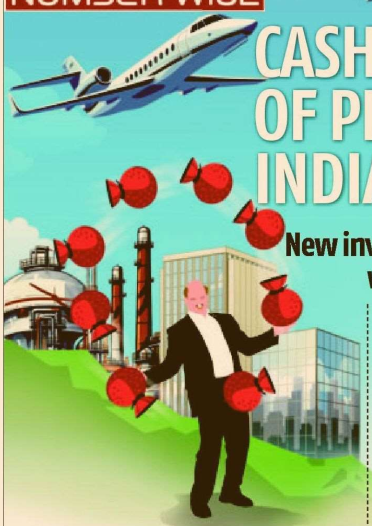
BUSINESS STANDARD, Delhi, 14.10.2023
Page No. 20, Size:(20.12)cms X (40.35)cms.

ILLUSTRATION: BINAY SINHA

NUMBER WISE

CASH IS A PROBLEM OF PLENTY FOR INDIAN COMPANIES

New investments are not keeping pace with cash flow from operations



RJ Reynolds Nabisco, the American tobacco and food major whose takeover spawned the classic *Barbarians at the Gate*, once had so much surplus cash that it was spent on a fleet of 10 corporate jets, executive perks, and even contemplated spending $10 million on a robot to replace a single forklift operator in its bakery business. Strong cash flow with limited avenues for profitable deployment most likely triggered its leveraged buyout in the 1980s.

According to various reports, some of the world's biggest firms hold huge cash balances, including Alphabet at $118 billion and Berkshire Hathaway at a record $147 billion.

Indian companies generated 73 per cent more cash from operations in the previous financial year (FY23), compared to the pre-pandemic phase in 2018-19, an analysis of 302 S&P BSE 500 firms shows. Investment cash flow was up only 25 per cent.

A major chunk of increased cash generation comes from oil companies. Refineries generated ₹80,000 crore more in operating cash flows in FY23, compared to FY19. Other oil companies added ₹30,000 crore.

Operating cash flow of power generation and distribution companies rose from ₹0.7 trillion to ₹1.2 trillion in the same period. It was up from₹ 0.7 trillion to ₹1 trillion for information technology companies.

The value of private sector projects under implementation has grown, shows the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy data.

Some of the increased cash generation is translating into more money being returned to shareholders, for example, ₹10,000 crore buyback at Larsen and Toubro and record dividend payouts.

ANOUSHKA SAWHNEY

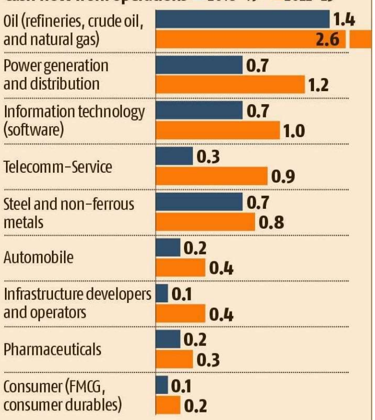
1: OPERATING CASH FLOW 73% HIGHER THAN PRE-PANDEMIC TIMES

Note: Based on a sample of 302 companies from the S&P BSE 500 index with continuous data since 2016-17. Excludes banks and finance companies.
Source: Capitaline, *Business Standard* calculations

2: LARGE INCREASE IN REFINERIES' CASH FLOWS

(in ₹ trn)

Cash flow from operations 2018-19 2022-23



Note: Based on a sample of 302 companies from the S&P BSE 500 index with continuous data since 2016-17. Excludes banks and finance companies.
Source: Capitaline, Business Standard calculations

3: GOVERNMENT DRIVING CAPEX

Projects under implementation (in ₹ trn)

Source: CMIE

MORNING STANDARD, Delhi, 14.10.2023
Page No. 10, Size:(15.23)cms X (16.84)cms.

Discount on Russian crude declines to lowest level since March 2022

RAKESH KUMAR @ New Delhi

DISCOUNT on Russian crude oil fell $12.20 per barrel, lowest level since March 2022, according to a report by the International Energy Agency (IEA).

The weighted average crude export price increased by $8 per barrel to $81.80 per barrel in September 2023. However, the country continues to profit from oil exports, even in the face of various sanctions imposed by Western countries. According to the monthly oil data report, Russian oil export revenues surged by $1.8 billion to $18.8 billion in September 2023, marking their highest level since July 2022.

"Total oil exports increased by 460 thousand barrels per day (kb/d) to 7.6 million barrels per day (Mbd), with crude oil accounting for 250 kb/d of the increase. The weighted average crude export price rose by $8 per barrel to $81.80 per barrel, narrowing its discount to North Sea Dated to $12.20 per barrel, the lowest level since March 2022," reads the report.

Following the Ukraine and Russia war, European countries shunned importing Russian crude and gas. However, Russia diverted its supply to Asia, and India emerged as the major beneficiary of discounted Russian crude. India, which imports 85% of its total oil, significantly increased its crude imports from Russia. Prior to the Ukraine and Russia war, Russia accounted for less than 2% of India's oil imports, but in the past seven months, it has become India's top oil supplier.

As per Vortexa, a London-based market intelligence provider, in September 2023, India imported nearly 36% or 1.58 million barrels per day (Mbd) of its total crude requirement from Russia. In August 2023, the country imported 1.44 million bpd from Russia. However, as Russia's discount decreased, India began to return to its traditional suppliers, Saudi Arabia and Iraq.

Meanwhile, the report also noted that the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict has not directly impacted oil flows. It also predicts that the global crude oil supply will increase by 1.7 million barrels per day in 2024 and 1.5 million bpd this year, reaching record highs, despite production cuts by major oil producers. The supply will come from non-Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries like the USA and Iran.

"World oil output rose 270 kb per day in September to 101.6 mb/d, led by higher production from Nigeria and Kazakhstan. The Israel-Hamas conflict has not had any direct impact on oil flows... Overall OPEC+ output is set to decline in 2023, although Iran may rank as the world's second largest source of growth after the United States," reads the report.

BUSINESS LINE, Delhi, 14.10.2023
Page No. 6, Size:(17.32)cms X (20.45)cms.

CAPITAL IDEAS.

RICHA MISHRA

Energy sector needs skilled workers

Across the hydrocarbon value chain, the demand for blue-collar workers is on the rise. Initiatives to train such workers are being ramped up

GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

On October 7, a statement from the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) said that it has joined forces with Hydrocarbon Sector Skill Council (HSSC) for skill development and capacity building in the hydrocarbon sector.

The hydrocarbon sector itself has gone through a lull. So, has there been a shift in hiring trend? If yes, which category is seeing an upswing? Is behavioural skill also a part of this training?

While there is always demand for petroleum engineers and geoscientists, there is also demand for blue-collar workers who do jobs such as drilling, laying pipelines or working in refineries.

All segments of the sector, upstream (exploration and production), downstream (refining and retailing) and midstream (pipeline networks) need blue-collar workers.

For example, in the upstream segment, assistant technicians for production are in demand; midstream requires skilled pipe fitters, particularly for city gas distribution; downstream needs retail outlet assistants. Other jobs in demand include process instrument operator, industrial electrician and welder, fire safety technician and LPG mechanic to name a few. These are important players in the hydrocarbon sector.

According to Alka Mittal, former Chairman ONGC, who was also CEO of Hydrocarbon Sector Skill Council, the entire value chain of the hydrocarbon sector requires huge skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled manpower.

ROLE OF HSSC

HSSC, which operates under the aegis of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, started its journey in October 2017. Since then HSSC has taken various initiatives to address the systemic imbalance between technical education and employable skills, by providing them comprehensive skills training, knowledge through vocational or technical hands-on training to meet the industry requirements and to ensure competitiveness in the global market.

For development of National Occupational Standards in the oil and gas sector, a total of 118 trades were identified by the industry committee for imparting skilling.

In order to create the pool of skilled manpower and for imparting quality training in line with industry requirement, Skill Development Institutes have been set up by the oil and gas public sector units. The institutes are in Bhubaneswar, Visakhapatnam, Kochi, Guwahati, Raebareli and Ahmedabad, where the candidates undergo the residential training programme to learn skills as per the industry requirement.

Additionally, HSSC is also endeavouring to identify more partners for creating more training centres in various locations on pan-India basis to meet the local employment requirement.

HIRING TREND

But has there been a shift in hiring trend in the energy space? According to Manish Ambwani, Head-Global Operations, GreenTree Advisory Services Pvt Ltd, a boutique search firm, "There has been a significant increase in hiring within the renewable energy sector, driven by the global focus on sustainability. With the global transition towards cleaner energy sources and reducing reliance on fossil fuel we are seeing lot of companies setting up teams in this space."

On the category of people who are being hired most, he said, "Hydrogen is gaining traction as a potential clean energy carrier. The interest in hydrogen technologies has led to increased hiring for roles related to hydrogen production. Hydrogen infrastructure development, apart from roles in technology, is also seeing lot of demand."

> **To create a pool of skilled manpower and for imparting quality training in line with** industry requirement, Skill Development Institutes have been set up.

COLLABORATION

What kind of job openings will SHRM and HSSC work at? Says Achal Khanna, CEO, SHRM India, APAC and MENA: "The tie-up is to create job opportunities across various sectors, with a primary focus on the hydrocarbon (oil and gas) sector. The partnership aims to enhance the skills and competencies of the Indian workforce, making them more attractive candidates for employment in the hydrocarbon sector."

Furthermore, the collaboration intends to nurture leadership capabilities, which will be valuable in various roles and industries beyond oil and gas, she said, adding that "In the longer run, both organisations (SHRM and HSSC) will look beyond the oil and gas sectors and get into manufacturing, railways, auto and other major infrastructure and service sectors."

The demand for assessment and training services in the workforce development sector is substantial and ever-growing, she said, adding "starting with the oil and gas sector, the demand for skilled and competent workers in the hydrocarbon sector is substantial."

The training will look at skill building, behavioural and skill assessments, behavioural training programmes. Skill building will be specific projects focused on skill development, capability enhancement, and related hard core technical activities.

Behavioural and skill assessments will include content, platforms and execution, to evaluate and enhance the behavioural skills and technical skills of the workforce. These assessments are designed to benefit not only the oil and gas sector but also other industries.

Behavioural training programmes aim to enhance behavioural skills and leadership capabilities. The focus here is on nurturing the soft skills and leadership attributes that are essential for career growth and success in various professional settings.

Most of the companies in the sector till now have been imparting such trainings in silos, which also costs the organisations. Trained and skilled resources are a much-needed component for this sector just as they are for other sectors. Not only do they help in preparing them before they actually hit the job floor, but also sensitise them to take on future challenge as most of the companies are diversifying into various other segments of the energy space.

The entire value chain's requirement of appropriately trained manpower in quantity and quality on a sustained and evolving basis is the need of the hour. What is needed is to sustain it and keep refreshing their skills in sync with the changing times.

BUSINESS LINE, Delhi, 14.10.2023
Page No. 9, Size:(12.71)cms X (9.05)cms.

Government offers 8 blocks for production of hydrocarbons under OLAP bid

Rishi Ranjan Kala
New Delhi

The Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas (MoPNG) has offered 8 blocks spread over 0.42 lakh sq km for exploration and production (E&P) of hydrocarbons under the Open Acreage Licensing Policy (OALP) bid round IX.

"The government of India has opened 99 per cent of the "No-Go" area of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) for hydrocarbon exploration and development. Eight blocks encompassing an acreage of 0.42 lakh sq km have been carved out based on expressions of interest (EoIs) received from potential investors during the EoI window XIII (April 1 to July 31, 2022)," the Directorate General of Hydrocarbons

(DGH) said. Of the eight blocks, three are in the Cauvery basin, two each in Saurashtra and Assam Shelf and one in the Cambay basin. While 6 blocks are spread over Category-I basins, the other two are in Category-II.

BASIN CATEGORIES

Category–I basins are those which have proven hydrocarbon resources with established commercial production, while Category–II have

Of the eight blocks, three are in the Cauvery basin, two each in Saurashtra and Assam Shelf and one in the Cambay basin

contingent resources that are yet to be converted to recoverable reserves and commercial production. Category–III basins have prospective resources with no hydrocarbon discovery and few exploration inputs and data.

In the ninth OLAP round, three blocks each are in ultra deep-water (27,154 sq km) and onland (3,666 sq km), while another two blocks are in shallow water (11,039 sq km.).

On blocks under finalisation, the DGH said "Around 20 additional around 20 EoIs received (August 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023) covering about 95,000 sq km in east coast basins like Krishna-Godavari and Mahanadi and West Coast Basins like Saurashtra, Kutch, Mumbai etc. Are under finalisation."

In March 2016, the government introduced OALP as a part of the Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy (HELP).

Besides, companies selected through competitive bidding would enter into contract with the government as per the Model Revenue Sharing Contract (MRSC) published before the competitive bidding. Such model contracts will be based on the principles of HELP.

HINDU, Delhi, 14.10.2023
Page No. 12, Size:(3.39)cms X (10.31)cms.

IOC gets board nod to invest ₹1,660 crore in NTPC Green JV

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

Indian Oil Corporation's (IOC) board approved equity contribution of up to ₹1,660.15 crore by the state-owned refiner, towards a 50% stake in joint venture (JV) company IndianOil NTPC Green Energy.

The board of IOC also accorded its approval to the investment plan of the JV for setting up of renewable energy power plants, Indian Oil said in a filing with the exchanges.

Set up in June, the joint venture with power producer NTPC's wholly owned subsidiary NTPC Green Energy will develop renewable energy-based power projects such as solar PV and wind to meet round-the-clock power requirements of new projects being undertaken by Indian Oil Corporation's refineries.

FINANCIAL EXPRESS, Delhi, 14.10.2023
Page No. 10, Size:(10.60)cms X (11.42)cms.

BREACHES $89 PER BARREL

Oil price surges over 4% on Israel-Gaza concerns

Countries urged Israel to hold off on plans for an all-out assault on Gaza

STEPHANIE KELLY
New York, October 13

OIL PRICES LEAPT nearly $4 on Friday, with Brent on track for its highest weekly gain since April, as investors worried the conflict in the Middle East could widen after Israel warned half of Gaza's population to move south.

Brent futures rose $3.97, or 4.6%, to $89.97 per barrel as of 12:46 p.m. EDT (1646 GMT). US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude gained $3.88, or 4.7%, to $86.79 a barrel, after earlier breaking the $4 barrier.

Brent was set for a weekly gain of 6.3%, its biggest such increase since April. WTI was set to climb about 4.8% for the week, after both surged on Monday.

Market participants worried about disruptions to Middle Eastern exports after the weekend attack by Hamas on Israel threatened a wider conflict. The United Nations said Israel's military informed it late on Thursday that 1.1 million Palestinians in Gaza should relocate to the enclave's south within the next 24 hours, in what Palestinians fear could be a precursor to a planned Israeli ground offensive following a deadly Hamas militant attack.

HEATING UP

- Brent was set for a weekly gain of 6.3%, its biggest such increase since April. WTI was set to climb about 4.8% for the week
- Market is worried about disruptions to Middle Eastern exports after the attack by Hamas on Israel threatened a wider conflict

Countries urged Israel to hold off on plans for an all-out assault on northern Gaza, where more than a million civilians largely defied its order to evacuate before it goes after Hamas militants who slaughtered Israelis a week ago.

Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian on Friday discussed the Israeli conflict with Hamas with the head of the powerful Tehran-backed Lebanese armed group Hezbollah, which has launched its own cross-border attacks on Israel. "The market is concerned because we don't know what that means. And could it impact oil?" said Phil Flynn, an analyst at Price Futures Group.

While oil flows have not yet been affected by the conflict, analysts and market observers are assessing how it could have an impact on the larger oil complex. Also boosting prices on Friday, the US imposed the first sanctions on Thursday on owners of tankers carrying Russian oil priced above the G7's price cap of $60 a barrel, to close loopholes in the mechanism designed to punish Moscow for its invasion of Ukraine.

Russia is the world's second-largest oil producer and a major exporter and the tighter US scrutiny of its shipments could curtail supply.

This week, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) kept its forecast for growth in global oil demand, citing signs of a resilient world economy so far this year and expected further demand gains in China, the world's biggest oil importer.

"Supply side issues remained the focus in the crude oil market," Daniel Hynes, senior commodity strategist at ANZ, said in a note on Friday, adding that prices during early trade on Friday rose on the stronger US sanctions enforcement.

Oil prices also shrugged off data released on Friday showing a month-on-month decline in Chinese crude imports. **REUTERS**

BUSINESS STANDARD, Delhi, 14.10.2023
Page No. 10, Size:(13.63)cms X (21.72)cms.

Oil rises $3 after US tightens curbs on Russia crude sales

REUTERS
London, 13 October

Oil prices leapt $3 on Friday after the US tightened its sanctions programme against Russian crude exports, raising supply concerns in an already tight market, with global inventories forecast to decline through the fourth quarter.

Brent futures rose $2.88 to $88.88 per barrel as of 1050 Greenich Mean Time (GMT). US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude gained $2.91 to $85.82 a barrel. Both benchmarks had earlier risen more than $3. Despite fluctuations through the week in both benchmarks, Brent was set for a weekly gain of around 5 per cent, while WTI was set to climb over 3.5 per cent for the week, after both surged on Monday.

The uptick was driven by the potential for disruptions to Middle Eastern exports after the weekend attack by militant Islamist group Hamas on Israel threatened a wider conflict.

"A geopolitical risk premium still lingers around the corner that is likely to support oil prices in the short-term," said Kelvin Wong, senior markets analyst at OANDA in Singapore.

BRENT CRUDE SPOT

*as of IST 1730 hrs
Compiled by BS Research Bureau
Source: *Bloomberg*

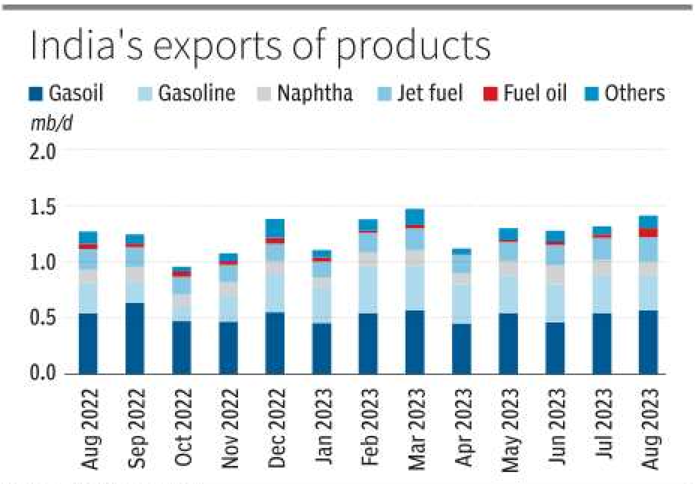
BUSINESS LINE, Delhi, 14.10.2023
Page No. 3, Size:(12.71)cms X (11.43)cms.

POL exports likely to slip in Sept on reduced diesel and petrol outflows: OPEC report

Our Bureau
New Delhi

India's exports of refined petroleum products (POL) are expected to decline in September, after rising for two consecutive months, on account of lesser outbound shipments of diesel and petrol.

According to OPEC's monthly oil market report for October, "Product exports are expected to slip in September due to reduced outflows of diesel and gasoline driven by planned maintenance at export-oriented refiners."



Sources: PPAC and OPEC

POL EXPORTS

Trade sources also anticipate that exports from the world's fourth largest refiner are likely to soften beginning September due to autumn maintenance at refineries and stocking of auto fuels ahead of the festive October-December season, when domestic fuel consumption picks up.

As per the Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC), India's POL exports rose to 5.36 million tonnes (mt) in July 2023 from 5.01 mt in June.

PPAC data also show that India's exports of POL rose by almost 9 per cent m-o-m to 5.83 mt in August largely supported by outbound shipments of diesel, Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) and fuel oil.

This was the highest in FY24 and the second highest in the current calendar year.

According to OPEC's monthly report, India's product exports rose 7 per cent m-o-m, or 99,000 barrels per day (b/d), to average 1.4 million b/d (mb/d), a five-month high.

SOFTENING IMPORTS

"Gains were seen in fuel oil, jet fuel and other products. The increase in outflows comes amid lower domestic demand during the monsoon season and higher demand for jet fuel on the international market. Compared to the same month last year, product outflows from India were up by 144,000 b/d, or 11 per cent," it added.

OPEC said that India's crude imports continued to decline, falling to a 10-month low of 4.4 mb/d in August, with the monsoon season weighing on domestic demand. Compared to the previous month, crude inflows were down 185,000 b/d, or 4 per cent. Y-o-Y, crude imports were lower by 0.3 mb/d, or around 6 per cent.

"In terms of crude imports by source, Kpler data show Russia was the top supplier of crude to India in August, with a share of 32 per cent, after holding a share of 44 per cent in July. Iraq was second with 20 per cent, followed by Saudi Arabia with 9 per cent.

FINANCIAL EXPRESS, Delhi, 14.10.2023
Page No. 3, Size:(2.55)cms X (16.03)cms.

Refining margins for OMCs likely to be strong

ARUNIMA BHARADWAJ
New Delhi, October 13

THE GROSS REFINING margins for downstream oil marketing companies are expected to be positive and set for a "multi-year bullish trend" due to steady demand growth and higher investment in secondary processing by the refiners, ICICI Securities said in a report on Friday.

The assessment comes amidst renewed concerns about marketing margins in these companies for retail sale of auto fuels, following a recent spike in global crude oil prices and uncertainty caused by the Israel-Hamas conflict. "Within refining product-wise demand, strength is observed in both transportation fuels (gasoline/diesel/ATF) as well as petrochemical/industrial inputs (naphtha/LPG)," noted the analysts.

To meet the increasing demand, large scale secondary processing capacity will also be required in global refining portfolio. However, even with the expected increase in refining margins, the retail pricing of petrol and diesel will play a crucial role in determining the bottom lines of the OMCs in the current quarter. "We remain cautious on OMCs in the near term, but a normalisation of retail prices can significantly boost earnings," the report said.

Petrol and diesel prices are to be revised daily based on the 15-day rolling average, as per the pricing methodology followed by the OMCs. However, prices have not been revised since April last year, following the surge in global crude prices due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Over the past two quarters, OMCs have been posting profits until late September when crude prices reached their highest level at $97 a barrel since November 2022.

PIONEER, Delhi, 14.10.2023
Page No. 3, Size:(34.62)cms X (10.09)cms.

Task force meeting on air pollution held

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, P K Mishra, on Friday chaired a high-level task force meeting on air pollution in Delhi-NCR and reviewed the preparedness to deal with the issue of adverse air quality in the region as the winter season approaches.

Mishra, during the meeting at the Prime Minister's Office, also discussed the implementation of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP), its monitoring and measures to improve its enforcement, a statement issued by the PMO said.

He said the strict implementation of the actions listed under the GRAP by all concerned is critical to prevent worsening of air quality.

The meeting was held to review the preparedness of various stakeholders to deal with the issue of adverse air quality in Delhi-NCR as the winter season approaches, the statement said.

During the meeting, Mishra discussed in detail about various measures being undertaken to reduce the impact of different sources of air pollution, including industrial pollution, vehicular pollution, dust from construction and demolition (C&D) activities, dust from roads, burning of municipal solid waste (MSW), biomass and miscellaneous waste, agricultural stubble burning and dispersed sources.

Greening and plantation initiatives to abate air pollution were also deliberated during the meeting, the statement said.

MM Kutty, Chairman, Commission for Air Quality Management, informed that industries in National Capital Region (NCR) are being shifted to cleaner fuels and out of 240 industrial areas, as many as 211 have already been provided CNG connection.

Similarly, out of 7,759 fuel-based industries, as many as 7,449 have shifted to PNG or approved fuels.

Kutty also said there has been increase in e-vehicles and currently, 4,12,393 e-vehicles are registered in the NCR, the statement said. The number of e-buses and battery charging stations has also increased and now there are 4,793 e-vehicle charging points in Delhi, it said.

In regard to construction and demolition waste management, the CAQM informed that five C&D waste processing facilities with capacity of 5,150 tonnes per day (TPD) are operational and one more facility with 1,000 TPD capacity is in the pipeline in Delhi. In Haryana, a C&D facility with 600 TPD capacity is operational and 700 TPD is in the pipeline. In Uttar Pradesh, a 1,300 TPD facility is operational and two facilities are in the pipeline. All states have been requested to augment C&D waste processing capacities, the statement said.

In an effort to ensure reduction of the paddy stubble burning in Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, the principal secretary to the prime minister instructed close monitoring of the issue by chief secretaries of the three states.

He advised the in-situ management of paddy stubble through Crop Residue Management (CRM) machines, and use of bio-decomposers.

Mishra also advised the Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR) to improve the technologies.

Elaborating on ex-situ management of paddy stubble, he advised working on developing economic use of paddy straw.

He also stressed on developing adequate storage facilities for baled straw along with infrastructure for baling, briquetting and pelleting for effective ex-situ utilisation of paddy straw, the statement said.

Further, strict adherence to the stipulated targets for co-firing of biomass, with a focus on paddy straw, in thermal power plants was also discussed, it said. The data showed that a total 2271 burning events were detected in the six states between 15-Sept-2023 and 13-Oct-2023, which are distributed as 1230, 374, 259, 02, 174 and 232 in Punjab, Haryana, UP, Delhi, Rajasthan and MP, respectively.

During the meeting, Mishra stressed on a multi-pronged approach comprising several measures, such as procurement of biomass pellets, adopting the benchmark price issued by the power ministry, expanding gas infrastructure and supply in entire NCR by March 2024, and ensuring expeditious supply of biomass on demand, according to the statement.

VEER ARJUN, Delhi, 14.10.2023
Page No. 11, Size:(21.88)cms X (30.88)cms.

जम्मू-कश्मीर, पूर्वोत्तर राज्यों में शहरी गैस वितरण के लिए निविदा प्रक्रिया शुरू

नई दिल्ली, (भाषा)। देश में प्राकृतिक गैस की पहुंच बढ़ाने की कोशिश में लगी सरकार ने बृहस्पतिवार को नवीनतम दौर की बोली में जम्मू कश्मीर एवं उत्तर-पूर्व समेत सात क्षेत्रों में सीएनजी खुदरा बिक्री लाइसेंस की पेशकश की। इस लाइसेंस वितरण से 4.5 अरब डॉलर का निवेश आने का अनुमान है। पेट्रोलियम एवं प्राकृतिक गैस नियामक बोर्ड (पीएनजीआरबी) ने वाहनों के लिए सीएनजी की खुदरा बिक्री और घरेलू रसोई एवं उद्योगों तक ईंधन पहुंचाने के लिए बोली के 12वें दौर में आठ भौगोलिक क्षेत्रों (जीए) में शहरी गैस वितरण (सीजीडी) लाइसेंस की पेशकश की। इन भौगोलिक क्षेत्रों में अरुणाचल प्रदेश, मेघालय, मणिपुर, नगालैंड, सिक्किम, जम्मू-कश्मीर और लद्दाख शामिल हैं। चुनाव आयोग से मंजूरी मिलने के बाद इस सूची में मिजोरम को शामिल किया जाएगा। पेट्रोलियम एवं प्राकृतिक गैस मंत्री हरदीप सिंह पुरी ने शहरी गैस वितरण की बोली के नए दौर की शुरुआत करते हुए कहा कि इस दौर के बाद, गैस को उन जगहों तक पहुंचाया जाएगा जहां अब तक यह नहीं पहुंच पाई है। वर्तमान में पीएनजीआरबी ने 300 भौगोलिक क्षेत्रों में गैस वितरण को अधिकृत किया हुआ है। यह देश के लगभग 88 प्रतिशत भौगोलिक क्षेत्र और 98 प्रतिशत जनसंख्या को समाहित करते हैं।

VIRAT VAIBHAV, Delhi, 14.10.2023
Page No. 13, Size:(16.67)cms X (32.65)cms.

पर्यावरण बनाम बाजार

तेल कंपनियां जलवायु परिवर्तन की जिम्मेदारी उपभोक्ताओं पर डालती हैं

जलवायु संकट के प्रति राजनीतिक प्रतिक्रिया काफी हद तक अपर्याप्त बनी हुई है, जबकि गर्मी की लहरें, तूफान, बाढ़ और जंगल की आग तेज और तीव्र होती जा रही हैं। राजनीतिक जड़ता को, अन्य बातों के अलावा, राजनीतिक निर्णय निर्माताओं पर जीवाश्म ईंधन हितों की जकड़न और उत्तरी अमेरिका में सत्ता के गलियारों पर प्रदूषणकारी उद्योगों के मजबूत प्रभाव से समझाया जा सकता है। ये उद्योग अपने हितों को सुरक्षित करने के लिए दो प्रकार के प्रवचन का उपयोग करते हैं। सबसे पहले, वे पारिस्थितिक मुद्दों को बदनाम करते हैं और हाशिए पर डाल देते हैं। उदाहरण के लिए, सिएटल, वाशिंगटन जैसे जलवायु नीतियों के खिलाफ तेल और गैस कंपनियों द्वारा की गई कार्रवाइयों के बारे में सोचें, जहां उन्होंने शहर द्वारा अपनाई गई टारपीडो समर्थक पर्यावरण नीतियों के लिए पैरवी करने वालों को काम पर रखा, और साथ ही गैस को बढ़ावा देने के लिए इंस्टाग्राम प्रभावकों को भुगतान किया। दूसरे, उद्योग लोगों को यह समझाने का काम करता है कि उनकी प्रदूषणकारी गतिविधियां जलवायु और पर्यावरणीय संकटों के प्रबंधन के अनुकूल हैं। ये रीब्रांडिंग रणनीतियाँ ग्रीनवॉशिंग निष्कर्षण गतिविधियों के व्यापक उद्देश्य का हिस्सा हैं।

पिछले तीन दशकों में, पांच सबसे बड़ी अमेरिकी तेल कंपनियों ने आम जनता और राजनीतिक नीति निर्माताओं के साथ अपने संचार को बढ़ावा देने के लिए विपणन और दान पर तीन अरब अमेरिकी डॉलर से अधिक खर्च किए हैं।

जलवायु संकट पर अंकुश लगाने के लिए नागरिकों को जिम्मेदार बनाना

तेल उद्योग द्वारा अपनाई गई एक विशेष रूप से महत्वपूर्ण रणनीति जलवायु परिवर्तन शमन और अनुकूलन की जिम्मेदारी व्यक्ति पर डालना है। प्रदूषण और ग्रीनहाउस गैस उत्सर्जन को कम करने का बोझ - और उससे होने वाले जलवायु परिवर्तन के खिलाफ लड़ाई - व्यक्तियों पर डालकर, तेल कंपनियां और उनके राजनीतिक सहयोगी अपने जीवाश्म ईंधन उत्पादन, खपत और शोषण प्रथाओं में बदलाव करने की जिम्मेदारी खुद ले रहे हैं।

उद्योग विपणन के प्रतीक के रूप में कार्बन पदचिह्न

व्यक्ति पर जिम्मेदारी डालने की इस रणनीति की सबसे स्पष्ट अभिव्यक्ति कार्बन पदचिह्न का निर्माण है। 2000 के दशक की शुरुआत में विशाल ब्रिटिश पेट्रोलियम द्वारा बियॉन्ड पेट्रोलियम नामक संचार रणनीति से जन्मा कार्बन पदचिह्न ग्रीनहाउस गैस उत्सर्जन पर व्यक्तिगत खपत के प्रभाव को मापता है। जलवायु संकट में व्यक्तिगत कार्रवाई के महत्व को बढ़ावा देने वाले कई विज्ञापनों के माध्यम से, बीपी उपभोक्ता पर जलवायु समस्या की जिम्मेदारी डालने में सफल रहा है। इससे वह समाधान खोजने और कार्बन उत्सर्जन को कम करने की जिम्मेदारी से बच जाता है।

बीपी का बियॉन्ड पेट्रोलियम अभियान भी व्यक्तियों को अपने उपभोग स्तर को बनाए रखते हुए अधिक टिकाऊजीवन शैली अपनाने के लिए प्रोत्साहित करने के लिए डिज़ाइन किया गया था। यह रणनीति उस चीज़ में योगदान करती है जिसे सैन डिएगो स्टेट यूनिवर्सिटी और साउथवेस्टर्न यूनिवर्सिटी के शोधकर्ता कार्ल स्मेरेनिक और वैलेरी रेनेगर पूंजीवादी एजेंसी कहते हैं। पर्यावरणवादी छवि का समर्थन करके और खुद को समस्या के स्रोत के रूप में हटाकर, तेल दिग्गज लोगों की उपभोग से परे पर्यावरणीय कार्वाई के अन्य रूपों के बारे में सोचने की क्षमता को सीमित करते हैं। यह जलवायु परिवर्तन के प्रति व्यक्ति और उसकी जिम्मेदारी को बाज़ार के तर्क के भीतर सीमित कर देता है, जिससे प्रणालीगत परिवर्तन की संभावनाएं कम हो जाती हैं।

एक्सॉनमोबिल और टोटल भी समान रणनीतियों में संलग्न हैं। वे ग्रीनहाउस गैस उत्सर्जन को मांग की समस्या मानते हैं, आपूर्ति की नहीं, वह उपभोक्ता और जलवायु परिवर्तन को कम करने के लिए जिम्मेदार एकमात्र हितधारक के रूप में व्यक्ति के इर्द-गिर्द एक काल्पनिक अवधारणा बनाते हैं। यह संचार रणनीति जीवाश्म ईंधन के निरंतर उत्पादन को वैध बनाती है और बढ़ती मांग पर उंगली उठाकर उद्योग को प्रतिबंधात्मक पर्यावरणीय नियमों से बचाने का काम करती है।

लुइसियाना का हरित और समुदाय-आधारित तेल उद्योग

लुइसियाना में राजनीतिक प्रवचनों और अनुकूलन की प्रथाओं पर मेरे डॉक्टरेट शोध से पता चलता है कि जीवाश्म ईंधन उद्योग इस अलंकारिक और विपणन तर्क पर भरोसा करते हैं। ग्रीनवॉशिंग उन्हें तटीय बहाली में निवेश करके और पर्यावरण-जिम्मेदार, समुदाय-आधारित उद्योग को बढ़ावा देकर अपनी भूमिका को सर्वोपरि रखने और खुद को वास्तविक पर्यावरण रक्षक के रूप में पेश करने में सक्षम बनाता है। एक्सॉनमोबिल जैसी प्रमुख तेल कंपनियों के पैरवीकर्ता और लुइसियाना मिड-कॉन्टिनेंट ऑयल एंड गैस एसोसिएशन जैसे वकालत समूह, साथ ही लुइसियाना सीनेट और प्रतिनिधि सभा में उनके राजनीतिक साझेदार, जीवाश्म ईंधन की हरित प्रकृति पर जोर देते हैं। यह बयानबाजी इस विचार को व्यक्त करती है कि निष्कर्षण गतिविधियों को संरक्षित करना अमेरिका और जलवायु परिवर्तन के खिलाफ लड़ाई के लिए लाभदायक है। इस तर्क के अनुसार, अमेरिकी तेल और गैस का कार्बन फुटप्रिंट अंतरराष्ट्रीय स्तर पर उत्पादित तेल और गैस की तुलना में बेहतर है। इसलिए, वे बढ़ती उपभोक्ता मांग के सामने वैश्विक उत्सर्जन को कम करने में मदद करते हैं। हरित जीवाश्म ईंधन की कहानी अन्य राज्यों के विधाई क्षेत्रों में भी रफ्तार पकड़ रही है, जिससे स्थानीय अर्थव्यवस्थाओं पर इन उद्योगों की पकड़ सुनिश्चित हो रही है।

लुइसियाना में तेल कंपनियों की पारिस्थितिक गतिविधियों को एक सच्चे काजुन पर्यावरण आंदोलन के रूप में संदर्भित करते हुए, पैरवीकार अपनी परिचालन गतिविधियों को संरक्षित करने के प्रयास में स्थानीय पहचान और नागरिक समर्थन की मांग करते हैं। वैयक्तिकरण का यह दूसरा रूप स्थानीय आबादी के हितों और भलाई पर सीधे हमले के रूप में जलवायु नीतियों, विशेष रूप से बाइडेन प्रशासन को लक्षित करता है। इस प्रकार सामुदायिक निवेश के माध्यम से एक वास्तविक तेल संस्कृति उभरी है (उदाहरण के लिए, न्यू ऑरलियन्स में जैज़ और हेरिटेज फेस्टिवल के लिए शेल की दीर्घकालिक फंडिंग, या स्थानीय तूफान रिकवरी ऑपरेशन)। यह स्थानीय तेल उद्योग के ऐतिहासिक विकास के साथ काजुन पहचान के उलझाव पर भी प्रकाश डालता है।

राजनीतिक जड़ता को सुदृढ़ करने के लिए व्यक्तिगत जिम्मेदारी का उपयोग करना

विशेष रूप से लुइसियाना में, वैयक्तिकरण को निष्कर्षण गतिविधियों के लिए लोकप्रिय समर्थन और प्रतिबंधात्मक नियमों या पर्यावरणीय आंदोलनों की अस्वीकृति में देखा जा सकता है। सच्चे पर्यावरण और सामुदायिक संरक्षक के रूप में स्थापित, तेल और गैस उद्योग राजनीतिक पैरवी और जनमत के समर्थन के माध्यम से विधाई क्षेत्रों में अपना प्रभाव बनाए रखते हैं। इस तरह, वे अपनी परिचालन प्रथाओं पर किसी भी पुनर्विचार को टालने में कामयाब होते हैं। बड़े पैमाने पर वैयक्तिकरण, चाहे बीपी के अभियानों के माध्यम से या फ्रांसीसी राष्ट्रपति इमैनुएल मैक्रॉन की स्कूली बच्चों से पेड़ लगाने की अपील, जलवायु परिवर्तन के खिलाफ लड़ाई की जिम्मेदारी को उलट देती है। यह उस राजनीतिक जड़ता को प्रोत्साहित करता है जो प्रदूषण फैलाने वाले उद्योगों के हितों की रक्षा करती है।

द कन्वरसेशन

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तेल कंपनियों में विस्तार करने की हलचल बढ़ी

एक्सॉन मोबिल ने अमेरिका में सबसे बड़ा तेल क्षेत्र परमिअन बेसिन शेल फील्ड चलाने वाली कंपनी पायोनियर नेचुरल रिसोर्सेस को 4.95 लाख करोड़ रुपए में खरीद लिया है। 1998 में मोबिल ऑयल को खरीदने के बाद यह एक्सॉन का सबसे बड़ा अधिग्रहण है। इधर तेल कंपनियों के बीच विस्तार की होड़ चल पड़ी है। शेवरॉन और कोनकोफिलिप्स भी शेल फील्ड खरीदने की कोशिश में हैं। इस बीच, बीपी ने इन्वेस्टरों को बताया कि वह तेल, गैस प्रोडक्शन में कटौती करेगी और अक्षय ऊर्जा स्रोतों पर ध्यान देगी।