notice of infrastructure exclusivity for some city gas markets. Although an unexpected move, industry experts and executives do not expect it to upset the current competition status quo.

On March 4, the Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) issued a public notice stating that the infrastructure exclusivity granted to geographical areas (GA) in Mumbai and Greater Mumbai has expired.

The end of the period for the stated exclusivity was mentioned as April 2021.

"Marketing exclusivity for city-gas distribution (CGD) was already under litigation. However, the March notice has brought out the issue of infrastructure exclusivity for the first time," said Piyush Joshi, partner with Clarus Law Associates, who is representing some of the CGD companies in other litigation against PNGRB. He added, "Given that PNGRB does not have a legal member on its board and its earlier notified common carrier-related regulations are under litigation, the notice is surprising."

PNGRB, in an email response, did not clarify the legal member aspect. However, they stated, "Infrastructure exclusivity for a few GA has expired. However, entities have not applied for further extension to PNGRB. Accordingly, the notice dated March 4, 2024, has been issued to inform that infrastructure exclusivity for such GA has expired. However, if such entities applied for an extension, PNGRB may consider in keeping with PNGRB Act and regulations".

An email query sent to Mahanagar Gas (MGL) on Thursday remained unanswered.

The notice, among other developments, also took a toll on MGL's stock prices, which closed at around ₹1,264.55 per share on Friday.

Analysts with Nuvama in a report earlier this month termed the decline in stock prices as a "knee-jerk" reaction and added, "The PNGRB stated MGL's Mumbai monopoly ended in April 2021; this, we argue, can extend by 10-plus years, given precedents. Critically, entrants cannot market at stations Mahanagar already dispenses at, minimising competition. And nothing can move forward until pending court cases are resolved".

The regulator recently stated that the infrastructure exclusivity granted to geographical areas in Mumbai and Greater Mumbai has expired

Executives and analysts in the industry agree on the minimised competition view.

"Technically, third-party marketing has been open for most CGD markets for many years now, but there is nothing to show as competition for any of these circles. Two main hindrances for new entrants not opting for it are that this market exclusivity is under litigation and second, there is unease around the possibility of non-trade barriers," said Prashant Vasisht, senior vice-president and co-group head, corporate ratings at ICRA.

Indore, Mumbai, Delhi, and Ahmedabad are where marketing exclusivity ended many years ago.

"CGD companies are conscious not to aggressively push for clients in another incumbent's market, for fear of being met with the same in their circles," said an executive from a CGD company.

Joshi from the law firm also highlighted there is a push from the new entrants in the gas trading space instead.

"The gas sector has over the past few years seen the emergence of traders who wish to be asset-light. This will jeopardise infrastructure creation and give higher importance to volumes traded," he said.

Vasisht from ICRA expects more litigation around infrastructure exclusivity, given there is already one underway about common carriage. He said, "We do not see any change in the status quo of competition, until and unless there is a clear and strong stand from either the judiciary or PNGRB. Current circumstances make it economically unviable for new entrants to procure new customers, without access to the existing compressed natural gas infrastructure, which lies with incumbents besides which cost-competitive gas is a scarce resource in the country."

WHAT EXCLUSIVITY MEANS

- Marketing exclusivity: Exclusivity from the purview of a common carrier or contract carrier
- Common carrier capacity: The extra capacity in a CGD network over and above the authorised entity's own requirements and the capacity allocated on a firm contract basis
- Infrastructure exclusivity: No third party can lay, build, operate, or expand any infrastructure for the supply of natural gas to consumers

Source: PNGRB

ECONOMIC TIMES, Delhi, 18.3.2024
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GOVT MOPUP TOPS FY24's REVISED ESTIMATES

CPSE Dividend Payout at Record ₹61,149 cr

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New Delhi: The government's dividend mopup from non-financial central public sector enterprises (CPSEs) and entities in which it holds minority stakes has touched a record ₹61,149 crore, 22% higher than the revised estimate for 2023-24, with almost a fortnight to go this fiscal, according to the latest finance ministry data.

Dividend receipts in the first half of March alone totalled nearly ₹10,000 crore. The revised estimate in the interim budget last month estimated the dividend collection for 2023-24 at ₹50,000 crore, higher than initial target of ₹43,000 crore.

Strong Performance ▸▸ 12

HANDSOME GAINS

Dividend in, ₹ cr

*As of Mar 15

Note: Dividend by non-financial CPSEs and cos in which govt has minority stakes

MARCH INFLOWS

Dividend by key CPSEs, ₹ cr

PowerGrid	2,149
Coal India	2,043
NTPC	1,115
HAL	1,054
NMDC	1,024
NHPC	948
PFC	647

Source: DIPAM

ECONOMIC TIMES, Delhi, 18.3.2024
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Strong Performance

▸▸ From Page 1

"The dividend collection has surpassed all expectations this fiscal. CPSEs across sectors have been performing well, and the strong dividend flow is the clearest sign of that," said an official, who did not wish to be identified. "Also, global crude oil prices didn't quite surge as was feared after the Israel-Hamas war in October last year. So, the profitability of oil companies didn't quite take a beating, which augurs well for dividend flow. Power sector companies, too, have been doing well."

Higher dividend would offset any potential shortfall in the government's miscellaneous receipts, which include disinvestment and monetisation, from the revised estimate of Rs 30,000 crore for this fiscal.

This month, the government has received dividends of Rs 2,149 crore from Power Grid Corporation of India, Rs 2,043 crore from Coal India, Rs 1,115 crore from NTPC, Rs 1,054 crore from Hindustan Aeronautics, Rs 1,024 crore from NMDC, Rs 948 from NHPC, Rs 647 crore from Power Finance Corporation, Rs 188 crore from National Aluminium Company and Rs 67 crore from Cochin Shipyard, according to the official data.

The total receipts by the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM), which comprise disinvestment and dividend collection, have touched Rs 75,886 crore. The disinvestment revenue so far this fiscal stands at Rs 14,737 crore.

The DIPAM's dividend receipts had hit a record Rs 59,533 crore last fiscal, driven significantly by the payment of about Rs 9,000 crore by Hindustan Zinc Ltd (HZL) for the government's 29.54% holding in the miner.

The CPSE dividend flow has been fairly broad-based this fiscal, even though HZL's payout hasn't been as generous, said officials.

The DIPAM had issued an advisory on a consistent dividend policy in 2020, which has also served to nudge CPSEs not to hold back on such payouts for no reason.

MILLENNIUM POST, Delhi, 18.3.2024
Page No. 10, Size:(21.30)cms X (19.79)cms.

Fuel prices costliest in Andhra & Kerala, MP & Bihar close behind

Three state-owned fuel retailers - Indian Oil Corp, Bharat Petroleum & Hindustan Petroleum - last week cut fuel prices by Rs 2 a litre each

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: Petrol and diesel prices are the costliest in the country in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Kerala while it is cheapest in smaller states and UTs like Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Delhi and those in the North East, mainly due to differential in local sales tax or VAT rates, oil industry data showed.

The three state-owned fuel retailers - Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) - last week cut petrol and diesel prices by Rs 2 a litre each, ending a nearly two-year hiatus in price revision.

That reduction brought relief to fuel users but rates continue to be above Rs 100 a litre mark in some states due to higher Value Added Tax (VAT).

Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy's YSRCP-ruled Andhra Pradesh has the costliest petrol at Rs 109.87 a litre, followed by Left Democratic Front (LDF)-ruled Kerala, where a litre of petrol comes for Rs 107.54. Congress-run Telangana is close behind with petrol costing Rs 107.39 a litre.

Petrol is the cheapest in Andaman & Nicobar Island where it comes for Rs 82 a litre, followed by Silvassa and Daman where it comes for Rs 92.38-92.49 a litre.

BJP-ruled states are not far behind - petrol costs Rs 106.45 a litre in Bhopal, Rs 105.16 in Patna (BJP in coalition with JD-U), Rs 104.86 in Jaipur and Rs 104.19 in Mumbai.

Mamata Banerjee's TMC-ruled West Bengal has petrol priced at Rs 103.93 a litre. Other states with over Rs 100-a-litre petrol are Odisha (Rs 101.04 a litre in Bhubaneswar), Tamil Nadu (Rs 100.73 in Chennai), and Chattisgarh (Rs 100.37 in Raipur), industry pricing data showed.

Petrol is the cheapest in Andaman & Nicobar Island where it comes for Rs 82 a litre, followed by Silvassa and Daman where it comes for Rs 92.38-92.49 a litre. Other smaller states too have local VAT, leading to cheaper petrol - Delhi (Rs 94.76 a litre), Panaji (Rs 95.19), Aizawl (Rs 93.68), and Guwahati (Rs 96.12). Most North Eastern states are among the lower-end of the petrol price band.

Diesel prices have almost a similar story with Amaravati in Andhra Pradesh selling the fuel at Rs 97.6 a litre, followed by Rs 96.41 a litre in Kerala's capital Thiruvananthapuram, Rs 95.63 in Hyderabad and Rs 93.31 in Raipur.

The fuel is in the Rs 92-93 a litre range in BJP-ruled sales of Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh and Bihar. It is also in that range in Odisha and Jharkhand.

Diesel is the cheapest in Andaman & Nicobar Island where it comes for about Rs 78 a litre. Delhi - which has the lowest VAT among metro cities - has diesel priced at Rs 87.66 a litre, while in Goa it costs Rs 87.76 per litre.

Commenting on the price cut, Goldman Sachs said the net marketing margin of the three oil marketing companies will decline to Rs 08-09 a litre from Rs 1.7-2.7 a litre.

Morgan Stanley said the price cut "should finally remove a key overhang for fuel retailers".

"The Rs 2 per liter price cut (our estimate was for Rs 2-3 a litre) brings India's fuel basket to \$85 per barrel Brent crude (i.e. breakeven fuel marketing profitability at this crude price). However, the implied integrated fuel margins for retailers will average 30 per cent above mid-cycle considering the strength in refinery margins," it said.

JP Morgan said the effect of the reduction is equivalent to about a \$3.5 a barrel increase in crude oil prices. "Although small on headline, a Rs 2 per liter cut will reduce oil marketing companies' revenue / EBITDA by about Rs 30,000 crore annualized."

A retail price cut, it said, was expected as the three companies had become highly profitable in the last three quarters, and ahead of general elections due in a few weeks.

"That prices have been cut one-time, and without any signal that pricing goes back to being crude linked (with periodical revisions) can be seen as a negative for these businesses, in our view. Yet, the price cut is relatively modest and seems unlikely to be followed by more (at least near term) - crystallizing the risk for these companies." Emkay Global Financial Services said the price cut translates to a reduction of Rs 1.6-1.7 a litre in gross marketing margins.

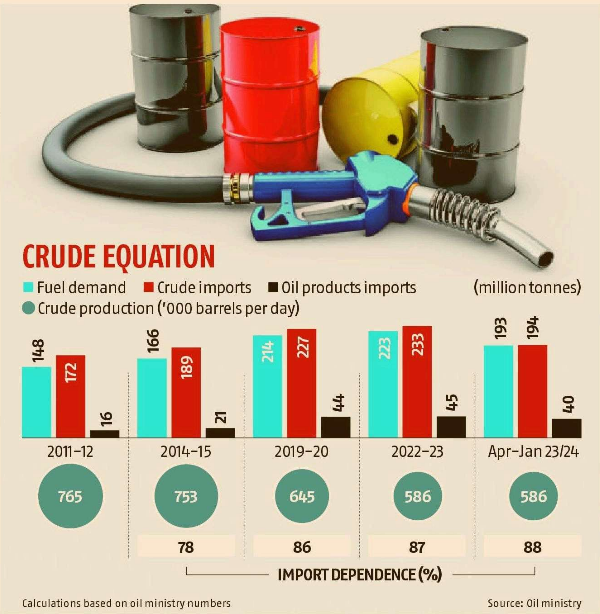
"In our view, this cut will be effective for next 2-2.5 months and once national elections are over, we would return to a normalized margin scenario. Deepening deregulation with resumption of daily pricing should likely pass any \$5-10 a barrel movement in oil prices."

BUSINESS STANDARD, Delhi, 18.3.2024
Page No. 15, Size:(28.18)cms X (49.17)cms.

HIGH AND DRY

India's high demand for oil and low domestic output are increasing the dependence on imports. The 'supportive' upstream policy, if backed by lower taxes, could turn things around

S DINAKAR
Amritsar, 17 March



A supercharged economy, growing at 8 per cent, is fuelling India's thirst for more oil, but domestic production has been declining. That leaves a $200 billion fuel import market open for suppliers such as Russia, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq, and global traders Vitol, BP, and Trafigura.

Industry officials say there just isn't enough on the table for state-run behemoth ONGC or private companies to make large investments in field development. Foreign oil companies, which possess advanced drilling technologies, prefer to drill in countries such as Guyana and Brazil, which offer high prospectivity.

During the last decade, India's dependence on foreign oil has climbed by around 10 percentage points to 88 per cent. Very soon, analysts say, of every 10 barrels consumed by India, nine will flow from West Asian countries, a region not immune to turmoil, and Russia, which remains engaged in a war.

High demand, low exploration

Paris-based International Energy Agency expects India to be the single largest source of global oil demand growth from 2023 to 2030, larger than China. During this seven-year period, says the IEA in its latest report released last month, Indian oil products consumption will surge by almost 1.2 million bpd, accounting for more than a third of the increase in global demand.

But domestic crude oil output, which has slumped by more than 30 per cent from a peak of close to 800,000 bpd in 2011 to 587,000 bpd in the period between April 2023 and January this year, is expected to fall further to 540,000 bpd by 2030, according to the IEA. That is a conservative estimate — barring ONGC's east coast discovery, there are no major finds. Also, large discoveries typically take six to 10 years for development.

International oil companies have shunned India's upstream sector partly due to the country's fiscal terms. Annual exploration spending in India fell to around $1 billion last year from a high of $3 billion in 2010, when Reliance Industries was developing a huge discovery in the Krishna Godavari basin, the IEA said. Foreign investment in the entire oil and gas sector was a measly $108 million last financial year — just 0.2 per cent of the total foreign direct investment of $71 billion flowing into the country — and has remained at these levels since the pandemic, the oil ministry says.

Pallavi Jain, the new head of the country's upstream regulator, Directorate General of Hydrocarbons, told *Business Standard* at the India Energy Week in Goa last month that she was not unduly concerned over the lack of participation from foreign oil companies. Aatmanirbharta, or self-reliance, she said, envisaged participation from domestic drillers.

According to the IEA, "The Indian exploration and production sector boasts a supportive policy regime, low surface risk, and high data availability."

However, the supportive policy is not translating into participation, if the eighth drilling round was an indication. Awards under India's eighth open acreage licensing policy (OALP) drilling round, launched in July 2022, were delayed, with ONGC eventually bagging most of the 10 areas in January. Bid submissions for the 28 blocks offered in the ninth round have been delayed by around 75 days to May 15. The ninth and 10th rounds offer more than 1 million square kilometres of acreage in locations previously barred for national security reasons, according to Jain.

The non-negotiables

The absence of international companies could be due to lacklustre discoveries since the turn of the century, the IEA said. Over the last 23 years, 2 billion barrels of commercial liquid resources have been discovered in India, with close to half associated with Cairn's onshore Rajasthan RJ-ON-90/1 project. By comparison, Angola, Norway, and Guyana have all seen around 10 billion barrels of oil resources discovered over the same period, while explorers in Brazil have found a massive 40 billion barrels.

Past disputes with foreign explorers such as Cairn Energy over retrospective taxes have also upset foreign drillers, said an official from one of the world's top oil companies, pointing out that policy certainty and stable fiscal regime were non-negotiable.

Waning investor interest leaves India very few choices, the most attractive of them being to focus on enhancing production from the existing areas held by ONGC and private sector Vedanta.

India's oil production is concentrated in mature, declining areas, or in pre-NELP blocks, with the Mumbai offshore basin accounting for 60 per cent of its output and the onshore Rajasthan basin nearly 20 per cent, the IEA said. (NELP is short for New Licensing and Exploration Policy.) But, industry officials at the India Energy Week said these areas required billions of dollars in investments, advanced technologies, and a longer licence duration for revival.

Though India has an attractive fiscal regime for areas offered under NELP and HELP (Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy), foregoing a cess on crude and adopting lower royalty rates, the most prolific, older areas carry much higher taxes. After adding the special additional excise duty on crude oil output, the government's share of most of India's production, industry officials say, comes to around 69 per cent of revenues, leaving a net of 7 per cent for developers after accounting for production costs. The government's share drops to 55 per cent and the explorer's net share rises to 21 per cent in blocks offered after the introduction of NELP and HELP.

The government increased the windfall tax on crude oil by ₹300 to ₹4,900 rupees ($60) a tonne (or, $8.1 a barrel) from March 15, adjusted every fortnight where the tax kicks in when global crude oil prices cross $75 a barrel. An industry official said windfall tax was more understandable in 2022, when crude oil was above $120 a barrel.

"India would need to make its exploration and production economics drastically more attractive to lure western supermajors," says Narendra Taneja, a Delhi-based oil expert.

An 18 per cent GST (goods and services tax) on exploration makes it more onerous; companies cannot adjust it because oil and gas is outside the GST, says Prashant Vasisht, senior Vice President and Co-Group Head-Corporate Ratings, at rating agency ICRA, a Moody's affiliate. But the cess and windfall taxes on crude and fuels have helped the government manage the deficit better. India budgeted receipts of ₹18,500 crore in the current financial year (2023-24) and ₹19,400 crore next year from a cess on crude oil. Revenues accruing from Special Additional Excise Duties were budgeted at ₹145,000 crore this year and ₹152,080 crore next.

Put together, that is sufficient to fund a major portion of the food subsidy. Moreover, taxes on fossil fuels have helped bolster the country's argument at international forums that it planned to curtail their consumption, in the interest of the environment.

"If the windfall tax was used to offset extra spending elsewhere, in volatile circumstances like in 2022, it should be lifted as soon as the market normalises," says Singapore-based oil expert Vandana Hari, founder of Vanda Insights.

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Kerosene consumption declines 26% CAGR during FY14-23: Govt

Petrol and pet coke have witnessed a growth of 13.38% and 28.68%, respectively, over the last year

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: Kerosene consumption in the country has declined sharply by 26 per cent CAGR between 2013-14 and 2022-23, mainly due to government policies to promote clean energy.

The latest 'Energy Statistics India 2024' of the National Statistical Office (NSO) stated, "The impact of energy policies of recent time is evident on the consumption of kerosene as a fuel in the country".

The data showed that the consumption of kerosene has seen a steady decreasing trend with a compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of (-) 25.78 per cent from 2013-14 to 2022-23.

The report stated that among all the petroleum products the HSD (diesel), which has the highest share of consumption (38.52 per cent) during 2022-23, experienced a positive growth of 12.05 per cent over the last year.

Petrol and pet coke have witnessed a growth of 13.38 per cent and 28.68 per cent, respectively, over the last year.

HSD (diesel) has also registered a 12.05 per cent growth to 85.90 MTs during 2022-23(P) compared to 76.66 MTs during 2021-22. The report stated that the consumption of natural gas has experienced a fluctuation over time.

HSD (diesel) has also registered a 12.05 per cent growth to 85.90 MTs during 2022-23(P) compared to 76.66 MTs during 2021-22

During 2022-23, the consumption against energy purpose has experienced a negative growth of -7.7 per cent (from 39,414 BCM during 2021-22 to 36,383 BCM during 2022-23, according to the data. The non-energy purpose, the report said, experienced a meagre growth of 1.1 per cent (from 22,077 BCM during 2021-22 to 22,319 BCM during 2022-23).

It noted that the maximum use of natural gas is in the fertilisers industry (32.35 per cent), followed by city or local natural gas distribution network, including road transport (20.06 per cent).

Industry-wise off-take of natural gas shows that, out of the total consumption (Availability Basis (Net Production + LNG Imports)), while 62 per cent of natural gas has been used for energy purposes, 38 per cent is used for non-energy purposes, it added. The estimated electricity consumption increased from 8,24,301 GWh during 2012-13 to 12,96,300 GWh during 2021-22, showing a CAGR of 5.16 per cent.

Out of the total consumption of electricity in 2021-22), the industry sector accounted for the largest share (41.16 per cent), followed by domestic (25.77 per cent), agriculture (17.67 per cent) and commercial sectors (8.29 per cent).

The Domestic sector has experienced the highest CAGR of 6.87 between FY2012-13 to FY2021-22.

Highlights

- » Among all petroleum products the HSD (diesel) experienced a positive growth of 12.05% over last year
- » HSD (diesel) has also registered a 12.05% growth to 85.90 MTs during 2022-23(P) compared to 76.66 MTs during 2021-22
- » The consumption of natural gas has experienced a fluctuation over time

FREE PRESS JOURNAL, Mumbai, 18.3.2024
Page No. 10, Size:(6.51)cms X (8.93)cms.

Petrol costliest in Andhra Pradesh & Kerala; BJP-ruled MP and Bihar close behind

PTI / New Delhi

Petrol and diesel prices are the costliest in the country in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Kerala while it is cheapest in smaller states and UTs like Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Delhi and those in the North East, mainly due to differential in local sales tax or VAT rates, oil industry data showed.

The three state-owned fuel retailers - Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) - last week cut petrol and diesel prices by Rs 2 a litre each, ending a nearly two-year hiatus in price revision.

That reduction brought relief to fuel users but rates continue to be above Rs 100 a litre mark in some states due to higher Value Added Tax (VAT).

Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy's YSRCP-ruled Andhra Pradesh has the costliest petrol at Rs 109.87 a litre, followed by Left Democratic Front (LDF)-ruled Kerala, where a litre of petrol comes for Rs 107.54. Congress-run Telangana is close behind with petrol costing Rs 107.39 a litre.

BJP-ruled states are not far behind - petrol costs Rs 106.45 a litre in Bhopal, Rs 105.16 in Patna (BJP in coalition with JD-U), Rs 104.86 in Jaipur and Rs 104.19 in Mumbai. Mamata Banerjee's TMC-ruled West Bengal has petrol priced at Rs 103.93 a litre. Other states with over Rs 100-a-litre petrol are Odisha (Rs 101.04 a litre in Bhubaneswar), Tamil Nadu (Rs 100.73 in Chennai), and Chattisgarh (Rs 100.37 in Raipur), industry pricing data showed.

Petrol is the cheapest in Andaman & Nicobar Island where it comes for Rs 82 a litre, followed by Silvassa and Daman where it comes for Rs 92.38-92.49 a litre.

FINANCIAL EXPRESS, Delhi, 18.3.2024
Page No. 2, Size:(2.98)cms X (5.08)cms.

PETROL COSTLIEST IN ANDHRA, KERALA & TELANGANA

PETROL AND DIESEL prices are the costliest in the country in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Kerala, while it is cheapest in smaller states and UTs like Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Delhi and those in the North East, mainly due to differential in local sales tax or VAT rates, oil industry data showed. The three state-owned fuel retailers — IOC, BPCL and HPCL — last week cut petrol and diesel prices by ₹2 a litre each

FINANCIAL EXPRESS
READ TO LEA

FINANCIAL EXPRESS, Delhi, 18.3.2024
Page No. 20, Size:(10.69)cms X (6.39)cms.

Reliance on oil imports up in Apr-Feb

SUKALP SHARMA
New Delhi, March 17

GROWING DEMAND FOR fuel and other petroleum products amid stagnant domestic crude oil output resulted in India's reliance on imported crude increasing to nearly 88% in April-February, indicating that oil import dependency for the full financial year 2023-24 (FY24) could breach the all-time-high FY23 levels.

As per latest data released by the oil ministry's Petroleum Planning & Analysis Cell (PPAC), the country's oil import dependency was 87.7% in the 11 months to February, up from 87.2% in the corresponding period FY23.

For full FY23, reliance on imported oil was 87.4%. According to industry insiders, like in the last financial year, import dependency in crude oil for the entire FY24 could be a tad higher than the April-February level. Given India's rapidly growing energy demand, reliance on oil imports has been rising continuously over the past few years, except for FY21, when demand was suppressed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Reliance on imported crude to meet domestic demand stood at 85.5% in FY22, 84.4% in FY21, 85% in FY20, and 83.8% in FY19.

The government wants to reduce India's extreme reliance on imported crude oil but sluggish domestic oil output in the face of incessantly growing demand for petroleum products has been the biggest roadblock. In 2015, the government had set a target to reduce reliance on oil imports to 67% by 2022 from 77% in FY14, but the dependency has only grown since. Heavy

reliance on imported crude oil makes the Indian economy vulnerable to global oil price volatility, apart from having a bearing on the country's foreign trade deficit, foreign exchange reserves, rupee's exchange rate, and inflation.

Cutting costly oil imports is also a fundamental objective of the government's push for electric mobility, biofuels, and other alternative fuels for transportation as well as industries.

Over the past few years, the government has also intensified efforts to raise domestic crude oil output by making exploration and production contracts more lucrative and opening vast acreages for hydrocarbon exploration.

INDIAN EXPRESS, Delhi, 18.3.2024
Page No. 13, Size:(12.41)cms X (10.99)cms.

INDIA'S OIL IMPORT DEPENDENCY WAS 87.7% IN THE 11 MONTHS TO FEBRUARY

Reliance on oil imports up in Apr-Feb, may hit fresh full-year high in FY24

SUKALP SHARMA
NEW DELHI, MARCH 17

GROWING DEMAND for fuel and other petroleum products amid stagnant domestic crude oil output resulted in India's reliance on imported crude increasing to nearly 88 per cent in April-February, indicating that oil import dependency for the full financial year 2023-24 (FY24) could breach the all-time-high FY23 levels.

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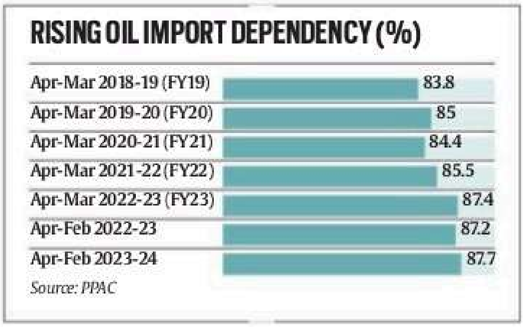
Total production of petroleum products from domestic crude oil was 26.1 million tonnes in April-February. *File*



The government wants to reduce India's extreme reliance on imported crude oil but sluggish domestic oil output in the face of incessantly growing demand for petroleum products has been the biggest roadblock. In 2015, the government had set a target to reduce reliance on oil imports to 67 per cent by 2022 from 77 per cent in FY14, but the dependency has only grown since. Heavy reliance on imported crude oil makes the Indian economy vulnerable to global oil price volatility, apart from having a bearing on the country's foreign trade deficit, foreign exchange reserves, rupee's exchange rate, and inflation.

Cutting costly oil imports is also a fundamental objective of the government's push for electric mobility, biofuels, and other alternative fuels for transportation as well as industries. Over the past few years, the government has also intensified efforts to raise domestic crude oil output by making exploration and production contracts more lucrative and opening vast acreages for hydrocarbon exploration. While there has been a pick-up in electric mobility adoption and blending of biofuels with conventional fuels, it is not enough to offset petroleum demand growth.

The calculation of the extent of import reliance is based on the domestic consumption of petroleum products and excludes petroleum product exports as those volumes do not represent India's demand.

With a refining capacity of a little over 250 million tonnes per annum, India—the world's third-largest consumer of crude oil and also one of its top importers—is a net exporter of petroleum products.

India's domestic consumption of petroleum products in April-February rose over 5 per cent year-on-year to 212.2 million tonnes, underscoring robust demand, particularly for transportation fuels petrol and diesel. However, domestic crude oil production for the year was nearly flat at 26.9 million tonnes. Crude oil imports in the first 11 months of FY24 rose 0.4 per cent year-on-year to 212.6 million tonnes. Additionally, petroleum product imports increased to 43.8 million tonnes from 40.2 million tonnes a year ago. Petroleum product exports in April-February rose 4.2 per cent to 57.3 million tonnes.

Total production of petroleum products from domestic crude oil was 26.1 million tonnes in April-February, which means that the extent of India's self-sufficiency in crude oil was just 12.3 per cent, down from 12.8 per cent in the corresponding period of the last financial year.

In FY23, consumption of petroleum products sourced from indigenous crude oil was 25.8 million tonnes, while total domestic consumption was 201.8 million tonnes.

HINDUSTAN TIMES, Delhi, 18.3.2024
Page No. 13, Size:(2.78)cms X (4.54)cms.

SCOPE - GIZ, Germany organises a workshop

Taking its Green Skilling endeavour to the next mile, the Standing Conference of Public Enterprises (SCOPE) in association with GIZ, Germany successfully organised a Workshop on 'Decarbonisation of India's Public Sector Enterprises and the Role of Green Hydrogen' at SCOPE Complex in New Delhi.

BUSINESS STANDARD, Delhi, 18.3.2024
Page No. 4, Size:(13.63)cms X (63.67)cms.

US-Venezuela tensions may spoil crude import plans

S DINAKAR
Chennai, 17 March

Indian imports of cheap Venezuelan oil, the country's fifth-biggest crude supplier in 2019, may face disruptions from April as the US and the South American country are embroiled in a dispute over renewing a six-month permission for crude exports.

Uncertainty over Venezuelan supplies for Indian refiners comes amid reduced discounted Russian flows also targeted by the US, and the Indian government's move to slash diesel and petrol prices by ₹2/litre. Brent crossed $85 per barrel for the first time since November on Thursday.

According to analysts, all these factors may hurt the finances of the state-run oil marketing companies.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Oil marketing companies (OMC) are projected to achieve a gross marketing margin of ₹5/litre on petrol and ₹1/litre on diesel, which after deducting marketing costs of ₹2/litre works out to a ₹1/litre loss on diesel sales, Swarnendu Bhushan, co-head of research Prabhudas Lilladher, said, adding that Brent will continue to trade in the $80/bbl range as OPEC manages output.

The value of Venezuelan oil for Indian refiners is reflected in the delivered average prices of $61/bbl in January, $26/bbl cheaper than Saudi oil and $18/bbl lower than Russian crude, according to Indian customs data. Estimated discounts to ICE Brent on Venezuelan heavy grades have narrowed to between $5/bbl and $14/bbl versus $20/bbl before sanctions were lifted, the UK-based agency Energy Intelligence reported.

Discounts on the Urals are in the $3/bbl range, an Indian refining official said.

In recent weeks, Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro's government has arrested opposition campaign officials and stifled civil society organisations while preventing opposition leaders from contesting polls. In January this year, the US threatened to reinstate sanctions on Venezuela's oil sector after the country's Supreme Court upheld the disqualification of an opposition presidential hopeful. The easing of sanctions, put in place by the previous Trump administration in 2019, came with conditions of conducting free and fair polls. Targeting opposition leaders lends uncertainty to a proposed renewal by Washington.

India was an active buyer of Venezuelan crude, which accounted for nearly 12 per cent of the country's supplies in 2015, before US sanctions were imposed in late 2020. Volumes reached a record 481,000 barrels per day (bpd) in November 2014, with Venezuela becoming India's fifth biggest crude supplier in 2019 having a 7 per cent share of the Indian market. Delivered rates of Venezuelan oil into India averaged as low as $48/bbl in FY20, the cheapest among all crudes.

Supplies of Venezuelan oil reached a high of 185,000 bpd this month until the 15th - higher than average shipments in 2020, according to ship tracking data from Paris-based market intelligence agency Kpler.

Venezuela's heavy, sour Merey crude is mainly shipped to Reliance Industries, which accounted for all of India's Venezuelan purchases in March, Kpler data show. Indian refiners expected cheap Venezuelan oil to provide an alternative to Russian Urals, two Mumbai-based refining officials said. Merey, a heavy, high sulphur grade sought by Indian refiners, is tough to process but the state-run refiners led by Indian Oil have upgraded their facilities to profitably process such grades.

OMCs made a gross marketing margin of ₹7.8/litre on petrol and ₹5.3/litre on diesel during the fortnight ended 14th March 2024 (prior to cuts), the brokerage said.

But expansion in global refining capacity led by 2.5 million bpd capacity added in China last year will weigh on margins later this year, Bhushan said.

He was more sanguine about near-term refining margins because drone attacks on Russian refineries have eliminated some products from the market.

Mumbai-based rating agency ICRA said that OMCs may achieve breakeven on marketing margins on diesel, and petrol will be in positive territory.

Prior to the cuts, the marketing margins were healthy for both petrol and diesel and on the refining side they are making very healthy margins, said Prashant Vasisht, senior vice president & co-group head - corporate ratings, ICRA Limited. He said diesel cracks were over $16/bbl and gasoline was around $11/bbl.

Availability of Venezuelan crude, with many fields shut down because of the sanctions, has proved a constraint for India as it has to compete with Chinese and US refiners. Venezuela produced around 786,000 b/d in October, Energy Intelligence said, citing OPEC numbers.

FAIR DEAL

India's oil import from Venezuela (in barrels per day)

	RIL	IOC	HMEL	Nayara	Total
2018 avg	249,300	0	0	68,000	**324,400**
2019 avg	210,000	0	0	92,600	**306,000**
2020 avg	131,500	0	0	29,200	**167,500**
Jan '24	65,800	0	0	0	**65,800**
Feb '24	106,000	40,700	28,300	0	**175,000**
March '24	185,000	0	0	0	**185,000**

Note: IOC is Indian Oil Corporation; HMEL is HPCL–Mittal Energy Limited; no imports during 2021–2023 due to US sanctions

Source: Kpler

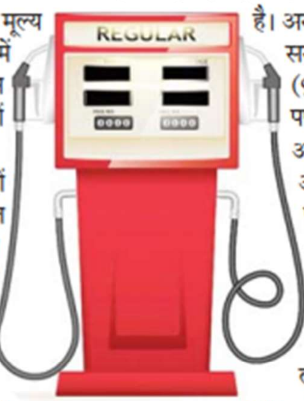
RASHTRIYA SAHARA, Delhi, 18.3.2024
Page No. 13, Size:(16.19)cms X (35.29)cms.

अंडमान में सिर्फ ₹82 प्रति लीटर हैं पेट्रोल के दाम

पणजी और दमन में भी कीमतें सौ रुपए से नीचे

नई दिल्ली (भाषा)।

देश में आंध्र प्रदेश, तेलंगाना और केरल में पेट्रोल और डीजल सबसे महंगा है। वहीं अंडमान और निकोबार द्वीप समूह, दिल्ली और पूर्वोत्तर जैसे छोटे राज्यों और केंद्रशासित प्रदेशों में वाहन ईंधन के दाम सबसे कम है। उद्योग के आंकड़ों से यह जानकारी मिली है। स्थानीय बिक्री कर या मूल्य वर्धित कर (वैट) की दरों में अंतर की वजह से विभिन्न राज्यों में वाहन ईंधन कीमतों में भिन्नता होती है।



सरकारी तेल कंपनियों ने पिछले सप्ताह पेट्रोल और डीजल की कीमतों में दो रुपये प्रति लीटर की कटौती की है। इससे पहले करीब दो साल से वाहन ईंधन कीमतों में संशोधन नहीं हुआ था। इस कटौती से लोगों को कुछ राहत मिली लेकिन ऊंचे मूल्य वर्धित कर की वजह से कई राज्यों में अब भी वाहन ईंधन 100 रुपये प्रति लीटर से अधिक है।

आंध्र प्रदेश में पेट्रोल सबसे महंगा 109.87 रुपये प्रति लीटर है। इसके बाद केरल में 107.54 रुपये में बिक रहा है। तेलंगाना में कीमत 107.39 रुपये प्रति लीटर है। बीजेपी शासित राज्य मप्र. की राजधानी भोपाल में पेट्रोल 106.45 रुपये, पटना में 105.16 रुपये, जयपुर में 104.86 रुपये और मुंबई में 104.19 रुपये प्रति लीटर है। पश्चिम बंगाल में पेट्रोल 103.93 रुपये प्रति लीटर है। ओडिशा में 101.04 रुपये, चेन्नई में 100.73 रुपये और रायपुर में 100.37 रुपये प्रति लीटर है।

अंडमान और निकोबार द्वीप में पेट्रोल सबसे सस्ता है जहां यह 82 रुपये प्रति लीटर बिक रहा है। इसके बाद सिलवासा और दमन है जहां यह 92.38-92.49 रुपये प्रति लीटर है। अन्य छोटे राज्यों में भी पेट्रोल सस्ता है। इनमें दिल्ली (94.76 रुपये प्रति लीटर), पणजी (95.19 रुपये), आइजोल (93.68 रुपये) और गुवाहाटी (96.12 रुपये) शामिल है।

डीजल कीमतों की बात की जाए, तो आंध्र प्रदेश के अमरावती में यह ईंधन 97.6 रुपये प्रति लीटर बिक रहा है। इसके बाद केरल की राजधानी तिरुवनंतपुरम में यह 96.41 रुपये प्रति लीटर, हैदराबाद में 95.63 रुपये और रायपुर में 93.31 रुपये प्रति लीटर है। महाराष्ट्र, छत्तीसगढ़ और बिहार में डीजल का दाम 92 से 93 रुपये प्रति लीटर है। ओडिशा और झारखंड में भी डीजल का दाम इतना ही है। अंडमान और निकोबार द्वीप में डीजल सबसे सस्ता है जहां यह लगभग 78 रुपये प्रति लीटर बिक रहा है। महानगरों में दिल्ली में वैट सबसे कम है। दिल्ली में डीजल 87.66 रुपये प्रति लीटर है, जबकि गोवा में इसकी कीमत 87.76 रुपये प्रति लीटर है।

VIRAT VAIBHAV, Delhi, 18.3.2024
Page No. 15, Size:(24.95)cms X (12.86)cms.

आंध्र प्रदेश और केरल में सबसे महंगा है पेट्रोल, मप्र-बिहार भी पीछे नहीं

एजेंसी ■ नई दिल्ली

देश में आंध्र प्रदेश, तेलंगाना और केरल में पेट्रोल और डीजल सबसे महंगा है। वहीं अंडमान और निकोबार द्वीप समूह, दिल्ली और पूर्वोत्तर जैसे छोटे राज्यों और केंद्रशासित प्रदेशों में वाहन ईंधन के दाम सबसे कम हैं। उद्योग के आंकड़ों से यह जानकारी मिली है। स्थानीय बिक्री कर या मूल्य वर्धित कर (वैट) की दरों में अंतर की वजह से विभिन्न राज्यों में वाहन ईंधन कीमतों में भिन्नता होती है। सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र की तीनों पेट्रोलियम कंपनियों इंडियन ऑयल कॉर्पोरेशन (आईओसी), भारत पेट्रोलियम कारपोरेशन लिमिटेड (बीपीसीएल) और हिंदुस्तान पेट्रोलियम कॉर्पोरेशन लिमिटेड (एचपीसीएल) ने पिछले सप्ताह पेट्रोल और डीजल की कीमतों में दो रुपए प्रति लीटर की कटौती की है। इससे पहले करीब दो साल से वाहन ईंधन कीमतों में संशोधन नहीं हुआ था। इस कटौती से लोगों को कुछ राहत मिली लेकिन ऊंचे मूल्य वर्धित कर की वजह से कई राज्यों में अब भी वाहन ईंधन 100 रुपए प्रति लीटर से अधिक है। वाई एस जगन मोहन रेड्डी की वाईएसआरसीपी सरकार के शासन वाले आंध्र प्रदेश में पेट्रोल सबसे महंगा 109.87 रुपए प्रति लीटर है। इसके बाद लेफ्ट डेमोक्रेटिक फ्रंट (एलडीएफ) शासित केरल का नंबर आता है। वहां एक लीटर पेट्रोल 107.54 रुपए में बिक रहा है। कांग्रेस शासित तेलंगाना में पेट्रोल की कीमत 107.39 रुपए प्रति लीटर है। बीजेपी शासित राज्य भी पीछे नहीं हैं -भोपाल में पेट्रोल की कीमत 106.45 रुपए प्रति लीटर, पटना में 105.16 रुपए (जेडी-यू के साथ गठबंधन में बीजेपी), जयपुर में 104.86 रुपए और मुंबई में 104.19 रुपए प्रति लीटर है। ममता बनर्जी के तृणमूल कांग्रेस (टीएमसी) शासित पश्चिम बंगाल में पेट्रोल की कीमत 103.93 रुपए प्रति लीटर है। आंकड़ों के अनुसार, जिन अन्य राज्यों में पेट्रोल का दाम 100 रुपए प्रति लीटर से अधिक है उनमें ओडिशा (भुवनेश्वर में 101.04 रुपए प्रति लीटर), तमिलनाडु (चेन्नई में 100.73 रुपए) और छत्तीसगढ़ (रायपुर में 100.37 रुपए) शामिल हैं। अंडमान और निकोबार द्वीप में पेट्रोल सबसे सस्ता है जहां यह 82 रुपए प्रति लीटर बिक रहा है। इसके बाद सिलवासा और दमन है जहां यह 92.38-92.49 रुपए प्रति लीटर है। अन्य छोटे राज्यों में भी पेट्रोल सस्ता है। इनमें दिल्ली (94.76 रुपए प्रति लीटर), पणजी (95.19 रुपए), आइजोल (93.68 रुपए) और गुवाहाटी (96.12 रुपए) शामिल हैं।

डीजल कीमतों की बात की जाए, तो आंध्र प्रदेश के अमरावती में यह ईंधन 97.6 रुपए प्रति लीटर बिक रहा है। इसके बाद केरल की राजधानी तिरुवनंतपुरम में यह 96.41 रुपए प्रति लीटर, हैदराबाद में 95.63 रुपए और रायपुर में 93.31 रुपए प्रति लीटर है। भाजपा शासित महाराष्ट्र, छत्तीसगढ़ और बिहार में डीजल का दाम 92 से 93 रुपए प्रति लीटर है। ओडिशा और झारखंड में भी डीजल का दाम इतना ही है।

BUSINESS STANDARD HINDI, Delhi, 18.3.2024

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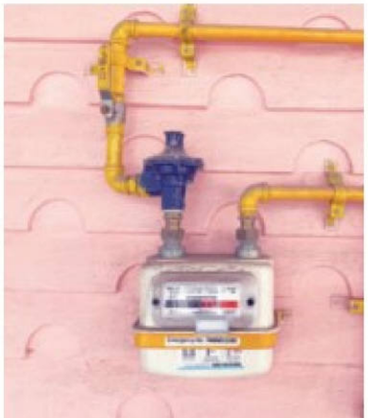
एकाधिकार खत्म होने पर भी प्राकृतिक गैस क्षेत्र में बदलाव नहीं

अमृता पिल्लै और शुभायन चक्रवर्ती
मुंबई/नई दिल्ली, 17 मार्च

भारत में प्राकृतिक गैस के नियामक ने कुछ शहरों की गैस मार्केट के आधारभूत ढांचे की एक्सक्लूसिविटी (विशेष अधिकार) की अवधि खत्म होने का नोटिस इस महीने की शुरुआत में जारी करके इस उद्योग को आचंभित कर दिया था। लेकिन उद्योग के जानकारों के अनुसार यह अप्रत्याशित कदम उठाए जाने के बाद भी प्रतिस्पर्धा की यथास्थिति में किसी बदलाव की उम्मीद नहीं है।

पेट्रोलियम और प्राकृतिक गैस नियामक बोर्ड (पीएनजीआरबी) ने 4 मार्च को जारी सार्वजनिक नोटिस में कहा कि मुंबई और ग्रेटर मुंबई के भौगोलिक क्षेत्र के लिए आधारभूत ढांचा एक्सक्लूसिविटी की मियाद खत्म हो चुकी है। इस समय अवधि को अप्रैल 2021 में ही खत्म होने की बात कही गई थी।

पीएनजीआरबी के खिलाफ दायर मामले में शहरी गैस वितरण (सीजीडी) कंपनियों का प्रतिनिधित्व कर रहे क्लारस लॉ एसोसिएट्स के वकील पीयूष जोशी ने कहा, 'शहरी गैस वितरण कंपनियों के मार्केटिंग एक्सक्लूसिविटी पर पहले से ही मामला दर्ज है। हालांकि मार्च के नोटिस में पहली बार बुनियादी ढांचे की एक्सक्लूसिविटी का मुद्दा उठाया गया है।' उन्होंने कहा, 'पीएनजीआरबी के बोर्ड में कानूनी क्षेत्र का कोई सदस्य नहीं है और इसके द्वारा पहले अधिसूचित साझे कैरियर के बारे में विनियमन पर भी मामला दर्ज है। ऐसे में यह नोटिस आश्चर्यचकित करने वाला है।'



पेट्रोलियम और प्राकृतिक गैस नियामक बोर्ड का नोटिस

- एक्सक्लूसिविटी का मतलब है किसी एक भौगोलिक इलाके में सिर्फ एक कंपनी को कारोबार का अधिकार, इसके लिए उसे विशेष सहूलियत या एकाधिकार
- **मार्केटिंग एक्सक्लूसिविटी :** कॉमन कैरियर या कॉन्ट्रैक्टकैरियर के दायरे में विशेष अधिकार
- **कॉमन कैरियर क्षमता :** सीजीडी नेटवर्क में अधिकृत इकाई की अपनी आवश्यकताओं और फर्म के अनुबंध के आधार पर आवंटित क्षमता के अतिरिक्त क्षमता मिलना
- **आधारभूत ढांचा एक्सक्लूसिविटी :** बुनियादी ढांचे का एकाधिकार, कोई भी तीसरा पक्ष उपभोक्ताओं को प्राकृतिक गैस की आपूर्ति के लिए किसी तरह के बुनियादी ढांचा के तहत बिछाने, निर्माण, संचालन या विस्तार का कार्य नहीं कर सकता

स्रोत – पीएनजीआरबी

पीएनजीआरबी ने ईमेल से भेजे जवाब में कानूनी क्षेत्र के सदस्य पर कोई टिप्पणी नहीं की लेकिन उसने कहा, 'कुछ भौगोलिक क्षेत्रों (जीए) के लिए आधारभूत ढांचे की एक्सक्लूसिविटी की अवधि पूरी हो चुकी है, लेकिन इकाइयों ने अवधि के विस्तार के लिए पीएनजीआरबी के समक्ष आवेदन नहीं किया है। इसलिए 4 मार्च 2024 की नोटिस के अनुसार ऐसे भौगोलिक क्षेत्रों के लिए इन्फ्रा एक्सक्लूसिविटी की अवधि समाप्त हो चुकी है। लेकिन यदि किसी कंपनी ने विस्तार के लिए आवेदन किया है तो पीएनजीआरबी अधिनियम और विनियमन के तहत उस पर विचार किया जा सकता है।'

महाराष्ट्र गैस को गुरुवार हमने ईमेल भेजा था, लेकिन उसी तरफ से कोई जवाब नहीं मिला है। इन नोटिस के कारण महानगर गैस के शेयर के मूल्य पर भी असर पड़ा और वह गुरुवार को 1279 तथा शुक्रवार को 1270 रुपये प्रति शेयर पर बंद हुआ।

नुवामा के विश्लेषकों के अनुसार शेयर को संभलने का समय तक नहीं मिला। विश्लषकों के अनुसार, 'पीएनजीआरबी के अनुसार एमजीएल का मुंबई में एकाधिकार अप्रैल, 2021 में ही खत्म हो गया था। हमारा तर्क है कि पूर्ववर्तियों की तरह इसका 10 वर्ष की अवधि के लिए विस्तार किया जा सकता है।

बाजार में नए प्रवेश करने वाले उन स्थानों पर मार्केटिंग नहीं कर सकते हैं, जहां महानगर पहले से ही वितरण कर रहा है। इसकी वजह से प्रतिस्पर्धा कम से कम है। अदालत में लंबित मामलों का जब तक निपटारा नहीं हो जाता, तब तक इस मामले में आगे नहीं बढ़ा जा सकता।'

उद्योग के वरिष्ठ अधिकारीगण और विश्लेषक न्यूनतम प्रतिस्पर्धा के दृष्टिकोण से सहमत हैं।

आईसीआरए के कॉरपोरेट रेटिंग्स के वरिष्ठ उपाध्यक्ष एवं सह-समूह प्रमुख ग्रुप प्रशांत वशिष्ठ ने बताया, 'तकनीकी रूप से पिछले कई वर्षों से ज्यादातर सीजीडी मार्केट के लिए तीसरे पक्ष की मार्केटिंग खुली हुई है लेकिन इन सर्कलों में कोई प्रतिस्पर्धा नहीं है।

बाजार में नए प्रवेश करने वालों के समक्ष दो बाधाएं हैं। पहला, मार्केटिंग एक्सक्लूसिविटी का मामला अदालत में विचाराधीन है और दूसरा, गैर व्यापारिक बाधाओं की आशंका को लेकर असहजता है।' भारत में इंदौर, मुंबई, दिल्ली, अहमदाबाद उन शहरों में हैं मार्केटिंग एक्सक्लूसिविटी कई साल पहले खत्म होने की बात की जा रही है, वहां कई गैस कंपनियां हैं।

विशेषज्ञों को उम्मीद है कि आने वाले समय में इस क्षेत्र में मुकदमेबाजी बढ़ेगी जबकि अभी कुछ मुकदमें लंबित हैं।

NAVODYA TIMES, Ghaziabad, 18.3.2024
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गैस लीक होने की अफवाह से मचा हड़कंप

■ **एनबीटी न्यूज, हापुड़ :** थाना हापुड़ क्षेत्र के नेशनल हाइवे-9 दिल्ली रोड़ स्थित एक सीएनजी पंप पर गैस लीकेज होने की अफवाह से हड़कंप मच गया। फायरबिग्रेड ने मौके पर पहुंच जानकारी की। जानकारी के अनुसार दिल्ली रोड पर सीएनजी पंप पर कम्पनी ने पिलखुवा में नया पंप लगाने के लिए रविवार को शटडाउन लिया था, जिसके चलते गैस के पाइपलाइन को खाली किया गया था। इस बीच शहर में गैस लीकेज की अफवाह फैल गई। मुख्य अग्निशमन अधिकारी मनु शर्मा ने बताया कि जिंदल नगर में नया पंप लगाने के लिए शटडाउन लिया गया था।

NAVBHARAT TIMES, Gurgaon, 18.3.2024
Page No. 3, Size:(21.87)cms X (30.94)cms.

पूरी है तैयारी पांच वर्षों में तीन लाख कनेक्शन देने की घोषणा, 50 से अधिक होंगे CNG स्टेशन

बढ़ेंगे PNG कनेक्शन, 500 करोड़ का होगा निवेश

■ **एनबीटी न्यूज, गुड़गांव :** पीएनजी गैस कनेक्शन की संख्या बढ़ाने के लिए हरियाणा सिटी गैस लिमिटेड समूह ने घोषणा की है कि आने वाले वर्षों में इनकी पहुंच लाखों लोगों तक बढ़ाई जाएगी। पालम विहार में पीएनजी के 101 कनेक्शनों के उद्घाटन समारोह के दौरान यह घोषणा की गई। इस आयोजन में पेट्रोलियम और प्राकृतिक गैस नियामक बोर्ड (पीएनजीआरबी) के सदस्य गजेंद्र सिंह उपस्थित रहे। उन्होंने ग्रीन और हेल्दी फ्यूचर के लिए स्थाई ऊर्जा समाधानों की दिशा में बदलाव की आवश्यकता के बारे में बताया। इसके अलावा अगले तीन वर्षों में गुरुग्राम में बुनियादी ढांचे को मजबूत करने के लिए 500 करोड़ रुपये से अधिक का निवेश करने की योजना है।

हरियाणा सिटी गैस लिमिटेड समूह ने PNG स्टेशन का किया उद्घाटन

प्राकृतिक गैस के बारे में उन्होंने कहा कि निवासियों के लिए सुविधा, आराम और क्वालिटी लाइफ में बढोतरी होगी। उन्होंने पर्यावरण-अनुकूल ऊर्जा विकल्पों को बढ़ावा देने के लिए एचसीजी समूह की सराहना की। समूह के अध्यक्ष कपिल चोपड़ा और निदेशक राहुल चोपड़ा ने कंपनी की योजनाओं के बारे में बताते हुए कहा कि अगले पांच वर्षों में लगभग तीन लाख घरों तक इस सेवा का विस्तार करेंगे। इसके अलावा अगले वर्ष में लगभग एक लाख घरेलू पीएनजी कनेक्शन देने का लक्ष्य रखा गया है। 50 सीएनजी स्टेशनों का भी प्लान भविष्य में है। कनेक्शन के प्रक्रिया को बेहतर बनाने के लिए भी संबंधित विभागों के बातचीत की जा रही है ताकि लोगों को आसानी से इसका कनेक्शन मिल सके। उन्होंने कहा कि टोटल एनर्जी को सोर्स में प्राकृतिक गैस की हिस्सेदारी को छह प्रतिशत से बढ़ाकर 15 प्रतिशत करने का उनका उद्देश्य है। राहुल चोपड़ा ने कहा कि शहर में 1000 किलोमीटर से अधिक तक फैले नेटवर्क को और मजबूत किया जाएगा।