

Mumbai's two-day CNG chaos ends as supply finally returns to pumps

Kamal Mishra

MUMBAI

Mumbaikars finally got some relief on Tuesday evening as the CNG supply was restored at pumps across the city. The disruption, which lasted for more than two days, had caused widespread inconvenience to commuters, with long queues at pumps and many autos and taxis off the roads.

The CNG crisis deepened on Tuesday morning, with long queues snaking out of fuel stations across the city as supply disruptions continued to plague motorists.

As the CNG supply remained disrupted in the morning in the most part of city, around 70% of CNG vehicles were off the roads. Many people struggled to reach their destinations on Tuesday morning, with some opting for bike-sharing or car-pooling. Bike taxi operators capitalised on the situation and charged exorbitant fares.

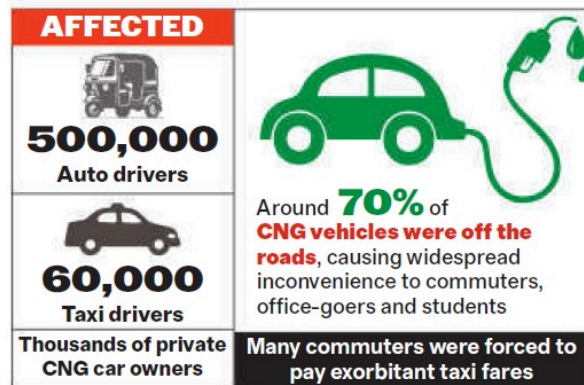
The issue began on Sunday afternoon when third-party damage to the main gas-supply pipeline of GAIL inside the RCF compound affected the gas supply at Mahanagar Gas Limited's (MGL) City Gate Station (CGS) in Wadala.

This led to a shortage of CNG, affecting over 500,000 auto drivers, 60,000 taxi drivers and thousands of private CNG car owners in MMR.

"The rectification work of



Drivers standing in a queue to fill the CNG at the Mahanagar gas filling station in Agripada



GAIL's damaged main gas pipeline in RCF Trombay premises has been completed and gas supply to MGL's City Gate Station (CGS), Wadala by GAIL has been restored. Restoration of gas supply to affected Industrial and Commercial customers is in progress," read the official statement issued on Tuesday

by MGL.

Taxi and auto-rickshaw drivers have been hardest hit, with some reporting wait times of three to four hours, compared to the usual 15-30 minutes. "I've been waiting in the CNG pump queue since 4am and I still don't know when my vehicle will be refilled," said Rajendra Singh a

taxi driver.

Auto-rickshaw and taxi drivers, who managed to refuel after waiting in long queues, took advantage of the situation by charging two to three times the usual fare. App-based cab operators also hiked their rates.

Many commuters expressed frustration and helplessness as they were forced to pay exorbitant fares. "I was charged Rs150 for a 2km ride that usually costs Rs40," said Sujana Singh, a Ghatkopar passenger.

One passenger headed to the airport said his experience was far from smooth. Although he had booked an AC cab, the driver refused to switch on the air-conditioner, claiming he had changed the vehicle's fuel mode to petrol. As a result, the passenger ended up paying the AC fare despite travelling in a non-AC cab.

CNG supply restored after 48 hours, queues outside gas stations persist

Taxi and auto drivers' unions seek adequate compensation from state government

Shashank Rao

htmumbai@hindustantimes.com

MUMBAI: It took over 48 hours to fix the Gas Authority of India Ltd (GAIL)'s damaged pipeline that supplies gas to Mahanagar Gas Limited (MGL), causing a significant disruption of transport and tremendous problems for commuters. A large number of taxis, auto rickshaws and app-based cabs which run on CNG stayed off the roads on Monday and much of Tuesday even as the queues outside CNG stations lengthened by the hour. On Tuesday evening, supply to the MGL City Gate Station in Wadala was restored at around 4 pm as stated by a note issued by MGL, which added that gas supply to CNG stations in Mumbai, Thane and Navi Mumbai had also been restored.

However, the Association of Petrol Pump and CNG Stations said that by the time they started getting uninterrupted gas supply, it was late evening and they expected it to normalise only by Tuesday night.

Members of the All India Petrol Dealers Association, under whom CNG pump stations also



Autos and taxis queued up for over a kilometre or two at the city's fuel pumps. Many drivers said they had exhausted their remaining CNG over the last two days. RAJU SHINDE/HT PHOTO

fall, said that the CNG supply was not sufficient.

"The stations that get supply through the pipeline were the ones that suffered the most," said a pump owner. "Those that get gas in cylinders called 'daughter boosters' managed to fill their stations by transferring the gas into their storage tanks."

Autos and taxis queued up for over a kilometre or two at city pumps. Many drivers said they had exhausted their remaining CNG over the last two days.

"There are three separate

queues here. I have been here since early morning and hopefully will get my auto filled," said Pankaj Mishra from Borivali. Rakesh Pawar, a cab driver, said he had been in line since 6 am. "Everyone thought the supply would start by Tuesday morning but the pump was dry," he said. "The queue is barely moving. We can't leave even to attend Nature's call or eat."

Long queues piled up at bus stops in Kurla, Chembur, Santa Cruz, Borivali, Ghatkopar, Andheri and Sion, with commuters

struggling to board jam-packed buses.

The few auto and taxi drivers on the road switched off their meters and began charging fixed fares of ₹100 to ₹150 even for short distances.

CNG pump owners claimed that the cumulative losses of Mumbai's 389 CNG stations were over ₹35 crore. "On an average, each CNG station supplies 6,000 kg of gas in a day," said Chetan Modi, president, Petrol Dealers Association, explaining the maths.

The unions are now seeking

Commuters' grievances

MANSOOR DARBESH

Resident of Oshiwara-Ram Mandir

Due to the crisis, school children were also affected. Many school buses and vans running on CNG stopped their services. It was a struggle for parents and guardians. The government should come up with a solution, probably to discontinue the monopoly of MGL.



ARYAHI KULKARNI

Resident of Kandarpada in Dahisar

It was a struggle to find auto rickshaws to metro and railway stations. The drivers were quoting insanely high fares of ₹100 which otherwise is a ride within the minimum fare. I was left with no other option but to walk to the metro station.



SANTY SHETTY

Resident of Kandivali Lokhandwala

We had no prior intimation on today's CNG problem. It has not been resolved even after two days. Office-goers and students were frustrated when they could not find shared autos or cabs early in the morning. Within our locality, we arranged for car pooling which helped people travel together.



compensation from the government. "Drivers have lost two days of income," said Shashank Sharad Rao, president of the Mumbai Auto Rickshaw and

Taximen's Union. "MGL must compensate them for this loss. I have written to the government and the state transport minister demanding this."



Autorickshaw drivers had to queue up at CNG stations for long hours on Tuesday. DEEPAK JOSHI

DAMAGED GAIL PIPELINE REPAIRED

Two-day nightmare ends as CNG supply restored

Zeeshan Shaikh & Vallabh Ozarkar
Mumbai, November 18

COMMUTERS AND drivers across Mumbai, Thane, and Navi Mumbai breathed a sigh of relief on Tuesday evening as CNG supply, disrupted for almost 48 hours, was fully restored around 4pm. The outage began Sunday night after the main gas pipeline of the Gas Authority of India (GAIL) was damaged within the Rashtriya Chemicals and Fertilizers (RCF) Trombay premises, affecting Mahanagar Gas Limited's (MGL) City Gate Station at Wadala and a number of CNG stations across the region.

In a statement, MGL said, "The rectification work of GAIL's damaged main gas pipeline in RCF Trombay premises has been completed and gas supply to MGL's City Gate Station (CGS), Wadala by GAIL has been restored. The gas supply to the affected CNG stations in Mumbai, Thane & Navi Mumbai has been restored... We are thankful to our esteemed customers for their cooperation."

During the disruption, long queues were seen outside pumps, some stretching over a kilometre, while several stations ran dry. Autorickshaw drivers reported losing income as they waited for fuel, and many commuters were forced to rely on overcrowded BEST and Thane Municipal Transport buses or walk long dis-



Passengers form a long queue at the autorickshaw stand near Thane railway station on Tuesday. DEEPAK JOSHI

tances to reach their workplaces and educational institutions. Areas such as Santacruz, Kurla, Ghatkopar, Malad, Andheri, Powai, Mulund, Dahisar and Vashi were particularly affected and commuters had to shell out extra than the regular fare to auto drivers. Earlier in the day, thousands of commuters were stranded and many were forced to walk long distances to reach work or other destinations during the rush hour.

Several fuel stations ran dry where autorickshaws and cabs were queuing up even as bus stops across the city witnessed heavy crowding amid concerns about timely travel.

Across areas such as Santa-

cruz, Kurla, Ghatkopar, Malad, Andheri, Powai, Santacruz, Mulund, Dahisar and Vashi, vehicles began lining up outside CNG pumps before sunrise. At some pumps, queues stretched for over a kilometre, blocking parts of main roads and slowing down traffic.

According to drivers, the situation on Tuesday was worse than it had been on Monday. "Most of us have already lost two full days of income. With no certainty on when a fresh supply would arrive, we are unable to take passenger trips despite high demand in the morning," one of the drivers said.

Commuters said they had to rely on BEST buses, which were crowded on several routes and

required a higher fare.

At Thane railway station, long queues formed on the SATIS bridge as commuters waited endlessly for buses. Many office-goers eventually began walking towards Teen Hath Naka, while others struggled to find autorickshaws as drivers hopped from one pump to another in search of fuel. Many office workers and students reported that their travel time increased as they waited longer for transportation.

Mumbai has 130 to 140 CNG pumps, Thane has 31, and Navi Mumbai has 34. Since Sunday night, most pumps witnessed serpentine queues, intermittent supply and even complete shutdowns in some locations.

गैस सप्लाई पूरी तरह बहाल, ऑटोरिक्षा और टैक्सी वालों ने ली राहत की सांस

ट्रॉम्बे की पाइप लाइन हुई दुरुस्त, CNG संकट खत्म

■ **NBT रिपोर्ट, मुंबई:** ट्रॉम्बे में क्षतिग्रस्त हुई मुख्य गैस पाइपलाइन की मरम्मत पूरी कर ली गई है और वडाला स्थित महानगर गैस लिमिटेड के सिटी गेट स्टेशन तक गैस सप्लाई बहाल कर दी गई है। इससे पिछले दो दिन से चल रहा सीएनजी का संकट मंगलवार को दोपहर के बाद खत्म हो गया है। हालांकि, इसका असर देर रात तक दिखाई दिया।

मंगलवार को भी दिखा असर

सीएनजी पंप देर रात तक ऑटोरिक्षा और टैक्सी वालों लाइन में दिखे। उनके मुताबिक, बुधवार को सुबह तक स्थिति सामान्य हो जाएगी।

महानगर गैस के अनुसार, मुंबई, ठाणे और नवी मुंबई के प्रभावित सीएनजी स्टेशनों पर गैस की आपूर्ति फिर से शुरू हो चुकी है। इसके साथ ही ईडिस्ट्रियल और कर्मांशियल उपभोक्ताओं को सप्लाई भी तेजी से बहाल की जा रही है। यह संकट रविवार को उस समय उत्पन्न हुआ



मंगलवार को भी सीएनजी समस्या का असर मुंबई की सड़कों पर दिखाई दिया। वेस्टन एक्सप्रेस हाईवे पर कतार में खड़े ऑटो रिक्शा।



मंगलवार की शाम 4 बजे पंपों पर सीएनजी की आपूर्ति फिर से शुरू हुई। विलेपारले पश्चिम में सीएनजी भरवाने के लिए लगी भीड़।

जब राष्ट्रीय केमिकल्स ऐंड फर्टिलाइजर्स लिमिटेड (आरसीएफ) कंपाउंड के भीतर तीसरे पक्ष द्वारा काम के दौरान गैस प्राधिकरण भारत लिमिटेड (गैल)

की मुख्य गैस पाइपलाइन क्षतिग्रस्त हो गया था। इसके कारण वडाला स्थित सिटी गेट स्टेशन (सीजीएस) पर गैस का दबाव अचानक कम हो गया और मुंबई

महानगर क्षेत्र में सीएनजी सप्लाई बाधित हो गई। इसके चलते रविवार की रात से ही सीएनजी स्टेशनों पर ऑटोरिक्षा और टैक्सी की लंबी कतारें लग गई थी। इसके

चलते रविवार की देर रात और सोमवार को सीएनजी पंप बंद पड़े गए थे। इससे टैक्सी और ऑटो चालकों को सबसे ज्यादा परेशानी का सामना करना पड़ा।



मीरा-भाईंदर में दिनभर ऑटो रिक्शों की लगी रही कतारें

■ **NBT न्यूज, मीरा-भाईंदर:** मीरा-भाईंदर में मंगलवार को सीएनजी की कमी का असर पूरे दिन ऑटो सेवाओं पर दिखाई दिया। शहर के लगभग सभी सीएनजी स्टेशनों पर सुबह से ही ऑटो चालकों की लंबी कतारें लगनी शुरू हो गईं जो दोपहर और शाम तक बढ़ती चली गईं। स्थिति यह रही कि मीरा रोड और भाईंदर पश्चिम के प्रमुख स्टेशनों पर 1 किलोमीटर तक वाहनों की लाइनें देखी गईं, जिससे ऑटो चालकों को कई घंटों तक इंतजार करना पड़ा।

दिकत के कारण स्टेशनों पर गैस की उपलब्धता कम हो गई थी। इसके चलते ऑटोचालकों की सेवाएं दिन भर प्रभावित रही और शहर में सार्वजनिक परिवहन व्यवस्था अस्थिर होती दिखाई दी। कई ऑटो रिक्शा चालकों ने बताया कि वे चार से छह घंटे तक लाइन में खड़े रहे, लेकिन गैस नहीं मिलने के कारण उन्हें मजबूरी में वाहन बंद करके लौटना पड़ा। कई लोग बसों और निजी वाहनों पर निर्भर रहने को मजबूर हुए। हालांकि शाम तक सप्लाई सामान्य करने की कोशिश जारी रही।