BUSINESS LINE, Delhi, 16.12.2023
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COP28: Much ado about very little

SMOKESCREEN. The pledges made in the conference amount to nothing, there are no binding commitments

M RAMESH

The words "transition away from fossil fuels" occurring in the decision text put out by the COP28 presidency at the climate conference seem to have generated a swell of excitement across the world.

Indeed, it is not without basis. While the urgent need for bidding goodbye to all fossil fuels has been well-recognised, it is for the first time doing away with 'fossil fuels' has been formally brought onboard a decision text. But one would have to think hard if it justifies screaming headlines like 'historic agreement', 'beginning of the end of fossil fuels'— giving the impression that rich countries have contributed something big to the cause of climate action.

The truth is that COP28 has changed nothing. The words "transitioning away from fossil fuels" means that some people in the room have just acknowledged the presence of the elephant in the room. The elephant doesn't go away just because people have noted that it is there. So, where is the commitment for 'the beginning of the end of the fossil fuel era', as the UNFCCC press release says?

COP meetings typically end in an explosion of hype. The 'loss and damage' fund set up at COP27 in Egypt last year is a case in point.

LOOSELY WORDED

Para 28(d) of the text is loose. First of all, the paragraph "calls on the parties" to do a number of things, including "accelerating efforts towards phase-down of unabated coal" and "transitioning away from fossil fuels". A call is not an agreement.

The use of the word "efforts" in the context of unabated coal, and the words "in a just, orderly and equitable manner" for fossil fuels mean countries will make their moves on "best effort" basis.

There is no hammer-nailing of any country to any commitment. In the absence of any binding commitment, platitudinous statements have little meaning.

Nobody is cutting down fossil fuels consumption. The US consumption of natural gas in 2022 was a record 32.26 trillion cubic feet. The country's coal consumption has been rising in the last three years — it was 594 million tonnes (mt) in 2022.

India's coal consumption is about 800 mt, but it is home to four times as many people in the US and, unlike the US, has no other energy source. As for the EU, the region's coal production increased 2 per cent to 454 mt in 2022. Its natural gas consumption decreased in 2022, but presumably only because of the Ukraine war.

Therefore, one should mine reality from hype. COP meetings typically end in an explosion of hype. For example, when the 'loss and damage' fund was set up at COP27 in Egypt last year, the reaction was euphoric, even though the fund had not a penny.

And now, in COP28, pledges worth $792 million were received for the fund (to which the US, which is spending billions on the Ukraine war, has contributed $17 million), the reaction again is as though something big has happened.

When you look through the smokescreen of hype, you see that the pledges amount to nothing, compared with the requirement. In 2022, Pakistan alone suffered loss and damage of $30 billion. When the need is so huge, a fund of less than a billion dollars is like offering a banana to a hungry elephant.

The need for a mechanism for financially helping a country hit by a climate event get back on its feet has been talked about since at least the Warsaw COP of 2013, when the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage was set up. Thus, the pledges received for the L&D fund are too little, very late.

USEFULNESS OF COP

Despite decades of negotiations, things have gotten only worse in terms of climate change. Should we hold COP meetings at all? The answer is an emphatic 'yes'.

At the time of the Paris conference (COP21 of 2015), the world was on a trajectory to get hotter by 4 degrees Celsius by 2100 (over the benchmark of the average temperatures of the pre-industrialisation era of 1850-1900.) Scientists have determined that up to 1.5 degrees (the "ambition") things will be (sort of) okay; up to 2 degrees, well, we can somehow manage; but beyond 2 degrees it is really bad and gets worse all the way up.

Today, as the recent Emissions Gap Report of the United Nations Environment Programme said, the world is headed to anywhere between 2.5 degrees and 2.9 degrees, perhaps closer to the latter, which is calamitous. But the journey from 4 degrees to 2.9 could not have happened but for the COP conferences. While it is debatable as to what exactly the COPs have brought in, it is undisputable that a lot of action has happened elsewhere because of the climate alarm rung by the COP meetings.

The hope is that things will slowly reach a tipping point soon, beyond which there will be acceleration of actions at a pace consistent with the need.

Many experts believe that the "1.5 degree target" isn't realistic anymore, the time for it has passed. The 6th Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC) — a scientific body tasked with generating data for negotiations — has said that Earth is already warmer by 1.1 degrees. There isn't much runway left.

ECONOMIC TIMES, Delhi, 16.12.2023
Page No. 6, Size:(8.12)cms X (4.03)cms.

Crude Oil Swings Negative as Fedspeak Stifles Relief Rally

Oil swung from gains to losses on Friday as hawkish signals from Federal Reserve officials undercut a risk-on mood that had shown the potential to halt crude's nearly two-month skid. West Texas Intermediate dropped 0.8% to trade near $71 a barrel, erasing an earlier advance, after New York Fed President John Williams said it's too early for officials to think about cutting rates in March. The slide puts crude on pace for its eighth straight weekly decline. Crude had rallied the most in about a month on Thursday, after Fed Chairman Jerome Powell statement on easy policy.—**Bloomberg**

BUSINESS LINE, Delhi, 16.12.2023
Page No. 3, Size:(12.71)cms X (12.22)cms.

India's liquid fuels consumption to surge at an average 0.3 mb/d in 2024

Rishi Ranjan Kala
New Delhi

India's liquid fuel consumption, which includes crude oil and refined petroleum products, is expected to grow at an average of 0.3 million barrels per day (mb/d) in 2024, the US EIA (Energy Information Administration) has said.

According to the US EIA's short-term energy outlook (STEO), global liquid fuel consumption is projected to increase by 1.8 mb/d in 2023 and by 1.3 mb/d in 2024. Most of the expected growth in liquid fuels demand is in non-OECD Asia, led by China and India.

"We expect China's liquid fuels consumption to rise by 0.8 mb/d in 2023 and by 0.3 mb/d in 2024. India's liquid fuel consumption in our forecast increases by an average of 0.3 mb/d in both 2023 and 2024," it added.

Liquid fuels include crude oil and refined petroleum products, natural gas liquids, biofuels and liquids derived from other hydrocarbon sources (including coal to liquids and gas to liquids). It does not include liquefied natural gas (LNG) and liquid hydrogen.

OUTLOOK. US EIA expects global liquid fuel consumption to increase by 1.8 mb/d in 2023 and by 1.3 mb/d in 2024 REUTERS

RISING CONSUMPTION

The US Department of Energy's statistical and analytical agency has projected India's petroleum and other liquid fuels consumption at 5.65 mb/d in Q1 2024 calendar year, 5.72 mb/d in April-June 2024, 5.34 mb/d and 5.68 mb/d in Q3 and Q4 2024, respectively.

For the entire 2024, the world's third-largest crude oil importer's consumption of liquid fuels as well as crude oil is projected at 5.6 mb/d, against 5.31 mb/d in the current calendar year and 5.02 mb/d in 2022.

OPEC has projected India's oil demand in 2024 at 5.59 mb/d against 5.37 mb/d in 2023 and 5.14 mb/d in 2022.

In Q1 2024, oil demand is projected to grow by a healthy 227,000 barrels per day (b/d), on an annual basis, OPEC said in its monthly oil market report of December 2023.

"Distillates are expected to be the driver of oil demand growth, supported by harvesting, construction and manufacturing activities. Additionally, annual traditional festivities and the influx of travellers are expected to support transportation activity and boost gasoline and jet/ kerosene demand. Overall, in 2024, India is expected to see a healthy oil demand growth of 220,000 b/d, Y-o-Y," it added.

CRUDE OIL PRICES

The US EIA's outlook expects the Brent price to increase from an average of $78 per barrel in December 2023 to an average of $83 per barrel for 2024.

"Our forecast annual peak in the mid-$80 per barrel range at the end of Q1 2024, was about $10 a barrel higher than futures contracts for delivery during that period when we closed STEO forecast runs. We expect OPEC+ production cuts will offset lower global demand growth, prevent increases in global oil inventories, and keep Brent prices above $80 a barrel next year.

"Although we forecast crude oil prices to increase from the current price, we reduced our forecast for the 2024 annual average Brent price by $11 per barrel from our November STEO," it added.

BUSINESS STANDARD, Delhi, 16.12.2023
Page No. 4, Size:(39.48)cms X (18.97)cms.

India set to buy Venezuelan crude

Puri says India open to importing from any country not under sanctions

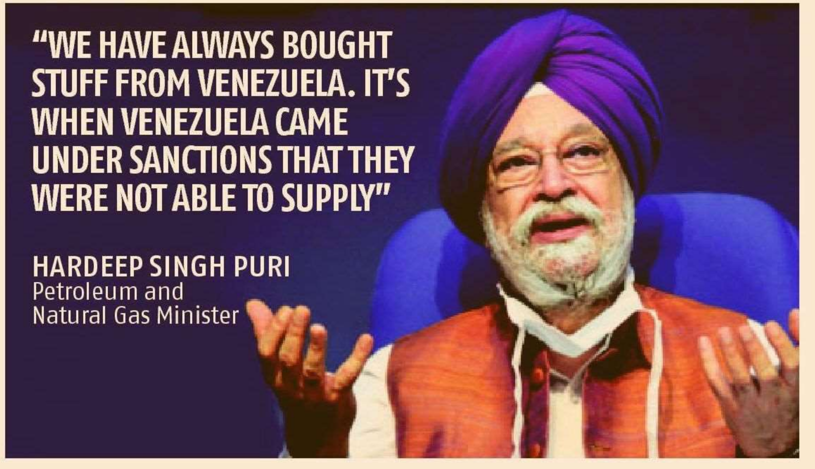
SUBHAYAN CHAKRABORTY
New Delhi, 15 December

The Ministry of Petroleum has given its informal nod to oil-marketing companies (OMCs) for sourcing crude from Venezuela, which in October became free from certain US sanctions, officials said.

Among public sector OMCs, BPCL is the first one to have placed purchase orders, they said. IOCL and Reliance Industries have bought Venezuelan oil in the past.

The decision has been taken even as more Indian refineries become capable of handling the ultra-heavy Merey-16 grade of crude from the South American country, the officials added.

"We always buy from Venezuela. We have always bought stuff from Venezuela. It's when Venezuela came under sanctions that they were not able to supply," Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said at a press briefing on Friday.



He said many refineries, including Indian Oil Corporation's (IOC) Paradip refinery in Odisha, were capable of processing the heavy Venezuelan oil.

On October 18, the US Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control suspended Venezuela-related sanctions applicable to most oil and gas sector operations, which was introduced by the Donald Trump administration. This included the sale of oil and gas, as well as the payment of taxes, royalties, costs, fees, dividends, and profits related to oil.

Before the Covid-19 pandemic, India had regularly imported crude oil from the South American country, which made up 6-7 per cent of the country's total oil imports. Shipments had reached their peak in 2018-19 when $7.24 billion worth of crude came from the country, which was India's fifth largest source of crude. In 2020-21, this had reduced to $643 million, followed by no shipments till now.

ONGC has $500 million worth of dividend payments stuck in its Venezuelan assets. The company's overseas investment arm, ONGC Videsh, has 40 per cent in the San Cristobal field in eastern Venezuela.

Diversifying supply

The government is aiming to diversify India's sources of oil. They added the rising threat of potential disruptions to the global oil supply, including the increasing chances of escalating tensions around the Israel-Hamas war, has necessitated this further. "The latest focus on Venezuela is part of this broader move," an official said.

After more than a year of securing major shipments of Russian crude, India is increasingly looking to re-establish supplies from its traditional partners in West Asia.

In October, the share of Russian crude in India's imports slipped to 33 per cent, down from September's 35 per cent, and much lower than its historic high of 42 per cent, Reuters reported.

This has happened even as the share of Saudi Arabia and Iraq has crept up in recent months. Estimates made by London-based commodity data analytics provider Vortexa, which tracks ship movements to estimate imports, showed imports from Russia rose 5 per cent to 1.68 million barrels per day.

Average levels of discount have increased $8-10 per barrel in recent months, up from around $4 per barrel in July.

INDIAN EXPRESS, Delhi, 16.12.2023
Page No. 19, Size:(8.02)cms X (5.48)cms.

India will buy crude from Venezuela, any country not under sanctions: Puri

SUKALP SHARMA
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 15

INDIA WILL buy crude oil from Venezuela as a number of Indian refineries are equipped to process heavy crudes, Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said. With the United States (US) easing sanctions on Caracas in October, India's imports of Venezuelan oil are set to resume after three years. The minister said that as a major international consumer of crude oil, India is willing to buy oil from any country that is not under sanctions.

Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri. *PTI*

At least three Indian refiners are understood to have booked Venezuelan oil cargoes, which are expected to land in India over the next couple of months. Bharat Petroleum Corporation is also looking to start imports of oil from the Latin American country.

"Many of our refineries, including (IOC's) Paradip (refinery), are capable of using that heavy Venezuelan oil, and we will buy... It's when Venezuela came under sanctions that they were not able to supply," Puri said, adding that India is willing to buy crude from any country not under sanctions.

The Indian EXPRESS
Sat, 16 December 2023
https://epaper.indianexpress.com/c/741

FINANCIAL EXPRESS, Delhi, 16.12.2023
Page No. 2, Size:(5.94)cms X (11.40)cms.

India will buy oil from Venezuela as it's not under sanctions: Puri

FE BUREAU
New Delhi, December 15

INDIA WILL ALWAYS buy crude oil from Venezuela as long as it is permitted to, Union oil minister Hardeep Singh Puri said on Friday.

"We always buy from Venezuela. It's when Venezuela came under sanctions that they were not able to supply," Puri said.

"We are willing to resume (oil purchases) with anyone who is not under sanctions,", he added.

In 2019-20, the country had imported 6.03 billion worth of petroleum oil from Venezuela which made up 99.5% of India's total imports from the country.

Puri's comments come after the US eased sanctions on Venezuelan oil in October.

The minister also said that many Indian refineries can use heavy Venezuelan oil.

"We are in a situation where we are utilising 5 million barrels of crude oil in a day.

"And our growth is going up. So if Venezuelan oil comes on the market, we welcome it," the minister said.

According to reports, at least three Indian refiners — Reliance Industries (RIL), Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), and HPCL-Mittal Energy (HMEL) — have booked Venezuelan oil cargoes, which are expected to land in India over the next couple of months.

Bharat Petroleum Corporation (BPCL) is also looking to start imports of Venezuelan crude.

India is the world's third-largest consumer of crude oil and depends on imports to meet over 85% of its requirement.

HARDEEP SINGH PURI,
UNION OIL MINISTER

WE ARE IN A SITUATION WHERE WE ARE UTILISING 5 MILLION BARRELS OF CRUDE OIL IN A DAY. AND OUR GROWTH IS GOING UP. SO IF VENEZUELAN OIL COMES ON THE MARKET, WE WELCOME IT

India will buy oil from Venezuela, says minister

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 15 DECEMBER

Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas Hardeep Singh Puri on Friday said India will always buy crude oil from Venezuela as long as it is permitted to.

While speaking to the media, the minister said, "India is willing to buy oil from any country that is not sanctioned and if Venezuelan oil comes to the market we welcome it."

Many refineries, including Indian Oil's Paradip unit, are capable of using the heavy Venezuelan oil, and we will buy it, Puri said.

Notably, Indian refining companies such as Indian Oil and Reliance Industries have already started buying oil from Venezuelan after the US lifted sanctions in October as part of Washington's strategy to squeeze out Russian oil from the market.

Hardeep Singh Puri further said some Indian money is locked up in Venezuela, referring to ONGC's pending $500 million in dividends since 2014 as the returns on its stake in Venezuelan oil and gas projects.

He highlighted that the Indian companies currently refine five million barrels of oil per day and the country's refining capacity is increasing.

It is worth highlighting that India is the world's third-biggest oil importer and consumer, shipping over 80% of its oil needs from overseas. Russia accounts for over one-third of India's oil imports.

Indian oil companies have been making large purchases of Russian oil after the Ukraine war broke out as it is available at a discounted price.

Buying oil from diversified sources helps oil companies to get it at a lower price.

If reports are to be believed, Venezuela has been offering steep discounts to Chinese independent refiners, who have been its biggest buyers of oil through the sanctions.

However, the discounts have narrowed considerably in recent weeks due to the easing of sanctions and other buyers now willing to pick up Venezuelan oil.

In October, the US government broadly eased sanctions on Venezuela's oil sector in response to a deal reached between the government and opposition parties for 2024 elections.

The new general license issued by the US Treasury Department authorized OPEC member – Venezuela to produce and export oil to its chosen markets for the next six months without limitation.

HINDU, Delhi, 16.12.2023
Page No. 11, Size:(2.99)cms X (9.45)cms.

India will buy Venezuelan crude, says Minister Puri

REUTERS
NEW DELHI

India will buy Venezuelan oil as some refiners in the country have the capability to process heavy crude, Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said.

Indian refiners have already resumed Venezuelan oil purchases, with Reliance Industries, Indian Oil Corp. and HPCL-Mittal Energy securing cargoes of Venezuelan oil after the U.S. lifted sanctions in October. India last imported Venezuelan crude in 2020.

"Many of our refineries, including Paradip, (are) capable of using that heavy Venezuelan oil," the Minister added.

ECONOMIC TIMES, Delhi, 16.12.2023
Page No. 10, Size:(7.87)cms X (17.46)cms.

PSUs Holding It Up From the Other End

Improved governance can help deliver better

Public sector enterprises (PSEs) are leading the rally in Indian equities, riding on a government push to clean up the balance sheets of state-owned banks and an expansion of its capital expenditure. Public sector banks have built up an adequate cushion after a period of capital infusion by GoI to clean up their bad loans. They have been aggressively feeding a revival in retail credit as consumption surged with the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions. Another section of PSEs has gained from swollen government orders on account of increased infrastructure spending and defence procurement. Energy companies have had to absorb some of the oil shock since the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine war, otherwise, the contribution of the public sector to market capitalisation gains could have been higher. The state-owned pack is also catching up with the fancier valuations of private competitors as investors seek opportunities in a rising market.

Some of these drivers are self-liquidating, though. Credit-led consumption is cooling off rapidly and the central bank has sought higher provisioning for retail loans to avoid concentration. GoI's capex cycle will likewise taper off, having crowded in private investment. This will have an effect on the public sector's capex plans alongside a greater demand for credit from the private sector. Public sector banks will also have to become more aggressive with deposit mobilisation, which may divert some of the household savings that are flowing into the stock market.

The public sector has delivered during an economic downturn by reinforcing higher government spending. It has used the extended slowdown in demand for commercial credit to its advantage. Improved valuation pushes this advantage further through enhanced access to credit. As the investment cycle turns, the critical role played by state-owned enterprises may be diluted. But that does not detract from their role as economic ballast, a role they can fulfil better with improved corporate governance. The dividends from a strong public sector are substantial.

BUSINESS LINE, Delhi, 16.12.2023
Page No. 3, Size:(6.23)cms X (11.96)cms.

Will buy Venezuelan oil, says Hardeep Puri

Our Bureau
New Delhi

India is open to buying Venezuelan oil with some refiners in the country having the capability to process such heavy crude oil, Union Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said on Friday.

Reportedly, Indian refiners are in the process of resuming Venezuelan oil purchases after the United States lifted sanctions in October.

The last import of Venezuelan crude into India was in FY20 to the tune of $6.03 billion.

"We are willing to buy oil from any country that is not sanctioned," the minister added.

"Many of our refineries, including Paradip, (are) capable of using that heavy Venezuelan oil. And we will buy (Venezuelan oil)," Puri told reporters during a press conference.

India, one of the largest oil importers of 80 per cent of its requirements. It wants to cut its crude import bill and is looking to expand its refining.

Puri said, India currently

Hardeep Singh Puri,
Oil Minister

refines 5 million barrels per day of oil and the country's refining capacity is rising. "...if Venezuelan oil comes to market we welcome it," he said.

The minister also said "some Indian refiners' money is locked up in Venezuela", referring to ONGC which has dividends pending since 2014 for its stake in Venezuelan projects.

India has paid an average price of $84.20 per barrel for Russian oil in October, higher than the $60 price cap set by G7 bloc.

"...if Venezuelan oil comes on the market, we welcome it," the minister said.

RASHTRIYA SAHARA, Delhi, 16.12.2023
Page No. 13, Size:(4.71)cms X (5.45)cms.

तेल बाजार में वेनेजुएला की वापसी का स्वागत : पुरी

नई दिल्ली (भाषा)।

पेट्रोलियम मंत्री हरदीप सिंह पुरी ने शुक्रवार को कहा कि वेनेजुएला पर लगाए गए प्रतिबंधों में ढील के बाद इस लातिन अमेरिकी देश की तेल बाजार में वापसी का भारत स्वागत करता है। पुरी ने कहा कि देश में कुछ रिफाइनरी कंपनियों के पास लातिन अमेरिकी देश में उत्पादित भारी कच्चे तेल को संसाधित करने की क्षमता है। उन्होंने हालांकि यह नहीं बताया कि क्या भारत ने वेनेजुएला से खरीदारी फिर से शुरू कर दी है।

भारत ने आखिरी बार 2020 में वेनेजुएला से कच्चे तेल का आयात किया था। अमेरिकी वित्त विभाग ने अक्टूबर में वेनेजुएला के तेल और गैस क्षेत्र पर प्रतिबंध आंशिक रूप से हटा दिया था। देश के तेल और गैस क्षेत्र में लेनदेन को अधिकृत करने के लिए छह महीने का लाइसेंस दिया गया है।

इस लाइसेंस का नवीनीकरण तभी किया जाएगा, जब वेनेजुएला अगले साल के राष्ट्रपति चुनाव में निष्पक्ष मतदान की प्रतिबद्धताओं को पूरा करेगा। पुरी ने यहां संवाददाताओं से कहा, ''हमने हमेशा वेनेजुएला से सामान खरीदा है। जब वेनेजुएला पर प्रतिबंध लगा, उसके बाद वे आपूर्ति करने की स्थिति में नहीं थे।'

उन्होंने कहा कि ओडिशा में इंडियन ऑयल कॉरपोरेशन (आईओसी) की पारादीप रिफाइनरी सहित कई रिफाइनरियां वेनेजुएला के कच्चे तेल को पेट्रोल और डीजल जैसे ईंधन में संसाधित करने में सक्षम हैं। वेनेजुएला से कच्चा तेल खरीदने के सवाल पर उन्होंने कहा, ''हम खरीदेंगे।''कुछ भारतीय रिफाइनर पहले ही वेनेजुएला से आपूर्ति सुनिश्चित कर चुके हैं। लातिन अमेरिकी देश से कच्चे तेल का आयात करके भारत को विविधता लाने में मदद मिलेगी।

PUNJAB KESARI, Delhi, 16.12.2023
Page No. 8, Size:(2.34)cms X (5.99)cms.

भारत वेनेजुएला से खरीदेगा तेल

नई दिल्ली, (पंजाब केसरी): पेट्रोलियम एवं प्राकृतिक गैस मंत्री हरदीप सिंह पुरी ने शुक्रवार को कहा कि भारत वेनेजुएला से तेल खरीदेगा क्योंकि लैटिन अमेरिकी देश के खिलाफ निर्यात प्रतिबंध हटा दिए गए हैं। पुरी ने पत्रकारों से कहा, भारत किसी भी ऐसे देश से तेल खरीदने को इच्छुक है जिस पर प्रतिबंध नहीं है और अगर वेनेजुएला का तेल बाजार में आता है तो हम इसका स्वागत करते हैं। मंत्री ने कहा, 'इंडियन ऑयल की पारादीप इकाई समेत कई रिफाइनरियां वेनेजुएला के भारी तेल का उपयोग करने में सक्षम हैं, और हम इसे खरीदेंगे।'

VIRAT VAIBHAV, Delhi, 16.12.2023
Page No. 15, Size:(7.69)cms X (6.05)cms.

वेनेजुएला की तेल बाजार में वापसी का स्वागत : हरदीप पुरी

एजेंसी ■ नई दिल्ली

पेट्रोलियम मंत्री हरदीप सिंह पुरी ने शुक्रवार को कहा कि वेनेजुएला पर लगाए गए प्रतिबंधों में ढील के बाद इस लातिन अमेरिकी देश की तेल बाजार में वापसी का भारत स्वागत करता है। पेट्रोलियम मंत्री हरदीप सिंह पुरी ने कहा कि देश में कुछ रिफाइनरी कंपनियों के पास लातिन अमेरिकी देश में उत्पादित भारी कच्चे तेल को संसाधित करने की क्षमता है। उन्होंने हालांकि यह नहीं बताया कि क्या भारत ने वेनेजुएला से खरीदारी फिर से शुरू कर दी है। भारत ने आखिरी बार 2020 में वेनेजुएला से कच्चे तेल का आयात किया था। अमेरिकी वित्त विभाग ने अक्टूबर में वेनेजुएला के तेल और गैस क्षेत्र पर प्रतिबंध आंशिक रूप से हटा दिया था। देश के तेल और गैस क्षेत्र में लेनदेन को अधिकृत करने के लिए छह महीने का लाइसेंस दिया गया है। इस लाइसेंस का नवीनीकरण तभी किया जाएगा, जब वेनेजुएला अगले साल के राष्ट्रपति चुनाव में निष्पक्ष मतदान की प्रतिबद्धताओं को पूरा करेगा। पुरी ने यहां संवाददाताओं से कहा, हमने हमेशा वेनेजुएला से सामान खरीदा है। जब वेनेजुएला पर प्रतिबंध लगा, उसके बाद वे आपूर्ति करने की स्थिति में नहीं थे। उन्होंने कहा कि ओडिशा में इंडियन ऑयल कॉरपोरेशन (आईओसी) की पारादीप रिफाइनरी सहित कई रिफाइनरियां वेनेजुएला के कच्चे तेल को पेट्रोल और डीजल जैसे ईंधन में संसाधित करने में सक्षम है। वेनेजुएला से कच्चा तेल खरीदने के सवाल पर उन्होंने कहा, हम खरीदेंगे। कुछ भारतीय रिफाइनर पहले ही वेनेजुएला से आपूर्ति सुनिश्चित कर चुके है। लातिन अमेरिकी देश से कच्चे तेल का आयात करके भारत को विविधता लाने में मदद मिलेगी, जो इस समय पश्चिम एशिया और रूस पर बहुत अधिक निर्भर है।

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वेनेजुएला से कच्चा तेल लेगा भारत

शुभायन चक्रवर्ती
नई दिल्ली, 15 दिसंबर

प्रतिबंध हटने के बाद लिया फैसला

- अधिकारियों ने बताया कि पेट्रोलियम मंत्रालय ने दक्षिणी अमेरिकी देश से कच्चे तेल के आयात को मंजूरी दी
- पेट्रोलियम मंत्री हरदीप सिंह पुरी ने कहा, भारत किसी भी ऐसे देश से आयात करेगा जिस पर प्रतिबंध नहीं है
- खरीदारी का ऑर्डर देने वाली पहली कंपनी बनी बीपीसीएल

पेट्रोलियम मंत्रालय ने वेनेजुएला से कच्चा तेल खरीदने के लिए तेल विपणन कंपनियों (ओएमसी) को अपनी अनौपचारिक मंजूरी दे दी है। अधिकारियों ने यह जानकारी दी और बताया कि वेनेजुएला से अक्टूबर में अमेरिकी प्रतिबंध हट गया है। उन्होंने बताया कि सरकारी तेल कंपनियों में बीपीसीएल खरीदारी का ऑर्डर देने वाली पहली कंपनी है। इससे पहले आईओसीएल और रिलायंस इंडस्ट्रीज ने भी वेनेजुएला से तेल खरीदा था।

अधिकारियों ने कहा कि यह निर्णय तब लिया गया है जब कई भारतीय रिफाइनरियां दक्षिण अमेरिकी देश से अल्ट्रा हेवी मेरे-16 ग्रेड के कच्चे तेल को संभालने में सक्षम हो गई हैं।

शुक्रवार को पेट्रोलियम और प्राकृतिक गैस मंत्री हरदीप सिंह पुरी ने एक संवाददाता सम्मेलन में कहा, 'हम हमेशा वेनेजुएला से खरीदते हैं। हमने हमेशा वेनेजुएला से सामान की खरीद की है। जब वेनेजुएला पर प्रतिबंध लगा तो वह आपूर्ति करने में सक्षम नहीं था।' उन्होंने कहा कि ओडिशा की इंडियन ऑयल कॉरपोरेशन (आईओसी) की पारादीप रिफाइनरी समेत कई रिफाइनरियां वेनेजुएला के भारी तेल का प्रसंस्करण करने में सक्षम हैं।

बीते 18 अक्टूबर को अमेरिकी ट्रेजरी विभाग के विदेशी संपत्ति नियंत्रण कार्यालय ने अधिकतर तेल और गैस क्षेत्र पर लागू वेनेजुएला से संबंधित प्रतिबंध हटा दिया, जिसे डॉनल्ड ट्रंप की सरकार ने लगाया था। इनमें तेल और गैस की बिक्री के साथ-साथ करों, रॉयल्टी, लागत, शुल्क, लाभांश और मुनाफे का भुगतान शामिल था।

वैश्विक महामारी कोविड-19 से पहले भारत नियमिति रूप से इस दक्षिण अमेरिकी देश से कच्चे तेल का आयात करता था, जो देश के कुल तेल आयात का 6 से 7 फीसदी था। साल 2018-19 में आयात अपने चरम पर पहुंच गया था जब देश से 7.24 अरब डॉलर का कच्चा तेल आया, जो भारत के लिए कच्चे तेल का 5वां सबसे बड़ा स्रोत था। साल 2020-21 में यह घटकर 64.3 करोड़ डॉलर हो गया, जिसके बाद अब तक कोई आयात नहीं हुआ है।

ओएनजीसी का फिलहाल वेनेजुएला की संपत्तियों में 50 करोड़ डॉलर मूल्य का लाभांश भुगतान फंसा है। कंपनी की विदेशी निवेश शाखा ओएनजीसी विदेश की पूर्वी वेनेजुएला में सैन क्रिस्टोबल क्षेत्र में 40 फीसदी हिस्सेदारी है।

फिलहाल केंद्र सरकार देश के तेल के स्रोतों में विविधता लाने का लक्ष्य लेकर चल रही है। उन्होंने कहा कि वैश्विक तेल आपूर्ति में संभावित व्यवधान के बढ़ते खतरे, जिसमें इजरायल-हमास युद्ध के कारण तनाव बढ़ने की बढ़ती संभावना भी है। इसने इसे और अधिक आवश्यक बना दिया है। एक अधिकारी ने कहा, 'वेनेजुएला पर ध्यान केंद्रित करना इस व्यापक कदम का हिस्सा है।' रूसी कच्चे तेल की बड़ी खेप हासिल करने के एक साल से अधिक समय के बाद भारत तेजी से पश्चिम एशिया में अपने पारंपरिक भागीदारों से आपूर्ति फिर से स्थापित करने पर विचार कर रहा है।

रॉयटर्स के मुताबिक अक्टूबर महीने में भारत के कुल आयात में रूस के कच्चे तेल की हिस्सेदारी घटकर 33 प्रतिशत रह गई, जो सितंबर में 35 प्रतिशत थी, जो 42 प्रतिशत के ऐतिहासिक उच्च स्तर की तुलना में बहुत कम है। हाल के महीनों में सऊदी अरब और इराक से तेल के आयात में तेजी के बावजूद यह स्तर बना हुआ है।

लंदन के कमोडिटी डेटा एनॉलिटिक्स प्रोवाइडर वोर्टेक्सा के मुताबिक रूस से आयात 5 प्रतिशत बढ़कर 16.8 लाख बैरल प्रतिदिन हो गया है। वोर्टेक्सा जहाजों की आवाजाही के आधार पर आयात का अनुमान लगाती है। हाल के महीनों में डिस्काउंट का औसत स्तर बढ़कर 8 से 10 डॉलर प्रति बैरल हो गया है, जो जुलाई के 4 डॉलर प्रति बैरल की तुलना में अधिक है।