

103 million households get Ujjwala Yojana benefits

PNG connections still a far cry from target

ARUNIMA BHARADWAJ
New Delhi, April 18

THE GOVERNMENT UNDER its flagship Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana has been able to extend the benefits of the clean cooking fuel to 103.3 million households between the start of the scheme and the end of 2023-24, according to data from the Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell.

Sales of domestic liquified petroleum gas (LPG) by the state-owned oil marketing companies stood at 26.21 million tonne in 2023-24, from 25.38 MT in 2022-23.

"LPG has had good growth after 2014, when the Ujjwala scheme came. The jump in consumption from 29 MT is because of the scheme reaching all places... people are enjoying the benefits and comfort," said a member of the Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board, who did not wish to be identified.

The government now expects to extend the benefit to 103.5 million households under the scheme by 2025-26.

The government had launched the scheme back in 2016 with an aim to provide cooking fuel to poor households while discouraging the use of traditional kitchen fuels, including cow dung cakes and firewood which are more polluting.

Last year in August, the government had announced a price cut of ₹200 per cylinder in LPG prices for all domestic consumers and

A SUCCESS STORY

■ Govt expects to extend the benefits to **103.5 mn** households by 2025-26

■ LPG sales by the OMCs stood at **26.21 MT** in FY24, against **25.38 MT** in FY23



■ Centre keen on increasing penetration of piped natural gas

■ PNG is facing a bit of difficulty because it has to replace LPG which is already subsidised

decided to expand the scheme with additional 7.5 million connections. In October 2023, the government again hiked the subsidy for PMUY consumers by ₹100, taking it to ₹300 per cylinder. In March this year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a cut of ₹100 per LPG cylinder while encouraging the use of LPG cylinders.

After realising the success of the Ujjwala scheme with an increased consumption of LPG, up by 3.8% on year at 29.6 MT in FY24, the government is now shifting its focus on increasing the penetration of piped natural gas (PNG) across the country.

In its manifesto for general elections, the BJP said it will extend PNG connections across the country while expanding LPG connections under the Ujjwala Yojana. The move is expected to aid in realising the government's target of increasing the share of natural gas in the energy mix from 6.8% at present to 15% by 2030.

According to the data by PPAC, domestic PNG connections as of February stood at 12.56 million. The government has targeted 125 million PNG connections by 2030, based on the minimum work programme targets of city gas distribution companies, it informed Parliament last year.

"PNG is facing a bit of difficulty because it has to replace LPG which is already subsidised," the PNGRB member said. "Wherever PNG is possible and they are using domestic gas, it makes sense to connect all places to PNG. But it is not happening because LPG is also an alternative which people are comfortable with."

"Entities that have LPG are not able to realise its benefits. But we are advocating that this is to be done," the official said. "If PNG is directly being transported to homes, the government does not need to give the kind of subsidy (like on LPG), so the subsidy burden will get reduced."





Crude oil stabilises on demand concerns



Crude oil prices were little changed after a three per cent drop in the previous session as the market remains concerned about demand this year and on signs that a wider conflict in the key Middle East producing region could be avoided. Brent futures were up 29 cents at \$87.58 a barrel, while US WTI crude futures traded 20 cents higher at \$82.89. REUTERS

Even without war in the Gulf, pricier petrol is here to stay

The
Economist

When Iran's missiles whizzed towards Israel on Sunday April 14th, oil markets were closed. When they opened 24 hours later, their reaction was a loud "meh". Brent crude, the global benchmark, dipped below \$90 a barrel. It has since hovered around that level (see chart).

Traders had expected an attack of precisely this variety: big enough to cause concern; obvious enough to be foiled. They are now betting that Israel will avoid anything too rash in response. Yet even if oil

prices do not surge, they remain uncomfortably elevated and seem likely to rise higher still in the summer, when increasing demand amid tight supply will probably tip the market into deficit. A cast of decision-makers—from central bankers to President Joe Biden, who faces re-election in November—is watching anxiously.

Geopolitical risk explains, in part, why oil prices have risen by a quarter since December. Brent passed \$90 for the first time in nearly six months after Israel bombed Iran's consulate in Damascus on April 1st. Supply disruptions are playing an even bigger role. Mexico is slashing shipments in order to produce more petrol at home.



Brent passed \$90 for the first time in nearly six months after Israel bombed Iran's consulate in Damascus on April 1st. REUTERS

A leaky Scottish pipeline was forced to close. Turmoil in Libya is disrupting output; war in South Sudan could do the same.

Meanwhile, tougher sanc-

tions on Russia are leaving more of its oil stranded. In March refiners in India—Russia's second-biggest buyer since 2022—said they would no longer welcome tankers

owned by Sovcomflot, Russia's state-owned shipping firm, for fear of Western retribution. Most of the 40-odd tankers subject to sanctions by America since October have not gone on to load Russian oil. The reimposition of sanctions on Venezuela could further dent supply. America may also decide to better police its existing embargo on Iran's oil sales.

The biggest supply disruption is deliberate. It is coming from the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and its allies (OPEC+). In November the group pledged to slash output by 2.2m barrels a day (b/d), or 2% of global production. Most observers had expected that, with prices likely to rise throughout 2024, mem-

bers would take the chance to row back on the cuts. Instead, several announced in March that they would extend them until the end of June. Russia even said it would deepen its cuts by another 471,000 b/d, reducing output to 9m b/d, from 10.8m b/d pre-war.

Last year supply growth outside the cartel more than made up for the rise in demand. This year non-OPEC output will rise again—Brazil and Guyana are expected to pump record amounts—but growth will slow. Global oil stocks are already falling; they will shrink faster this summer, as holiday-makers in America take to the road.

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The most likely scenario is that oil prices remain tolerable to the world economy, at somewhere in the region of \$85-90 a barrel. AP

Even without war in the Gulf, pricier petrol is here to stay

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All this is happening in the face of robust demand. Measures of manufacturing activity in America, China and Europe have surprised on the upside, leading the International Energy Agency, an official forecaster, to predict that global crude demand will rise by an average of 1.2m b/d this year, up from the 900,000 b/d it suggested in October. Others, including some big traders and OPEC itself, reckon demand growth may near or surpass 2m b/d.

Where will the oil price go next? If OPEC keeps its cuts unchanged, it could reach \$100 within months. But that is not an outcome the cartel really wants. Many members, not least Saudi Arabia, worry that a rapid rise in the oil price could destroy demand. Dearer crude is pushing American petrol prices, already at \$3.60 a gallon, closer to \$4. A surge past that point could shave 200,000 b/d off petrol demand over the summer, estimates JPMorgan Chase. Thus OPEC may signal its intention to produce more at its next meeting. Jorge León, a former OPEC analyst now at Rystad Energy, a consultancy, expects crude to average \$90 a barrel in the third quarter of the year and \$89 in the final quarter. Futures markets are even more sanguine: buying crude for delivery in December costs around \$85 a barrel.

Black cloud

Even if the tit-for-tat between Israel and Iran escalates, it is unlikely to change much. Any reduction in Iran's exports—worth 1.6m b/d in March—might be balanced by more pumping from the rest of OPEC. In a worst-case scenario, Iran could decide to close the Strait of Hormuz, a waterway that connects the Gulf to the Indian Ocean, through which 30% of the world's seaborne oil, and nearly all of the Gulf's, must pass. Doing so would anger just about everyone in the region, and cut off Iran from its sole oil buyer, China. Perhaps Iran would opt to cause trouble in less self-harming ways, such as harassing ships in the Gulf. Yet even the "tanker war" of the 1980s—when hundreds of tankers were attacked—failed to durably boost prices.

The most likely scenario, therefore, is that oil prices remain tolerable to the world economy, at somewhere in the region of \$85-90 a barrel, while allowing OPEC members to earn juicy margins. Prices are unlikely to fall soon, though. And whether such a level is tolerable to American voters, who see gasoline prices advertised in big red numbers by the highway every day, is another matter entirely.

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Firefighters, Deep-sea Divers & Such: It's a Woman Thing

Women take on labour-heavy jobs at mines, oil rigs & shop floors as cos look to expand talent pool while breaking gender stereotypes

Rica Bhattacharyya & Lijee Philip

Mumbai: In September last year, Tata Steel hired its first batch of 23 women firefighters, a move aimed at enhancing diversity in a hitherto male-dominated role. Tata's not the only one. India's leading heavy engineering companies are increasingly hiring more women to work at mines, steel plants, oil rigs and shop floors, a step towards ending gender-based stereotyping of jobs. "We have also initiated three-shift deployment of

women workforce at Tata Steel Kalinganagar (TSK), West Bokaro (power house and washery)," said Jaya Singh Panda, chief diversity

officer at Tata Steel. "A special drive was undertaken to onboard women in operation and maintenance roles at TSK and Tata Steel Meramandali

(about 220 women). At West Bokaro, women were onboarded as heavy earth moving machinery (HEMM) operators and, basis their perfor-

mance, another batch of 37 women has been onboarded who are currently undergoing training."

This will help mainstream marginalised communities, she said.

As top heavy engineering firms hire more women in a mix of front-line, managerial and leadership roles, the benefits are two-pronged: it broadens the talent pool while helping them break gender stereotypes.

Hindustan Zinc, a part of Vedanta, currently employs 132 women executives in managerial functions in core mining operations, in charge of drilling and blasting, explosive magazines and production drilling.



WoMan Power, India Inc Edition

- Tata Steel has 23 women firefighters
- Hindustan Zinc employs women in managerial roles in core mining ops
- L&T has quality inspectors, maintenance engineers
- ONGC has women as deep-sea explorers
- CHALLENGES** Many of these roles involve 'heavy lifting', although technology has greatly eased this
- Ensuring safety and women-friendly infrastructure at work

Illustration of a woman in a red hard hat and safety gear operating machinery. **ZAHID & GYAN**

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Gender Parity at Work

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Other roles at Hindustan Zinc are underground managers, shift foreman, shift engineer and in mine planning, among others. The representation of women in mining jobs at the company has more than doubled in four years to 13.3% now from 5.7% in FY20.

"We target to increase gender diversity in the coming year by hiring women in mining functions and related maintenance and enabling functions," said Priya Agarwal Hebbur, chairperson, Hindustan Zinc, and non-executive director, Vedanta. "Gender parity at the workplace brings in larger benefits to the organisation by bringing diverse perspectives, promoting innovation, agile working and better employee engagement."

L&T has women as quality control inspectors and maintenance engineers on the shop floor:

"In our process plant turnaround service business, all engineering leads (process, electrical, instrumentation and controls, civil) and head of welding technologies are women engineers," said Anil Parab, whole-time director and member, L&T board, heavy engineering

and valves.

State-run ONGC has inducted women in deep-sea exploration roles.

"This was typically male-dominated and those working have to spend at least 14 days in offshore operations," said a company spokesperson. "We have introduced targeted initiatives which include the development of custom-designed dungarees by the National Institute of Design in Ahmedabad, heightened safety measures through closed-circuit television (CCTV) installations and have dedicated boarding facilities for women in offshore operations."

While leading companies are making changes to working hours, improving site conditions and introducing better training programmes, the ecosystem needs to be more enabling.

"One of the reasons why women lagged in heavy engineering functions is due to the perception (and reality) that such roles are not safe for women," said Saundarya Rajesh, founder-president of diversity, equity, and inclusion solutions company Avtar group.

However, with the advent of technology, the literal "heavy lifting" has been reduced greatly.

India ready to tackle impact of Iran-Israel conflict: FM

India is prepared to take adequate steps to mitigate any impact of the Iran-Israel conflict on its economy and will "remain alert", finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Thursday.



"Can't say that we are fully ready. As developments unfold, we are preparing to take adequate steps in India's interests," Sitharaman told the CNBC Awaaz news channel in an interview.

The conflict has not yet significantly impacted global oil prices. However, any escalation of tensions in the oil-rich middle east could raise India's oil import bill. India is the world's third-biggest oil importer, and ships in about 85% of its oil needs from overseas.

Sitharaman said India started importing oil from Russia to cushion the country from higher prices after sanctions were imposed by Western countries. "Similarly, in every challenge, we decide to take steps in India's interest after discussions with govt departments. And definitely we will remain alert," she said. REUTERS

Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas looking to hire consultants to provide business vision, restructuring plan

AMITAV RANJAN

NEW DELHI: With the global energy landscape muddled by various alternatives to fossil fuels, Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas plans to hire consultants to provide a business vision and a restructuring plan to keep itself and its various public sector undertakings relevant in the continuously changing energy world.

“The objectives of the project are towards policy transformation and capacity building,” says its proposal seeking budgetary funding of Rs 75 crores to pay the consultants. The proposal for hiring consultants

was mooted to the Delegated Investment Board end-February. They would be hired for providing guidance for three years starting fiscal 2024-25.

“Major interventions/components include energy sector landscape assessment (Energy Security, Energy Transition, Emerging Alternatives, New Energy etc.), future projections, a gas economy strategy, setting the business vision for the future Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas,” it says.

The key targets of the study would be:

(1) Strengthening the ministry’s delivery capability across its mandate through global

benchmarking, process re-engineering, knowledge management and consolidated monitoring.

(2) Studying the trends, outlook and fiscal regime applicable to oil and gas industry in major oil and gas producing countries. Studying the framework adopted by these countries to promote indigenous production of supply chain and ancillary industries.

(3) Complete appraisal and exploration of all sedimentary basins and enhancing oil and gas production of the country at a faster pace along with Integrated Offshore Energy Development.

(4) Increasing the role of biofuels in the Indian energy basket to reduce import dependence.

(5) Emphasizing decarbonization to help India achieve its net zero targets.

(6) Preparing a gas economy strategy of India.

(7) Assessing and analysing the nationwide financial incentives and tax structures to prepare an incentive framework for promoting “Make in India” initiative.

(8) Analysing the current decommissioning, site restoration and disaster management system.

(9) Developing a monitor-

ing and evaluation structure for the Upstream, Midstream and Downstream sectors of the exploration and production business.

“The overall objective,” it says, “is to assess the changing landscape in the energy domain, conceptualize and drive associated strategic initiatives, provide execution and monitoring support to realise the outcomes and improve the capabilities and effectiveness of organisational structures, governance models and management systems considering the present responsibilities as well as the emerging opportunities for the ministry.”

Oil Holds Near 3-Week Low on Fresh US Sanctions

Reuters

London: Oil prices held near a three-week low on Thursday as investors weighed robust US jobs data and sanctions on Venezuela and Iran against global demand concerns and easing tensions in the Middle East.

Brent futures rose 17 cents, or 0.2%, to \$87.46 a barrel by 1:05 p.m. EDT (1705 GMT), while U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude rose 38 cents, or 0.5%, to \$83.07.

On Wednesday, both benchmarks closed at their lowest since March 27.

Increased interest in energy trading boosted open interest in Brent futures on the Intercontinental Exchange to its highest since February 2021 for a second day in a row on

Wednesday.

In other energy markets, the drop in US diesel futures to a 15-week low, cut the heating oil crack spread, which measures refining profit margins, to its lowest since April 2023.

In the US, President Joe Biden's administration said it wants to keep gasoline prices



within current ranges as the country heads into its summer driving season.

Meanwhile, the number of Americans filing new claims for unemployment benefits was unchanged at a low level last week, pointing to continued labor market strength.

Lower interest rates would reduce borrowing costs and could spur economic growth and demand for oil.



ONGC awards PMC contract to Nauvata Energy Enterprise and PERC Engineering

Our Bureau

New Delhi

Oil and gas exploration and production (E&P) major ONGC has awarded a front end engineering design (FEED) and project management consultancy (PMC) contract to a consortium of Nauvata Energy Transition Enterprise and PERC Engineering.

The contract, for pre-FEED, FEED and PMC services, encompasses concept study and tender bid package preparation for two developments in the Krishna-Godavari (KG) basin on the east coast, Nauvata said.

The award comes on the heels of ONGC achieving its first oil from its KG-DWN-98/2 development project where Nauvata, along with its consortium partner, was the project management consultant for SURF (subsea umbilicals, risers, and flowlines), SPS (subsea production systems), FPSO (floating production storage and offloading) and onshore scopes of work.

DEEPWATER PROJECTS

"We have played a significant role in ONGC's KG-DWN-98/2 project by providing PMC services.

ONGC's KG-DWN-98/2 is one of the most complex deepwater development projects in the world. At its peak, Nauvata had close to 100 resources deployed for the project, managing the interfaces on a very elaborate and complex contracting quilt, which comprised of multiple international and local contractors," NET Enterprises Group CEO Baroruchi Mishra said.

The company intends to maintain the same momentum on this newly awarded contract, he added.

"The project is a great opportunity to showcase our capabilities in this exciting market and we are confident that our successful execution will result in a longstanding relationship with both ONGC and Nauvata," PERC President Felipe Gonzalez said.

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Rajkot gears up for green transport with CNG buses

FPJ NEWS SERVICE / RAJKOT

Rajkot Municipal Corporation (RMC) is taking steps towards curbing air pollution by phasing out diesel buses and introducing Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) buses after concerns were raised about the rising pollution levels caused by the existing fleet of 52 diesel buses.

The government has responded positively to the request, as Rajkot will receive a total of 100 CNG buses in multiple phases starting next month. The rollout plan outlines the arrival of the first 25 CNG buses at the beginning of May, followed by an additional 75 buses delivered in phases. The initial batch will replace the current diesel buses, leading to a reduction in air pollution.

"We understand the impact diesel buses have on

25 CNG buses will arrive in the city by the beginning of May, followed by an additional 75 buses

our environment. This is why we requested the government to provide CNG buses as a cleaner alternative. We aim to completely eliminate diesel buses from Rajkot's public transport system by July," asserted Commissioner Anand Patel, adding that CNG buses will significantly reduce emissions and create a healthier environment for everyone.

The city boasts 75 electric buses running on BRTS (Bus Rapid Transit System) routes and other major roads. Additionally, the RMC has secured approval for another 100 electric bus-

es under the Pradhan Mantri Yojana.

"Electric buses are the ultimate goal," Commissioner Patel explained. "However, it will take some time for them to be fully integrated into the system."

To ensure smooth operations, Rajkot has a network of CNG pumps strategically located across the city. This infrastructure advantage allows for faster refuelling compared to electric buses, which require charging time.

The introduction of new buses goes hand-in-hand with route expansion plans. RMC will prioritize areas with high demand for public transport, launching new routes and potentially reviving those closed due to bus maintenance issues. Additionally, a buffer of spare buses will be maintained to address unforeseen circumstances.

MOTILAL OSWAL

Shares of Oil Marketing Cos Look Attractive

Motilal Oswal Financial Services said shares of oil marketing companies (OMCs) are attractively placed, though the industry's marketing margins have weakened due to geopolitical headwinds, ongoing refining capacity maintenance, and elevated freight rates for product transportation.

The brokerage said HPCL, BPCL, and IOCL have declined since mid-Feb as the gross

marketing margins on petrol and diesel have declined to an average of ₹2.3 and ₹0.2 per litre, respectively, in April from an average of ₹8.0 and ₹3.4 per litre in the March quarter.

"We expect marketing margins to normalise at higher levels from 2QFY25 onwards as the impact of these events subsides," said Motilal Oswal's analysts Abhishek Nigam and Aman Chowdhary in a client note. – **Our Bureau**

Stock	Rating	Target Price (₹)	CMP (₹)	Reason
HPCL	Buy	590	480	Valuations have limited room for correction
IOC	Buy	195	170	Agreement with Panasonic Energy to explore lithium-ion cell making can keep investor interest elevated
BPCL	Neutral	620	593	Limited downside from the current level but minimal volume growth over two years and earnings volatility in marketing

Source: **Motilal Oswal**

MAHESH B

UAE Murban is Indian refiners' preferred crude

COSTLY SHIPMENTS. Supply of Sokol from Russia hit by sanctions; limited availability of similar oil grade from US, Nigeria leads to shift

Rishi Ranjan Kala
New Delhi

A new oil trade scenario is emerging in India with refiners sourcing higher quantities of Murban from UAE as cargoes of its light sweet equivalent, Sokol from Russia, got derailed due to payment issues and western sanctions on ships transporting crude oil above the G7 price cap.

Another development, further strengthening Murban's prospects, is the higher cost of transporting a similar crude oil grade —WTI— from the US and limited availability of light sweet crude from Nigeria.

MURBAN SHIPMENTS

Data from energy intelligence firm Kpler shows that Indian refiners sourced higher quantities of crude (WTI) from US in mid-March, after which the quantities have tapered down. Trade sources said that April is also expected to witness

lower cargoes from US. On the other hand, Murban shipments have risen consistently every month since January 2024. India on an average sourced a little over 104,200 barrels per day (b/d) of Murban from UAE in 2023. However, in the first four months of 2024, it has risen to more than 265,000 b/d.

Heavy sulphur or sour grades account for more than three-fourths of India's total crude oil processing. For instance, refiners processed 4.11 million barrels per day (mb/d) of sour grades in FY24 accounting for 78.5 per cent of the total.

India processed around 1.24 mb/d of light sweet crude in FY20 and FY21, which fell to 1.15 mb/d in FY22 and then to 1.13 mb/d in FY23 and FY24.

COST DYNAMICS

"India's higher buying of Murban could exist as long as Murban is a cost-efficient option. No one believed back in



DRYING UP. Data from energy intelligence firm Kpler show that Indian refiners sourced higher quantities of crude (WTI) from US in mid-March, after which the quantities tapered down

the day that Urals could be India's default medium sour grade, yet it did. Similarly as Nigerian barrels are shrinking and as US barrels are expensive because of the shipping disruptions, Murban seems to be winning the battle for the preferred light grade," Viktor Katona, Kpler's Lead Crude Analyst told *businessline*.

For most of 2023, Murban has been relatively expensive,

the annual average premium of Murban to Dubai swaps has been \$1.66 per barrel and around September-October 2023, the light sour grade has been a solid \$3 per barrel more expensive, Katona said.

However, the Murban-Dubai swaps spread has literally halved to \$0.78 per barrel in 2024 and in recent days it even dropped to a discount vis-a-vis Dubai, he added.

ICRA Senior VP & Co-Group Head Corporate Ratings Prashant Vasisht too points out the cost arbitrage.

"Middle East to West coast of India takes only a fraction of the time it takes to move crude from say the US Gulf coast to India. As refiners make decisions to buy a particular crude it is guided by the value of products as well as inventory costs, freight etc. Murban is a light sweet crude which is beneficial for refiners owing to higher value of products due to higher distillate yield. Besides local currency settlement provides a fillip to internationalise and increase acceptance of Rupees trade," he added.

MURBAN VS WTI

"The big fight across Asia is between US' WTI and UAE's Murban. Both grades are seeing higher availability recently. This is especially true of Murban, after ADNOC refurbished the Ruwais refinery in early 2024 so that it could

run on heavier crudes as well," Katona said.

India's buying of US grades is mostly due to pricing developments with light sweet grades. Besides, some of the usual suspects that Indian refiners historically have been buying, such as Nigerian barrels, becoming expensive.

Over and above that, the light sweet supply coming from Sokol, produced by Russia's Rosneft in Sakhalin, is no longer there, so Indian refiners, in general, need to modify their import strategies for lighter grades, he explained.

"It's a fight for which grades will be used to blend down the medium sour barrels from Iraq, Russia or Saudi Arabia, and higher intakes of American WTI are part of that game. However, in the long term, with UAE being so conveniently located to India, I think ADNOC's Murban grade will see most of that opportunity," Katona emphasised.

दूरदृष्टि • हमारे लिए महंगी साबित होगी यह लड़ाई इजराइल-ईरान टकराव से तेल के दाम उछल सकते हैं



मनोज जोशी

‘अंडरस्टैंडिंग द इंडिया चाइना वॉर्डर’
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इजराइल और ईरान के बीच जो कुछ हो रहा है, वह भारत के लिए भी बड़ी चिंता का विषय है। शनिवार को- हमला शुरू होने से पहले- ईरानी फौज ने होर्मुज के जलडमरूमध्य में एक मालवाहक जहाज को ज्वल कर लिया था, जिसमें चालक-दल के 25 सदस्यों में से 17 भारत के थे। जहाज का स्वामित्व आंशिक रूप से एक इजराइली के पास था और इस कार्रवाई का उद्देश्य मध्य-पूर्व क्षेत्र में तनाव बढ़ाना था। इजराइल पर ईरानी हमले के तुरंत बाद भारत ने इस पर गंभीर चिंता व्यक्त करते हुए एक बयान जारी किया और तत्काल तनाव कम करने का आह्वान किया। तेहरान से बातचीत में अलग से जहाजकर्मियों की हिरासत का मुद्दा भी उठाया और चालक-दल से मिलने की अनुमति मिली।

वैसे इजराइल और ईरान लंबे समय से इस क्षेत्र में शौ-बोर लड़ रहे हैं। इजराइल ईरानी अधिकारियों और परमाणु वैज्ञानिकों की हत्या करता है तो ईरान हिजबुल्ला और हूती सहयोगियों की मदद से इजराइली ठिकानों पर हमला बोलता है। लेकिन गत 1 अप्रैल को इजराइलियों ने कथित रूप से दमिश्क में एक ईरानी कॉन्सुलेट पर हमला कर दिया, जिसमें कुद्स फोर्स के सात वरिष्ठ अधिकारी मारे गए। यह ईरान के इस्लामिक रिवोल्यूशनरी गार्ड्स कॉर्प्स (आईआरजीसी) की एक इकाई है। इसके बाद ईरान को लगा कि अब उसे इजराइल के खिलाफ सीधे जवाबी कार्रवाई करने के लिए मजबूर होना पड़ेगा।

शनिवार रात एक बड़े हमले के माध्यम से उसने ऐसा ही किया। इजराइल ने अमेरिका, ब्रिटेन, फ्रांस, जॉर्डन और सऊदी अरब की मदद से ईरानी ड्रोन और मिसाइल हमले को सफलतापूर्वक रोक दिया। अगर एक भी मिसाइल इजराइल में घुस जाती और उसके हमले में कई इजरायली मारे जाते तो तेल अवीव को जवाबी हमला बोलने में कोई हिचकिचाहट नहीं होती। लेकिन हमलों से अपना लगभग पूर्ण बचाव करने के बाद इजराइल के लिए इस अमेरिकी दबाव को नजरअंदाज करना मुश्किल था कि वह भले अभी अपनी जीत की घोषणा कर दे, लेकिन जवाबी कार्रवाई न करे। हालांकि इजराइल के प्रधानमंत्री नेतन्याहू पर उनके दक्षिणपंथी गठबंधन के सदस्यों की ओर से ईरान को मुंहतोड़ जवाब देने का बहुत दबाव है। इसका एक कारण यह भी है कि इससे इजराइल द्वारा गाजा में किए गए विनाश से भी दुनिया का ध्यान भटकेंगा।

7 अक्टूबर को इजराइल पर हमला के आतंकवादी हमले के बाद से ही भारत ने स्थिति को शांत करने के लिए मध्य-पूर्व क्षेत्र के सऊदी अरब, ईरान, इजराइल, मिस्र और फिलिस्तीन के साथ-साथ यूरोप के नेताओं से बात की है। लेकिन भारत इससे अधिक कुछ कर नहीं सकता है। भारत के ईरान के साथ लंबे समय से रणनीतिक संबंध हैं, वहीं मोदी सरकार ने रक्षा के क्षेत्र में इजराइल के साथ गहरे संबंध विकसित किए हैं। इजराइल ने पिछले दशक में 2.9 अरब डॉलर मूल्य की मिसाइलें, रडार और निगरानी और लड़ाकू ड्रॉन हमें निर्यात किए हैं। ईरानी तेल-गैस भी भारत के लिए हाइड्रोकार्बन के निकटतम स्रोत हैं। अमेरिकी प्रतिबंधों से पहले भारत ईरानी तेल का बड़ा खरीदार था।

भारत इस तथ्य से भी अवगत है कि इस्लामी कट्टरवाद की लहर में भी भारत कभी शिया चरमपंथियों के निशाने पर नहीं रहा था। दरअसल, भारत और ईरान दोनों ही पाकिस्तान और अफगानिस्तान से सुन्नी चरमपंथियों द्वारा आतंकवाद के निर्यात को लेकर चिंतित हैं। इसके अलावा, पाकिस्तानी नाकाबंदी को देखते हुए ईरान ने भारत को चाबहार और बंदर अब्बास

भारत कच्चे तेल का दुनिया का तीसरा सबसे बड़ा उपभोक्ता है और अपनी ऊर्जा-आवश्यकताओं की पूर्ति के लिए आयात पर निर्भर है। विश्लेषकों का मत है तनाव के चलते तेल की कीमतें 100 डॉलर प्रति बैरल तक पहुंच सकती हैं।

के बंदरगाहों के माध्यम से मध्य एशिया और यूरोप के लिए एक रास्ता प्रदान किया है। भारत ने 2016 में चाबहार को विकसित करने के लिए 8.5 करोड़ डॉलर का निवेश किया था और तेहरान को 15 करोड़ डॉलर की क्रेडिट लाइन भी दी थी। ईरान-इजराइल संघर्ष के चलते तेल की कीमतों में वृद्धि से भी भारत अप्रत्यक्ष रूप से प्रभावित हो सकता है। भारत आज कच्चे तेल का दुनिया का तीसरा सबसे बड़ा उपभोक्ता है और अपनी अधिकांश ऊर्जा-आवश्यकताओं की पूर्ति के लिए वह आयात पर ही निर्भर है।

विश्लेषकों का मत है कि मध्य-पूर्व तनाव के चलते तेल की कीमतें बढ़कर 100 डॉलर प्रति बैरल तक पहुंच सकती हैं। आज भारत ईरानी कच्चा तेल तो नहीं खरीद रहा है, लेकिन गत मार्च में उसने सऊदी अरब, इराक और यूई से अपने कुल तेल-आयात का 48 प्रतिशत हिस्सा लिया था। इराकी और सऊदी तेल होर्मुज के जलडमरूमध्य से ही होकर आता है और तनाव बढ़ने पर ईरानी इसकी नाकाबंदी कर सकते हैं।

(ये लेखक के अपने विचार हैं।)

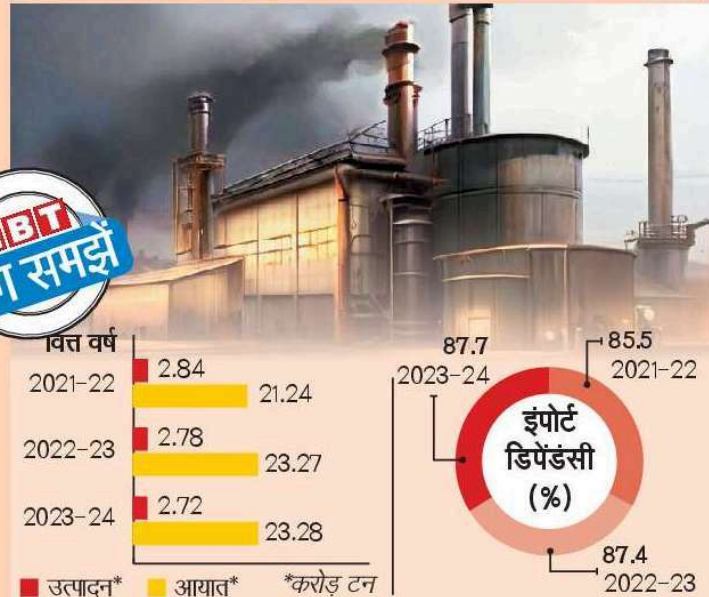
कच्चे तेल के कम उत्पादन से बढ़ेगी दिक्कत ?

AI Image

■ विशेष संवाददाता, नई दिल्ली

ईरान-इराक तनाव कूड ऑयल के मोर्चे पर दिक्कतें बढ़ा सकता है। एक ओर जहां इस साल करीब 16% चढ़ चुका कूड अभी 87 डॉलर प्रति बैरल के करीब है, वहीं इलेक्ट्रिक वीकल्स का इस्तेमाल बढ़ने के बाद भी पेट्रोलियम उत्पादों की खपत घट नहीं रही है और इंपोर्ट पर निर्भरता बढ़ रही है, क्योंकि देश में कच्चे तेल का उत्पादन नहीं बढ़ पा रहा है।

Q क्या है उत्पादन का हाल? : पेट्रोलियम मिनिस्ट्री के पेट्रोलियम प्लानिंग एंड एनालिसिस सेल के आंकड़ों के मुताबिक, वित्त वर्ष 2024 में ओएनजीसी का प्रोडक्शन टारगेट 1.92 करोड़ टन था, लेकिन उत्पादन हुआ 1.81 करोड़ टन। यह वित्त वर्ष 2022 के 1.85 करोड़ टन और वित्त वर्ष 2023 के 1.84 करोड़ टन से कम रहा। इसी तरह, ऑयल इंडिया



लिमिटेड ने 34 लाख टन के प्रोडक्शन टारगेट के मुकाबले 33 लाख टन उत्पादन किया। हालांकि यह वित्त वर्ष 2023 के 32 लाख टन से अधिक रहा।

Q क्या है खपत और आयात का समीकरण? FY2024 में पेट्रोलियम खपत 23.33 करोड़ टन रही। FY23 में 22.3 करोड़ टन, 2022 में

ग्लोबल टेंशन बढ़ने का क्या हो सकता है असर ?

आयात पर निर्भरता वित्त वर्ष 2024 में बढ़कर 87.7% हो गई, जो इससे पिछले फाइनेंशियल ईयर में 87.4% थी। रूस से कम कीमत पर आयात के बावजूद भारत के लिए कच्चे तेल की औसत कीमत मार्च में 84 डॉलर प्रति बैरल से अधिक हो गई। केडिया फिनकोर्प के फाउंडर नितिन केडिया का कहना है कि टेंशन बढ़ने पर एमसीएक्स पर कूड 8200 रुपये प्रति बैरल के पार जा सकता है। बैंक ऑफ बडौदा के चीफ इकनॉमिस्ट मदन सबनवीस का कहना है, 'कूड उछलेगा तो रुपये पर दबाव बढ़ेगा। ट्रेड बैलेंस प्रभावित होगा और करंट अकाउंट डेफिसिट पर भी असर आ सकता है। इम्लेशन को भी हवा मिलेगी।'

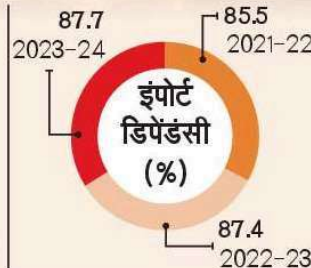
20.2 करोड़ टन थी। FY24 में 23.25 करोड़ टन कूड का आयात हुआ। FY23 में आयात 23.27 करोड़ टन और FY22 में 21.24 करोड़ टन रहा।

कच्चे तेल के कम उत्पादन से बढ़ेगी दिक्कत ?

■ विशेष संवाददाता, नई दिल्ली

ईरान-इज्राइल तनाव कूड ऑयल के मोर्चे पर दिक्कतें बढ़ा सकता है। एक ओर जहां इस साल करीब 16% चढ़ चुका कूड अभी 87 डॉलर प्रति बैरल के करीब है, वहीं इलेक्ट्रिक वीकल्स का इस्तेमाल बढ़ने के बाद भी पेट्रोलियम उत्पादों की खपत घट नहीं रही है और इंपोर्ट पर निर्भरता बढ़ रही है, क्योंकि देश में कच्चे तेल का उत्पादन नहीं बढ़ पा रहा है।

Q क्या है उत्पादन का हाल?
: साल 2023-24 में देश में 3 करोड़ टन कूड ऑयल प्रोडक्शन के टारगेट के मुकाबले उत्पादन 2.72 करोड़ टन रहा। वित्त वर्ष 2022-23 में 2.78 करोड़ टन और वित्त वर्ष 2021-22 में उत्पादन 2.84 करोड़ टन था। पेट्रोलियम मिनिस्ट्री के पेट्रोलियम प्लानिंग एंड एनालिसिस सेल के आंकड़ों के मुताबिक, वित्त वर्ष 2024 में ओएनजीसी का प्रोडक्शन टारगेट 1.92 करोड़ टन था, लेकिन उत्पादन हुआ 1.81 करोड़ टन। यह वित्त वर्ष 2022 के 1.85 करोड़ टन और वित्त वर्ष 2023 के 1.84 करोड़ टन से कम रहा। इसी तरह, ऑयल इंडिया



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Q क्या है खपत और आयात का समीकरण? वित्त वर्ष 2024 में देश में पेट्रोलियम उत्पादों

की खपत 23.33 करोड़ टन रही, जो FY23 में 22.3 करोड़ टन और 2022 में 20.2 करोड़ टन थी। वित्त वर्ष 2024 में 23.25 करोड़ टन कूड का आयात हुआ। वित्त वर्ष 2023 में आयात 23.27 करोड़ टन और वित्त वर्ष 2022 में 21.24 करोड़ टन रहा।

ग्लोबल टेंशन बढ़ने का क्या हो सकता है असर ?

अभी सूरत यह है कि आयात पर निर्भरता वित्त वर्ष 2024 में बढ़कर 87.7% हो गई, जो इससे पिछले फाइनेंशियल ईयर में 87.4% थी। रूस से कम कीमत पर आयात के बावजूद भारत के लिए कच्चे तेल की औसत कीमत मार्च में 84 डॉलर प्रति बैरल से अधिक हो गई। केडिया फिनकोर्प के फाउंडर नितिन केडिया का कहना है कि टेंशन बढ़ने पर एमसीएक्स पर कूड 8200 रुपये प्रति बैरल के पार जा सकता है। बैंक ऑफ बड़ौदा के चीफ इकनॉमिस्ट मदन सबनवीस का कहना है, 'कूड उछलेगा तो रुपये पर दबाव बढ़ेगा। ट्रेड बैलेंस प्रभावित होगा और करंट अकाउंट डेफिसिट पर भी असर आ सकता है। इन्फ्लेशन को भी हवा मिलेगी।'

Q क्या है कामयाबी ? : इस साल कृष्णा गोदावरी डीप वॉटर ब्लॉक 98/2 में ओएनजीसी ने प्रोडक्शन शुरू किया था। जून तक इस ब्लॉक से 45 हजार बैरल प्रतिदिन उत्पादन होने की उम्मीद है, जो देश में कुल कूड उत्पादन के करीब 7 प्रतिशत के बराबर होगा।