



Crude imports from Russia up a tad in April; India still largest buyer

Rishi Ranjan Kala
New Delhi

India remained the largest buyer of seaborne Russian crude oil in April 2023 for the fifth consecutive month, with inbound shipments growing by a little over 1 per cent month-on-month to 1.63 million barrels per day (mb/d).

The world's third-largest energy resources guzzler imported around 1.61 mb/d in March this year, according to data shared by energy intelligence firm Vortexa.

texa with *businessline*. India became Russia's largest buyer of seaborne crude in December last year, with imports of around 1.22 mb/d. Since December, inbound shipments have been consistently over 1.22 mb/d.

Private refiners such as Reliance Industries (RIL) and Russian state-run oil giant Rosneft-backed Nayara Energy accounted for almost 46 per cent of the total imports from Russia, according to Vortexa.

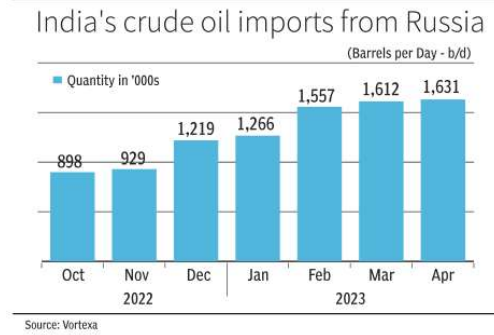
They imported 524,000 barrels per day (b/d) of

Ural grade, followed by 123,000 b/d of ESPO; Varandey (67,000 b/d); and Arco (35,000 b/d) in April.

CRUDE PRICE RALLY

Analysts said that as global crude oil prices have started to cool down again after the rally witnessed in April due to OPEC+ production cuts, it will help Indian refiners protect their margins.

Besides, it will also bring down instances of prices breaching the G7 cap of \$60 per barrel. However, at present, only some of the supplies, largely of lighter



grades such as Sokol, have breached the cap. Oil Marketing company (OMC) sources said it seems the April 2 production cut has not been able to support

Private refiners accounted for almost 46% of the imports from Russia

international crude oil price rally for long.

After a brief spike, which saw prices hit \$87 per barrel around mid-April, the rates are now around \$76-78 a barrel. This is being attributed to concerns over decelerating global industrial growth and rising interest rates. The develop-

ment also reflects in the Indian basket's crude oil prices for free on board (FOB).

They stood at around \$77.84 per barrel on March 29, appreciating to \$78.30 on March 31. After the output cut announcement, the basket price rose to \$85.11 a barrel on April 5.

However, as on April 26, the Indian basket is at 80.71. In April so far, the prices have averaged at \$84.3 a barrel against \$78.54 in March 2023.

However, OMC officials indicated that a more concrete analysis would be

possible after analysing trading in the next 2-3 months, as a better view is required to judge the impact of these production cuts (around 1.16 mb/d till end of 2023).

Earlier this month, ICRA, in a report, said that sea-borne exports from Russia witnessed a significant decline in the first week of April 2023 to around 2.89 m/bd from around 5 m/bd at the end of calendar year (CY) 2021, indicating the impact of production cuts by Russia. This is likely to keep the supplies tight in the market.

Green fuel gets just 10% of oil subsidy

SANGEETHA G

CHENNAI, APRIL 27:

Notwithstanding India's commitment to become net zero by 2070, the subsidies provided by the government on renewable energy is just one-tenth of that given to fossil fuels, finds a report by ADB.

As per ADB's data, the government provided \$4.5 billion towards subsidising renewable energy in 2021, whereas the total subsidies given to fossil fuels was \$47.4 billion.

China, another major emitter in Asia, provided just a fraction of the sub-

sidies at \$16.6 billion to renewable energy while fossil fuels grabbed a larger share of \$51.8 billion.

Fossil fuel subsidies skew the playing field by artificially increasing the returns to investments in carbon-intensive energy and by encouraging excess consumption.

China, India, and Indonesia — the most populous countries in the region — are the largest emitters in Asia, accounting for 23 per cent, 6.8 per cent, and 3.9 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions, respectively, in 2019.



IndianOil Ties Up with Tesla Power to Sell Batteries at Fuel Stations

Our Bureau

New Delhi: IndianOil has entered into a strategic alliance with Tesla Power USA for providing automotive batteries at fuel stations across the country, the two companies said in a statement.

To begin with, Tesla Power batteries will be available at select IndianOil fuel stations in the national capital region. The batteries will be made available at fuel stations in other states subsequently. Tesla Power USA offers both lead-acid and lithium batteries.



The partnership will bring convenience to customers, said Vigyan Kumar, executive director at IndianOil. The company has 36,000 petrol pumps in the country.

“Tesla Power currently has over 5000 distribution points in India that we aim to double in 2023. The addition of IOCL petrol pumps can potentially offer Tesla Power USA distribution reach of over 40,000; the largest for any battery brand in India,” Kavinder Khurana, MD, Tesla Power USA, said in a statement.

'Locals don't want Barsu refinery'

We oppose the projects because people wanted us to do so, Uddhav Thackeray clarifies his party's stand on the Barsu-Solgaon refinery project

ABHIJIT MULYE / MUMBAI

While clarifying his party's stand on the proposed refinery at Barsu-Solgaon in Ratnagiri district, Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray on Thursday said that his party opposed projects because "the local people didn't want the projects and wanted to oppose them".

"Our policy was to put forth all the sides of the project before the people and let them decide the fate of the project, I feel that the same policy should continue," Thackeray asked while explaining his stand and appealed to the government to let people know about the employment potential and do away with their doubts.

"I'm asked about our party's stand on Nanar and Bar-



su-Solgaon (refinery) and I tell them that people's stand is our stand. At a program in Rajapur local people came to me for support to their agitation against the Nanar project and I lent them the support," Thackeray said while explaining his stand. He was speaking at the 55th Founda-

tion Day ceremony of Shiv Sena's labor union the Bharatiya Kamgar Sena at Ravindra Natya Mandir in Prabhadevi.

While justifying his flip-flop the on Barsu-Solgaon site for the refinery project, Thackeray said, "We opposed the Nanar site for the project,

That time we were told that the project would be pollution-free and would bring in jobs. Then came the proposal for Barsu. Hence, I wrote the letter. But, now I see that people there are being subjected to pressure. Why do you need to use pressure if the project is for the people's good," Thackeray asked.

Thackeray also dared the present dispensation in the state saying that "revenge will be taken for the way in which his government was ousted."

He also opposed being labeled "anti-development". "Projects worth Rs2 lakh crore of investment were to come to Maharashtra when we were ruling it. Why would they come if we were anti-development," he asked. Thackeray also criticised the

current dispensation in power for not being able to protect those industries which have come to Maharashtra.

"I heard that the industries minister and the DyCM had signed an MoU with a Taiwanese company for Rs2,300 crore of investment. That was a shoe company and that too, I heard, has left Maharashtra for Tamil Nadu," Thackeray said, adding that what else is expected when those who don't even deserve to shine shoes have started ruling the state.

Thackeray also criticised the Union government over its attempt to influence the judiciary. "Now they even want to appoint judges. If they are successful in that, who would we look at for justice," he asked.

Oil Slips Below \$78, but Reduction in Domestic Pump Prices Unlikely Soon

Fears of a recession in the US weigh on prices; Russia keeps markets well supplied

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New Delhi: Oil prices tumbled to \$78 per barrel on Thursday, slipping below the near-\$80 level it was trading at the beginning of the month before the OPEC+ producer club announced production cuts that triggered price spike warnings and inflationary worries.

The drop in crude rates may not immediately translate into a reduction in domestic pump prices for fuels, but will keep refiners in good financial health.

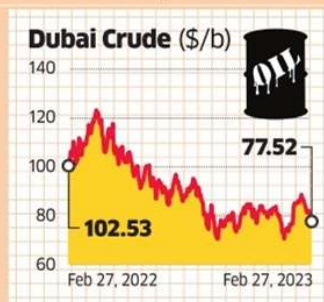
Deepening fears of a recession in the US, the largest consumer of oil, have been weighing on prices, overshadowing the OPEC+'s pro-

duction cut that will take effect next month. Strong production and exports from Russia have kept the global markets well supplied, with India and China receiving record volumes of Russian oil.

Oil has lost about \$10 per barrel in a fortnight from \$87 on April 12

"The fear of a demand slowdown is driving the market. It seems OPEC+ will get it right again," said an industry executive.

Oil has lost about \$10 per barrel in a fortnight from \$87 on April 12. It had gained about \$7 in the 10 days after the OPEC+ announced an output cut of more than a million barrels per day on April 2, citing concerns about the global econo-



my and the oil demand.

In October, when the oil price was around \$90 per barrel, OPEC+ announced a production cut, triggering warnings of price spikes. After initially rising, the prices stabilised and remained below \$90 for nearly four months.

Lower oil prices will benefit the

global economy fighting inflation for more than a year. Lower crude prices, along with recent increases in global refining capacity, will keep rates of fuels such as petrol and diesel low. If lower fuel prices are passed on to consumers, this would increase households' ability to spend on other goods.

In India, pump prices haven't changed for a year, with state-run oil marketing companies absorbing losses when international prices spiked. With international fuel prices having calmed, state oil companies are now making decent marketing margins on petrol and diesel. Lower crude prices also translate into lower energy cost for refiners. Falling crude prices can bring down domestic natural gas prices as well.

Russia oil discount to India shrinks as China sucks supply

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The steep discounts India enjoyed on Russian crude oil through most of FY23 have plunged, two government officials aware of the development said, as China boosted purchases and oil producers cut production.

As Russia scrambled for buyers after its invasion of Ukraine sparked Western sanctions, India stepped up as a new major buyer, securing discounts of as much as \$15-20 a barrel. This has since fallen below \$10 and has touched even \$5, the officials cited above said on the condition of anonymity.

“With Russian oil finding more buyers, the discounts to Indian refiners have been coming down. Earlier, we were getting discounts that varied from cargo to cargo,” said one of the two officials cited above, all of whom spoke on condition of anonymity.

Until now, Indian refiners used to get Russian oil at an average discount of \$15-20 per barrel on a delivered-at-place (DAP) basis, where the seller bears the transportation risk for delivering at the designated port. This discount varies from



Discounts fell after China boosted its purchases

AP

cargo to cargo, and a sub-\$10 per barrel discount seems to have become the new normal for India, the world's third-largest oil importer.

China, the world's second-largest oil buyer, recently turned one of the top buyers of Russian oil as it reopened its economy after the pandemic setback. According to Chinese government data, Russia overtook Saudi Arabia to become its top oil supplier during January and February 2023. Imports from Russia stood at 15.68 million tonnes in January-February, or 1.94 million barrels per day (mbpd), up 23.8% from 1.57 mbpd in the corresponding

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Russian oil discounts to India shrink as China sucks supply

FROM PAGE 1

period of last year, showed the data from China's General Administration of Customs released in March. Also, this comes in the backdrop of a \$60 per barrel price cap imposed by a US-led global initiative along with G7 countries, the European Union and Australia that was to be revised in March.

"We used to get around \$15-20 per barrel discount on Russian oil cargoes depending on what used to be the price in the spot market. That discount has become less now," the second official added.

Meanwhile, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) plus grouping, including Russia, has announced an additional 1.16 million barrels per day of supply cut that takes effect next month. On Thursday, Brent

was trading at \$74.56 a barrel and West Texas Intermediate (WTI) at \$77.97 a barrel at press time. The cost of the Indian basket of crude, comprising Oman, Dubai and Brent crude, was \$84.3 per barrel in April, according to Petroleum Planning & Analysis Cell (PPAC) data. "The discounts are below the \$10 per barrel level and differ from cargo to cargo. We have been getting a discount of around \$8 per barrel now," an executive at a state-run refiner said.

Russia emerged as a major supplier to Indian refiners for the first time in FY23 after it started offering discounts amid the Ukraine war. This put the Russian Federation at the second spot for Indian oil imports in the 11 months till February last fiscal, with India buying crude oil worth \$27 billion from its strategic partner. The dis-



Russia emerged as a major supplier to India for the first time in FY23 after it started offering discounts amid the Ukraine war. MINT

counted Russian oil also helped India meet the growing demand for petroleum products, with 222.30 million tonnes of petroleum products consumed in FY23, 10.2% higher than the year before.

"With the discounts coming

down, the market is feeling the reduction of discounts on the Russian oil," an executive at another state-run refiner said.

The heavy discounts also helped state-run refiners improve their gross refining margins (GRM). *Mint* earlier

reported about state-run oil refiners more than doubling their refining margins in the nine months to December, benefiting from the lower costs of imported crude oil from Russia. According to PPAC data, Indian Oil Corp.'s GRM rose from \$8.52 to \$21.08 per barrel, Hindustan Petroleum Corp. from \$4.50 to \$11.40 per barrel, Bharat Petroleum Corp. from \$6.78 to \$20.08 per barrel, and Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd from \$5.80 to \$11.70 per barrel.

Queries emailed to the spokespeople for India's petroleum and natural gas ministry, Rosneft, Russian Federation Embassy in New Delhi, Indian Oil Corp. Ltd, Bharat Petro-

leum Corp. Ltd, Hindustan Petroleum Corp. Ltd, Nayara Energy Ltd and Reliance Industries Ltd on 25 April remained unanswered till press time.

India is a key Asian refining hub, with an installed capacity of more than 249.36 million tonnes per annum (mtpa) across its 23 refineries. The country plans to grow its refining capacity to 400 mtpa by 2025. Large Indian refiners

India secured discounts of as much as \$20 a barrel, which has fallen below \$10 and has touched even \$5

include Indian Oil Corp., Bharat Petroleum Corp., Hindustan Petroleum Corp., Nayara Energy Ltd (formerly Essar Oil), and Reliance Industries Ltd. India's import of crude oil and petroleum products rose 29.5% to \$209.57 billion in FY23.

Ujjwala turns Indira in Raj

MANISH GODHA / JAIPUR

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot has revamped and renamed the Ujjwala scheme for LPG cylinders. The scheme, rechristened in Rajasthan as the Indira Gandhi Gas Cylinder Subsidy Scheme, involves providing LPG cylinders for just Rs500 to around 76 lakh families. These will not only include beneficiaries of the Ujjwala scheme but also families that lie in the BPL category.

The beneficiaries of the scheme are being registered at the Mahangai Rahat camps that began on April 24 across the state. The camps have got good response with more than seven lakh registrations being done in just four days.

CYLINDER SUBSIDY

“Our schemes have become popular and are the talking point in the country. We are giving gas cylinders for just Rs500 and other state governments are worried that they will also have to im-

plement this scheme,” said Gehlot, who has been visiting the Mahangai Rahat camps in various districts for the last four days, interacting with the people there, and holding public meetings along with the Congress state president Govind Singh Dotasara.

The opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) said that this is not the first time that Gehlot has changed the name of schemes run by the central government and previous state governments.

महंगाई पर मौसम भारी

केंद्रीय वित्त मंत्री निर्मला सीतारमण ने कहा है कि आपूर्ति से जुड़ी मौसमी समस्याओं के कारण महंगाई बढ़ी है, और जरूरी सामान के दामों में नरमी लाने के प्रयासों के साथ स्थिति पर बराबर नजर रखी जा रही है।

महंगाई और नीचे लाने के उपायों की बाबत बुधवार को एक संवाददाता सम्मेलन में पूछे गए सवाल के जवाब में उन्होंने कहा कि हाल के दिनों में मौसमी स्तर पर आपूर्ति संबंधी समस्याओं के कारण महंगाई बढ़ी है। कोविड तथा रूस-यूक्रेन युद्ध के कारण वैश्विक बाजारों में महंगाई का रुख बनने का असर भी भारत में सामानों के दामों पर पड़ा। गौरतलब है कि भारत को ईंधन और प्राकृतिक गैस आयात करना पड़ता है, और कोविड और रूस-यूक्रेन युद्ध



के कारण वैश्विक बाजार में इन उत्पादों के दामों में तेजी आई। घरेलू बाजार में इनके दामों में तेजी का रुख कमजोर करने की गरज से नवम्बर, 2021 में ईंधन पर लगने वाले आयात शुल्क में कटौती की गई। नतीजतन, दीपावली के दौरान महंगाई ज्यादा कचोटने नहीं पाई। दरअसल, आयातित कच्चे तेल और प्राकृतिक गैस के ऊंचे दाम घरेलू बाजार में महंगाई भड़काने न पाए इसके लिए मंत्रियों का समूह

लगातार स्थिति पर नजर रखता है। जून, 2022 में भी महंगाई काबू में रखने के लिए कच्चे तेल और प्राकृतिक गैस पर आयात शुल्क में कटौती की गई थी। चावल के दाम में तेजी आने पर सरकार ने बफर स्टॉक से तत्काल चावल जारी करके कीमतों को काबू में रखने का प्रयास किया। और उसमें सफल भी हुई। दामों पर अंकुश लगाने की सतत कोशिशों का ही नतीजा है कि उपभोक्ता मूल्य सूचकांक आधारित मुद्रास्फीति छह फीसदी से घटकर 5.8 फीसदी पर आ गई। हाल में अति मौसमी स्थितियों ने गेहूँ और सब्जियों की फसल को खासा नुकसान पहुंचाया। फसल को मौसमी नुकसान संबंधी शुरुआती सूचनाएं गहरी चिंता में डाल देने वाली थीं। डर के माहौल में जमाखोर सक्रिय हो जाते हैं, और चौजों की कमी बताकर दाम भड़काने के प्रयास किए जाते हैं। लेकिन सरकार ने तत्परता से वस्तुस्थिति सामने रखते हुए आश्वस्त किया कि मौसमी नुकसान इतना नहीं है कि महंगाई बेकाबू हो जाए। फिर गेहूँ और खाद्यान्नों का पर्याप्त भंडार महंगाई के बरक्स निश्चित बने रहने की बड़ी आश्वस्ति है।

वेदांता के प्रमुख अनिल अग्रवाल ने कहा, कर्ज चुकाने में कोई दिक्कत नहीं

नई दिल्ली, (भाषा)। खनन क्षेत्र के प्रमुख कारोबारी अनिल अग्रवाल ने कहा है कि उनके वेदांता समूह के पास अपनी सभी देनदारियों को चुकाने के लिए पर्याप्त नकदी प्रवाह है। उन्होंने कहा कि समूह का लक्ष्य अगले 2-3 साल में शुद्ध शून्य ऋण वाली कंपनी बनना है। अग्रवाल ने कहा कि वेदांता की कर्ज चुकाने की क्षमता पर सवाल बिल्कुल अप्रासंगिक है, क्योंकि समूह अगले साल 30 अरब डॉलर की आय के साथ करीब नौ अरब डॉलर का लाभ अर्जित करेगा। उन्होंने कहा कि यह राशि सभी देनदारियों को चुकाने के लिए पर्याप्त है। उनकी यह टिप्पणी ऐसे वक्त में आई है, जब अडाणी समूह पर अमेरिकी शॉर्ट सेलर हिंडनबर्ग की रिपोर्ट आने के बाद अत्यधिक कर्ज वाले भारतीय समूहों पर निगरानी बढ़ रही है। वेदांता रिसोर्सेज के संस्थापक और चेयरमैन अग्रवाल ने यहां एक साक्षात्कार में कहा, हमारे आकार के समूह के लिए हमपर दुनिया में सबसे कम कर्ज है। उन्होंने कहा कि कारोबार में अरबों डॉलर का निवेश करने के चलते यह कर्ज है। उन्होंने कहा, कंपनी पर कुल कर्ज 13 अरब डॉलर का है और इस साल हमें सात अरब अमेरिकी डॉलर का लाभ हुआ है। अगले साल हमारी आय 30 अरब डॉलर और मुनाफा नौ अरब डॉलर होगा। उन्होंने कहा कि देनदारियों को चुकाने के लिए नकदी प्रवाह जरूरत से अधिक है। उन्होंने कहा, हम बहुत ही आरामदायक स्थिति में हैं। हमने कभी भी किसी भी भुगतान में चूक नहीं की है। हमारे पास हमेशा भुगतान करने की योजना रहती है।

2024-25 तक 5,000 सीबीजी संयंत्र लगाने के लक्ष्य पर सरकार कायम

शुभायन चक्रवर्ती

नई दिल्ली, 27 अप्रैल

सरकार का मानना है कि छोटे पैमाने पर 200 कंप्रेस्ड बायो गैस (सीबीजी) परियोजनाएं स्थापित करने, राज्य संचालित वृद्धि, उच्च वाणिज्यिक बिक्री दर के साथ कई अलग नीतिगत कदमों की वजह से केंद्र सरकार की कई प्रमुख योजनाओं और भारत में सीबीजी उत्पादन को बढ़ावा मिल सकता है।

पेट्रोलियम एवं प्राकृतिक गैस मंत्रालय के शीर्ष अधिकारियों ने हाल में उद्योग के हिस्सेदारों के साथ दिल्ली में हुई एक अहम बैठक में कहा कि 2024-25 तक 5,000 वाणिज्यिक सीबीजी संयंत्र स्थापित करने की योजना बरकरार है, जिसे सस्टेनेबल अल्टरनेटिव टुवर्ड्स अफर्डेबल ट्रांसपोर्ट (एसटीएटी) योजना के तहत स्थापित किया जाना है।

एसटीएटी योजना 2018 में शुरू की गई थी, जिसका मकसद विभिन्न बायोमास स्रोतों से कंप्रेस्ड बायोगैस (सीबीजी) के उत्पादन को



■ एसटीएटी योजना 2018 में शुरू की गई थी, अब तक देश में सिर्फ 46 कंप्रेस्ड बायोगैस संयंत्र स्थापित किए जा सके

■ लद्दाख ने 200 सीबीजी संयंत्र और 300 कम्युनिटी और क्लस्टर आधारित बायोगैस संयंत्र लगाने की योजना बनाई

प्रोत्साहन देना है। लेकिन यह योजना लक्ष्य से बहुत पीछे है। अब तक देश में सिर्फ 46 कंप्रेस्ड

बायोगैस (सीबीजी) संयंत्र स्थापित किए जा सके हैं। अधिकारियों ने कहा कि स्थिति में जल्द बदलाव हो सकता है।

वैश्विक सीबीजी कॉन्फ्रेंस में पिछले सप्ताह अधिकारियों ने कहा कि देश भर के 100 से ज्यादा खुदरा आउटलेट पर सीबीजी की बिक्री शुरू हो चुकी है। सरकार सीबीजी की प्रभावी बिक्री के साथ सस्ते वित्तपोषण, वित्तीय प्रोत्साहन और कार्बन अकाउंटिंग व्यवस्था पर भी चर्चा करेगी।

राज्यों से भी यह उम्मीद की गई है कि परियोजनाओं को अंतिम रूप देने के लिए आगे आएंगे।

अधिकारियों ने कहा कि लद्दाख केंद्र शासित प्रदेश ने 200 सीबीजी संयंत्र और 300 कम्युनिटी और क्लस्टर आधारित बायोगैस संयंत्र लगाने की योजना बनाई है।

अधिकारियों ने उम्मीद जताई कि जल्द ही बड़े पैमाने पर संयंत्र स्थापित होंगे क्योंकि तेल व गैस विपणन कंपनियों ने सीबीजी की खरीद के लिए दीर्घावधि वाणिज्यिक समझौते किए हैं।