

Crude oil imports rise to four-year high in March

ARUNIMA BHARADWAJ
New Delhi, March 27

INDIA'S CRUDE OIL imports rose to 5.2 million barrels per day in March, the highest level since early 2020 amid increased runs by the domestic refiners, an analysis of the data provided by intelligence firm Kpler showed. Imports were 11% higher than February volumes and up 4.5% from 4.9 million barrels a day in March 2023.

Additionally, the country's imports from Russia rose to 1.8 million barrels per day in March, highest after July 2023, primarily on the back of higher discharge of Urals. Imports were, however, down a tad from 1.87 million barrels a day a year ago.

"India's strong crude imports is partly a signal of refiners ramping up runs, although we have also seen a slight uptick in the country's onshore crude inventories this month," said Serena Huang, analyst, Vortexa. "India's imports of Russian crude will likely remain robust in the near term," she said.

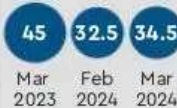
Post the outbreak of conflict in Ukraine, Russia has emerged as the top supplier of crude oil to India on the back of healthy discounts it offered. Despite retaining its position at the top, Rus-

RUSSIA STAYS TOP SUPPLIER

Crude oil imports by countries (million barrels per day)



Russia's share in total crude imports (%)



Source: Kpler

sia's share in total imports of the country has come down to 34.5% in March from the peak of 45% in May 2023, when the purchase volume stood at 2 million barrels per day. Russia's share has, however, increased from 32.5% in February.

Amid all Russian grades, Urals discharges to India remained the highest at around 1.5 million barrels a day, up from 1.1 million barrels in February. Now with sanctions on Venezuela kicking in from April 18, Russian supplies are once again expected to fill the gap.

Imports from Iraq, too, surged significantly from last month, 66% rise to 1.3 million barrels per day. Iraqi imports in

March were the highest since 2020, suggesting that India has returned to its traditional suppliers in West Asia.

India's growing reliance on supplies from West Asia can be attributed to many reasons, including the narrowing discounts on Russian crude, rising uncertainty of US sanctions on tankers for the violation of G7 price cap and increased freight cost amid the Red Sea crisis.

"With freight from the Atlantic Basin being prohibitively expensive again, India's refiners needed to turn towards option closer to home, leading to the high Iraqi crude imports," Viktor Katona, lead crude analyst at Kpler, had earlier said.





NATURAL GAS CONSUMPTION SET TO GROW 6-8% IN FY25

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, MARCH 27

Gas demand is expected to increase by 6-8 per cent in FY2025 driven by increasing offtake by the city gas distribution sector amid an expanding network and strong offtake by refineries and petrochemical plants.

Natural gas demand grew 16 per cent in 10M FY2024 supported by softening liquefied natural gas (LNG) prices and uptick in domestic gas production.

LNG prices have remained soft since the beginning of FY2024 supported by higher-than-anticipated natural gas inventories in the US, the EU and Japan. Increased pipe flows from Russia have kept the LNG demand in check, thereby supporting price levels.

With the linkage of domestic gas prices with 10 per cent slope to the monthly average of the India crude basket, Gas prices are expected to remain at ceiling levels in the near term amid firm crude oil prices.

Capex in the pipeline transmission and city gas distribution segment with outlay of ₹10,000-15,000 crore per annum over next three years.

The debt levels of the industry are expected to increase to ₹19,500-20,000 crore by March 31, 2024.



Oil Falls as Industry Report Shows Bumper US Stockpile Build

Bloomberg

Oil extended a decline, with Brent trading near \$86 a barrel on Wednesday, after an industry report pointed to a substantial build in inventories in the United States.

The industry-funded American Petroleum Institute on

Tuesday said nationwide stockpiles expanded 9.3 million barrels last week, according to people familiar with the data. It also reported a 2.4 million barrel increase in crude at the Cushing, Oklahoma hub, although gasoline stockpiles shrank overall.

If confirmed by government data due later Wednesday, lev-

els of crude at Cushing would see the biggest weekly gain in barrel terms since January 2023. Meanwhile, gasoline inventories would fall for an eighth week, the longest run of declines in almost a year.

Oil has rallied this quarter after breaking out of a tight range in the year's first couple of months. Uncertainty amid

Ukrainian drone attacks on Russian oil infrastructure and extended supply cutbacks by OPEC+ have buoyed prices, although a challenging economic outlook in China and robust non-OPEC supply growth remain headwinds.

"Given an approaching end of month, end of quarter and the long Easter weekend, it is

understandable that a little froth comes off the markets," said John Evans, an analyst at brokerage PVM. JPMorgan Chase & Co. warned that crude could hit \$100 a barrel if Russia's recent output cut isn't balanced by other steps. US gasoline prices are also likely to hit \$4 a gallon by May, its analysts wrote.

Oman becoming hot spot for ship-to-ship transfer of Russian oil

Bloomberg

The waters off Oman are emerging as a hot spot for ship-to-ship transfers of Russian oil heading to India, as the US steps up scrutiny of the flows.

New Discovery is the latest tanker to transfer its load of Russian crude to another vessel near the Omani port of Sohar this week. The ship had been signalling Sikka in western India as its destination from early March, before idling off the country's west coast for more than a week and then traveling back to



Oman to make the transfer, according to Bloomberg ship-tracking.

The Caroline Bezenji, which received about 1 million barrels of Urals crude from the New Discovery, isn't

currently signaling a destination, Kpler data show.

Transferring oil from one vessel to another is often done to mask the origin of the cargoes, and sometimes to split up the shipment to meet draft restrictions at certain ports. Oman and Fujairah in the UAE Arab Emirates are common locations for transfers in the Middle East, while in Asia they're often done in the waters off Malaysia.

Oman now seems to be gaining in popularity as a location for the reloading of Russian barrels. Prior to the New Discovery, three other tankers have passed their car-

goes of Urals crude to other vessels in the country's waters since early February. The ships that received the oil then discharged their cargoes at Indian ports.

Read More: More Oil Tankers Behave Oddly Delivering Russian Crude to India

India has been a major buyer of discounted Russian oil since the invasion of Ukraine, but tighter enforcement of US sanctions is now disrupting the trade. All of the country's refiners are refusing

to take oil carried on PJSC Sovcomflot tankers.

Sohar is "arguably one of the biggest STS places in all of the Middle East and Asia" and there's no crude imported there, said Viktor Katona, lead crude analyst at data intelligence firm Kpler. "I wouldn't be surprised if India's solution is to have the Russians deliver the barrels to Sohar or the UAE territorial waters and then trans-ship it onto tankers that are already OK for them compliance-wise."

Reforms momentum will continue: FM

Nirmala Sitharaman
Union Minister of Finance & Corporate Affairs



Union Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman unveils a special limited edition of *Business Standard* as it enters its 50th year, on the first day of Business Standard Manthan in New Delhi on Wednesday

“The valuation of these companies (PSUs) is being closely monitored and improved before we take them to the market”

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN, UNION FINANCE & CORPORATE AFFAIRS MINISTER

From tariffs and Centre-state relations to how she unwinds, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman covered vast ground on the inaugural day of the *BS* summit; Telecom & IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw spoke about India's competitive advantage in the global semiconductor space. And, there was much more...

BS REPORTER
New Delhi, 27 March

The government will continue the push on its reforms agenda in its “third term” since political continuity, along with a predictable and stable economic environment and taxation structure, is important to achieve the laid-down developmental goals, said Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman while delivering the keynote address at the inaugural edition of the annual *Business Standard* summit, Business Manthan, in New Delhi on Wednesday. The first day of the summit, celebrating *Business Standard's* 50th year, saw a galaxy of stars from the world of economy, politics, business and sports.

In a fireside chat that followed Sitharaman's keynote address, she explained the nuances of the higher tariff policy in some sectors. “Atmanirbhar Bharat is not a regressive step, but a considered, calibrated one,” she said. While pointing out that the imposition of tariffs is not a permanent stance of the government and that calibrations are being made to the policy, she said, “it is not a permanent shut the door”.

Inaugurating the two-day summit, the finance minister spoke on a range of issues: On how revenue collection supported by prudent expenditure management has helped to contain the fiscal deficit; how from a twin balance sheet problem in 2014,

India now had a twin balance sheet advantage; why in matters of economy, Centre-state differences should not arise on grounds of politics; and how digital transformation was drawing the world's attention and admiration. She also spoke about how she unwinds: “Listening to a lot of music and reading a lot of books.”

As a pathway to becoming a developed country by 2047, she listed four “I”s: Infrastructure, investment, innovation, and inclusiveness.

Before her address, Sitharaman unveiled the logo of 50 years of *Business Standard*.

The summit, which was packed with multilayered conversations, included those with Union Railways,

Communications, Electronics and IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, who said India was poised to become a “products nation”.

“Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Viksit Bharat vision,” Vaishnaw said, “we will see an ecosystem that makes for India and the world.” India, he said, would become a products nation, and many of those products would come from deep-tech sectors. **Turn to Page 11**

Union Railways, Communications, Electronics & IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw at a fireside chat during the *BS Manthan* summit

PHOTOS: KAMLESH PEDNEKAR



“India will become a product nation and many products will come from deep tech sectors which will affect every citizen's life”

ASHWINI VAISHNAW, UNION RAILWAYS, COMMUNICATIONS, ELECTRONICS & IT MINISTER

▶ FROM PAGE 1

‘Reforms momentum to continue’

Looking into the future ahead of the general elections, and predicting the first 100 days of Modi government 3.0, he said, “We have a very good legacy of the last 10 years and the road map for the next 25 years.” In the years to come, he said, the government would bring change with continuity.

On whether India’s focus needed to be on manufacturing or services, Vaishnav said the answer was not “or” but “and” with both manufacturing and services getting attention.

While reimagining India with the eye on 2047, Pennsylvania State University economist Rohit Lamba, too, made the point that figuring out the right mix for India in services and manufacturing would be key. “There is a China fetish that has crept in that jobs are going to come only from the factory floor. We need to move away from this idea,” he said, emphasising the need to shake up the thinking away from the cookie-cutter model.

He also made a strong case for ensuring sound education for children, linking it to the fortunes of the country. “We need to get basic primary and secondary education and the health of our children right — this is the primary constraint,” Lamba said. He said there was evidence that if a child’s health and education have not been developed at an early age, then, among other issues, “we are going to lose out on human capital”.

Speaking virtually from London, *Financial Times*’ chief economics commentator Martin Wolf argued in favour of prosperous capitalist democracies.

Quoting Aristotle, he said that the best partnership is one that operates through the middle-class. “A stable democracy is one with a stable, contented, independent middle-class,” Wolf said.

He also presented data from Washington, D.C.-based non-profit Freedom House to indicate that a decline in freedom had been observed in every

region of the world, including in the United States and India, the world’s two largest economies.

The state of the markets in a country going into elections, meanwhile, had the attention of GQuant Investech Founder Shankar Sharma, a seasoned investor and financial expert. “The markets don’t care who runs the country,” he said, adding that they have a way of finding their rhythm. Whoever wins, he said, “India’s organic growth story is unstoppable in the decades to come”.

He, however, did point to an “ageing bull”. “Data shows that no bull market lasts over five years,” he said. “And an ageing bull market starts to draw blood.”

He advised on exercising caution when it came to the equity markets, suggesting that it would be wise to cap such investment at 30 per cent and put money into gold and fixed deposits. Within the markets, he said, largecaps are ageing, mid-caps are neither here nor there, and while smallcaps are the story of the future, they are fraught with risks.

The challenges, opportunities, risks and complexities of artificial intelligence in a country as complex as India figured in another scintillating discussion. “If 2023 was the year of AI, 2024 will be the year of AI at scale,” said Irina Ghose, MD, Microsoft India.

Another conversation, around sports and its potential to drive India’s developed-country agenda, had Anju Bobby George, winner of World Athletics Championship medal in long jump, saying that “By 2036 (when India is pitching to host the Olympics), we’ll be at the top.”

Earlier in the day, during the inaugural session of the summit, T N Ninan, former editor and publisher of *Business Standard*, and Akila Urankar, director on its board, revisited the journey of the newspaper over five decades since its inception and the vision that continues to drive it.

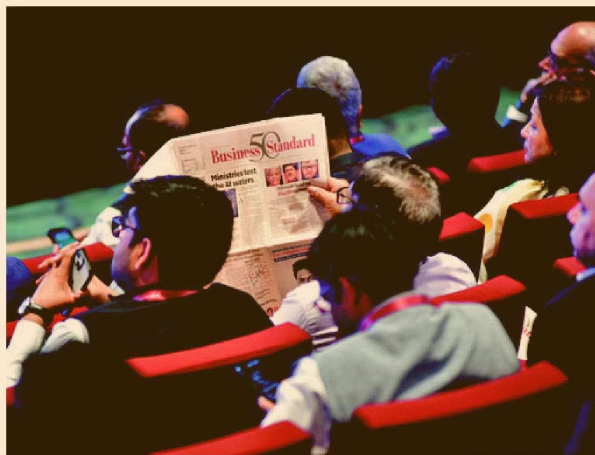


PHOTO: PRIYANKA PARASHAR

US SANCTIONS ON RUSSIA'S SHIPPING MAJOR SOVCOMFLOT

Sanctions unlikely to majorly hit Russian oil flows to India

SUKALP SHARMA
NEW DELHI, MARCH 27

THE LATEST round of United States' (US) sanctions targeting Russian shipping major Sovcomflot has led to Indian refiners avoiding oil transported on the shipper's fleet, but the impact of the situation is only expected to be muted on the overall crude oil trade between Moscow and New Delhi, as per an analysis by commodity market analytics firm Vortexa. The agency, in fact, sees the possibility of deeper discounts being offered on Russian oil going forward as buyers may insist on stricter compliance with the G7 price cap of \$60 per barrel on seaborne Russian crude.

In the latest action against oil tankers over alleged violation of the price cap, the US on February 23 sanctioned Russia's state-owned shipping major Sovcomflot along with 14 tankers associated with it. This was in addition to similar action against other shippers and tankers involved in hauling Russian oil over the past few months. Given that India is a top buyer of Russian crude, most of the 14 tankers sanctioned recently had transported oil to Indian refiners over the past year, ship tracking data shows.

Following the development, Indian refiners are now refusing to take delivery of crude transported by Sovcomflot tankers in an evident bid to steer clear of any secondary sanction risk. According to a senior govern-



The opaque fleet of tankers involved in Russian oil trade is likely to keep Moscow's oil flowing to India. *File*

ment official, the government does not want Indian refiners to brazenly flout the G7 price cap or get involved in trades that might have sanctions-related risks.

"India's import of Russian crude averaged slightly below 1.4 mbd (million barrels per day) so far in Q1 2024 (January-March), down by nearly 600 kbd (thousand barrels per day) from the peak quarter in Q2 2023... This is clearly linked to commercial and logistical hiccups, with payment issues and tanker sanctions playing a role," Vortexa said in its latest report on Russian oil trade.

Indian refiners' reluctance to accept crude on Sovcomflot tankers in the future "underpins the impact of US/Western sanctions", Vortexa said, while noting that the share of crude on Sovcomflot-linked tankers has already come down drastically over recent months.

"An alternative explanation for lower flows to India is the potential push for compliance with

the price cap, while sellers are likely to seek for outlets that accept higher but still substantially discounted prices... Ultimately Russian oil will continue to hit markets, but potentially at growing discounts," Vortexa said.

While a lot of crude deliveries on Sovcomflot tankers are now shifting to China—the other big buyer of Russian crude—the massive so-called opaque fleet of tankers involved in Russian oil trade is likely to keep Moscow's oil flowing to India.

"India (is) more risk-averse than China but large opaque fleet suggests minimal impact to both markets from US sanctions," Vortexa said.

Broadly speaking, the opaque tanker fleet refers to vessels of unclear ownership involved in crude oil and petroleum products trade of suppliers under sanctions or restrictions of various degrees from international powers, particularly the US. With major Western fleet operators loath to

get involved in the oil trade of these countries, little-known operators from countries like Greece, Turkey, Russia, and tax havens like Marshall Islands, Liberia, and Panama have emerged as the key players in the so-called shadow fleet network.

A large number of opaque fleet tankers have complex and obscure ownership structures and are registered in geographies with lax regulatory oversight. Often, such vessels, which are usually quite old, operate with substandard insurance and certifications. The true extent of the shadow fleet operation with regard to Russian oil trade can be ascertained from the fact that of the 493 tankers that supplied Russian oil to India since January 2021, just 6 per cent are now under US sanctions, underscoring the ample availability of tankers.

Indian refiners ramped up Russian oil purchases in the aftermath of Moscow's February 2022 invasion of Ukraine. As the West started weaning itself off Russian energy supplies, Russia began offering deep discounts on its crude oil, which Indian refiners began lapping up.

Prior to the war in Ukraine, Russia was a marginal player in India's oil imports, but is now New Delhi's biggest source of crude ahead of traditional heavyweights Iraq and Saudi Arabia. India has a highly diversified crude oil supplier base that would help in keeping supply steady even if some of the volumes coming from a major supplier see some disruption.



Tata arm, HPCL to set up 5,000 charging stations

Tata Passenger Electric Mobility (TPEM) tied up with Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) to set up 5,000 public charging stations across the country by the end of the year. The collaboration will HPCL's fuel station network and company's insights from over 1.2 lakh Tata EVs on Indian roads, to set up chargers at locations frequently visited by Tata EV owners, TPEM, a unit of Tata Motors, said in statement.

Transporting crude oil from Russia to India offers huge margins

Rishi Ranjan Kala
New Delhi

Discounted seaborne crude oil flowing from Russia to India, which accounts for more than one-third of New Delhi's overall imports, has opened up avenues to make huge margins — sometimes to the tune of \$23 a barrel — from transporting the critical commodity.

The findings form part of a report by the Oxford Institute for Energy Studies (OIES), released on Monday, on the outlook for Russia's oil and gas production and exports, which said "the biggest beneficiary of this new trade at discounted prices has been India".

The report pointed out that there is an "obvious logic" on increased Indian purchases of Russian oil due to the large discount on Urals Blend to Brent, but it needs to be remembered that this is based on the FOB price in the Baltic Sea.

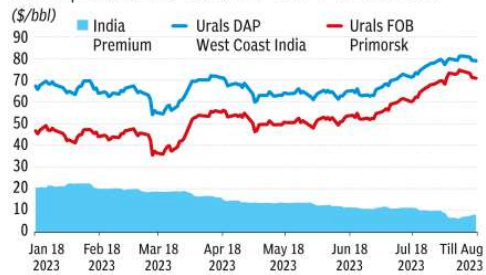
BIG MARGINS

"The discount has not only offered cheap oil to India but has also opened a huge margin to be made in the provision of transport and ancillary services to deliver the oil from northern Europe to Southern Asia," the OIES study said.

Analysing the delivered price of Russian oil to the west coast of India with the FOB price at Primorsk during 2023, the study said that although the differential narrowed significantly over the last eight months (till August 2023), the margin has ranged from a high of around \$23 per barrel to the current \$8 per barrel.

"This has tempted traders and tanker owners to get involved with the trade in Rus-

Price of Russian oil delivered to India compared to Urals FOB Primorsk



Source: Platts data

The biggest beneficiary of the new trade at discounted prices has been India, says an OIES study

sian crude not only to India but also to other Asian destinations where similar margins have been on offer and has helped to facilitate the liquidity of the global oil market. This has underpinned the decline in the oil price from its high of over \$122 per barrel in May 2022 to the current level of around \$84 per barrel (October 5, 2023)," it added.

ADVANTAGE INDIA

OIES said that the biggest beneficiary of this new trade at discounted prices has been India. It also said that Foreign Minister S Jaishankar noted in November 2022, "Russia has been a steady and time-tested partner...if it works to my advantage, I would like to keep that going."

This strategy has led to a marked shift in India's oil import geography, with Russia accounting for as much as 40 per cent of total imports in some months in 2023, while

other suppliers such as the UAE, Iraq and Saudi Arabia have seen their shares decline.

"According to some commentators India may now have reached a limit of its exposure to Russian crude, but there is no immediate sign of a return to previous low levels," it added.

DISCOUNTS

The OIES study pointed out that in 2023, it is possible to say that Russia managed to redirect the flows of its crude oil exports away from so-called "unfriendly" countries to alternative markets and to limit any decrease to manageable levels driven mainly by an agreement with the OPEC+ group to constrain exports.

This happened thanks to the significant discounts that Russian energy commodity exporters offered to buyers in Asia (mostly to India and China), although the extent of these discounts has been somewhat exaggerated.

"The so-called 'mirror statistics' from the Indian and the Chinese customs demonstrate that imported Russian crude was only \$10-15 per barrel cheaper than Brent, not the often reported \$35-40 a barrel," it added.

अगली सरकार का अजेंडा, लोगों को मिलेगा फ्री PNG कनेक्शन!

AI Image

■ एनबीटी न्यूजडेस्क : केंद्र सरकार देश के गरीब परिवारों को फ्री पाइपड नेचुरल गैस (PNG) कनेक्शन देने की योजना बना रही है। इसका मकसद ये है कि उज्वला योजना में जैसे LPG का विस्तार किया गया, उसी तरह PNG को भी आम गरीबों के बीच लोकप्रिय बनाया जा सके। पेट्रोलियम एंड नेचुरल गैस मिनिस्ट्री इस योजना पर काम कर रहा है।

सूत्रों का कहना है कि प्रस्तावित योजना के तहत मंत्रालय कनेक्शन लगाने, इन्स्टॉलेशन और सिक्युरिटी फी में छूट और सब्सिडी शुरू करने का प्रस्ताव कर सकता है। इसे उज्वला की तर्ज पर 'प्रज्वला' कहा जा सकता है। योजना शुरू करने के लिए कैबिनेट से मंजूरी की आवश्यकता होगी।

सूत्रों का कहना है कि मंत्रालय की योजना का मकसद प्रीपेड मीटर के माध्यम से कम खपत की समस्या को भी हल करना है। उज्वला ग्राहकों द्वारा औसत से कम खपत सरकार के लिए चिंता का विषय रही है। लेकिन इस योजना के तहत एक परिवार कम रकम में प्रीपेड मीटर रिचार्ज कर सकता है। चूंकि घर पर पाइप वाली गैस हमेशा उपलब्ध रहेगी, इसलिए एलपीजी तुलना में औसत खपत बढ़ सकती है।

इकोनॉमिक टाइम्स की रिपोर्ट के मुताबिक, सूत्रों ने बताया कि यह स्कीम सरकार के पहले 100 दिवसीय अजेंडे के मंत्रालय के प्रस्ताव का हिस्सा है। इस प्रस्ताव को आम चुनाव के बाद लागू



फैक्ट फाइल

- 32 करोड़ LPG कंस्यूमर्स हैं
- 10.3 करोड़ उज्वला बेनिफिशियरी
- 1.2 करोड़ ही PNG यूज करते हैं

- क्या है योजना : कनेक्शन लगाने, इन्स्टॉलेशन, सिक्युरिटी फी में छूट और सब्सिडी शुरू करने का है प्रस्ताव : सूत्र

किया जा सकता है। केंद्र सरकार ने सभी मंत्रालयों से अगली सरकार के गठन के बाद अगले 100 दिन की योजनाओं को लेकर अपना प्रस्ताव देने के लिए कहा है। जानकारों के अनुसार, इन दिनों केंद्र सरकार के अधिकारी स्कीम्स को तैयार करने में व्यस्त हैं। मई की शुरुआत में कैबिनेट सचिव के साथ इन स्कीम्स को लेकर चर्चा होने की संभावना है।

LPG की तरह लोकप्रिय बनाना है मकसद

नेचुरल गैस आधारित इकोनॉमी एक दशक से पीएम मोदी के एनर्जी अजेंडे के केंद्र में रहा है। सरकार का शहरी इलाकों में PNG को लोकप्रिय बनाना एक प्रमुख मकसद रहा है, लेकिन LPG की तुलना में यह लोगों के बीच जगह नहीं बना पाया है। 10.3 करोड़ उज्वला बेनिफिशियरी सहित 32 करोड़ LPG कंस्यूमर्स की तुलना में PNG के करीब 1.2 करोड़ कंस्यूमर्स हैं। सरकार चाहती है कि शहर के लोग LPG से PNG की ओर तेजी से शिफ्ट हों। मंत्रालय के अधिकारियों का कहना है कि सरकार की पहल और वित्तीय सहयोग से PNG की तरफ लोगों का झुकाव तेजी से होगा।

अगली सरकार का अजेंडा, लोगों को मिलेगा फ्री PNG कनेक्शन!

AI Image

■ एनबीटी न्यूजडेस्क : केंद्र सरकार देश के गरीब परिवारों को फ्री पाइपड नेचुरल गैस (PNG) कनेक्शन देने की योजना बना रही है। इसका मकसद ये है कि उज्वला योजना में जैसे LPG का विस्तार किया गया, उसी तरह PNG को भी आम गरीबों के बीच लोकप्रिय बनाया जा सके। पेट्रोलियम एंड नेचुरल गैस मिनिस्ट्री इस योजना पर काम कर रहा है।

सूत्रों का कहना है कि प्रस्तावित योजना के तहत मंत्रालय कनेक्शन लगाने, इन्स्टॉलेशन और सिक्युरिटी फी में छूट और सब्सिडी शुरू करने का प्रस्ताव कर सकता है। इसे उज्वला की तर्ज पर 'प्रज्वला' कहा जा सकता है। योजना शुरू करने के लिए कैबिनेट से मंजूरी की आवश्यकता होगी।

सूत्रों का कहना है कि मंत्रालय की योजना का मकसद प्रीपेड मीटर के माध्यम से कम खपत की समस्या को भी हल करना है। उज्वला ग्राहकों द्वारा औसत से कम खपत सरकार के लिए चिंता का विषय रही है। लेकिन इस योजना के तहत एक परिवार कम रकम में प्रीपेड मीटर रिचार्ज कर सकता है। चूंकि घर पर पाइप वाली गैस हमेशा उपलब्ध रहेगी, इसलिए एलपीजी तुलना में औसत खपत बढ़ सकती है।

इकॉनॉमिक टाइम्स की रिपोर्ट के मुताबिक, सूत्रों ने बताया कि यह स्कीम सरकार के पहले 100 दिवसीय अजेंडे के मंत्रालय के प्रस्ताव का हिस्सा है। इस प्रस्ताव को आम चुनाव के बाद लागू



फैक्ट फाइल

- 32 करोड़ LPG कंस्यूमर्स हैं
- 10.3 करोड़ उज्वला बेनिफिशियरी
- 1.2 करोड़ ही PNG यूज करते हैं

■ क्या है योजना : कनेक्शन लगाने, इन्स्टॉलेशन, सिक्युरिटी फी में छूट और सब्सिडी शुरू करने का है प्रस्ताव : सूत्र

किया जा सकता है। केंद्र सरकार ने सभी मंत्रालयों से अगली सरकार के गठन के बाद अगले 100 दिन की योजनाओं को लेकर अपना प्रस्ताव देने के लिए कहा है। जानकारों के अनुसार, इन दिनों केंद्र सरकार के अधिकारी स्कीम को तैयार करने में व्यस्त हैं। मई की शुरुआत में कैबिनेट सचिव के साथ इन स्कीम को लेकर चर्चा होने की संभावना है।

LPG की तरह लोकप्रिय बनाना है मकसद

नेचुरल गैस आधारित इकॉनमी एक दशक से पीएम मोदी के एनर्जी अजेंडे के केंद्र में रहा है। सरकार का शहरी इलाकों में PNG को लोकप्रिय बनाना एक प्रमुख मकसद रहा है, लेकिन LPG की तुलना में यह लोगों के बीच जगह नहीं बना पाया है। 10.3 करोड़ उज्वला बेनिफिशियरी सहित 32 करोड़ LPG कंस्यूमर्स की तुलना में PNG के करीब 1.2 करोड़ कंस्यूमर्स हैं। सरकार चाहती है कि शहर के लोग LPG से PNG की ओर तेजी से शिफ्ट हों। मंत्रालय के अधिकारियों का कहना है कि सरकार की पहल और वित्तीय सहयोग से PNG की तरफ लोगों का झुकाव तेजी से होगा।



देश में 5000 चार्जिंग स्टेशन लगाएगी टाटा

नई दिल्ली (भाषा)। टाटा पैसंजर इलेक्ट्रिक मोबिलिटी ने इस साल के अंत तक देशभर में 5,000 सार्वजनिक चार्जिंग स्टेशन स्थापित करने के लिए हिंदुस्तान पेट्रोलियम कॉरपोरेशन लिमिटेड के साथ गठजोड़ किया है। टाटा मोटर्स की इकाई टाटा पैसंजर इलेक्ट्रिक मोबिलिटी (टीपीईएम) ने बुधवार को बयान में कहा कि इस गठजोड़ के तहत एचपीसीएल के पेट्रोल पंप पर चार्जिंग स्टेशन लगाये जाएंगे। ये स्टेशन उन स्थानों पर लगाये जाएंगे जहां 1.2 लाख से अधिक टाटा इलेक्ट्रिक वाहनों के मालिक प्रायः आते हैं। दोनों संस्थाओं ने इस संबंध में एक समझौता ज्ञापन पर हस्ताक्षर किये हैं। कंपनियां सह-ब्रांडेड आरएफआईडी कार्ड के माध्यम से एक सुविधाजनक भुगतान प्रणाली शुरू करने की संभावना भी टटोल रही हैं। एचपीसीएल के पास 21,500 से अधिक पेट्रोल पंप का नेटवर्क है। कंपनी का दिसम्बर, 2024 तक 5,000 इलेक्ट्रिक वाहन चार्जिंग स्टेशन स्थापित करने का लक्ष्य है। टीपीईएम के मुख्य रणनीति अधिकारी बालाजी राजन ने कहा, 'एचपीसीएल के साथ यह रणनीतिक साझेदारी भारत के ईवी परिवेश को आगे बढ़ाने की हमारी प्रतिबद्धता को दर्शाती है।'