Millennium Post, Delhi, 01/09/2025
Page No: 9, Size: (16.46cm x 13.18cm)

IndianOil wins multiple honours at SCOPE Eminence Awards 2022-23

NEW DELHI: Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) has won major recognitions at the SCOPE Eminence Awards 2022-23, held at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi on August 29, 2025. The awards were presented by the President of India, Droupadi Murmu, in the presence of leaders from across Public Sector Enterprises.

IndianOil received three Corporate Excellence Awards in the categories of Environment Excellence & Sustainable Development, Women Empowerment, and Global Outreach.

The awards were received on behalf of the firm by A S Sahney, Chairman, IOC, and Rashmi Govil, Director (HR).

Geetika Verma, CGM & State Head, IOC Kerala State Office, was conferred the Outstanding Women Leadership Award, while Mamoni Basumatary, General Manager (Technical), IOC Refineries Headquarters, received the Outstanding Women Leadership Award (Commendation).

The Individual Leadership Excellence Award (Miniratna I & II PSEs) was presented to Arvind Kumar, Director (Refineries) with additional charge of Director (Pipelines), for his performance and leadership during his tenure as MD of CPCL. Further, Shrikant Madhav Vaidya, Former Chairman, IOC, received Individual Leadership Excellence Award (Commendation) in the Maharatna & Navratna PSEs category. MPOST

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Project SPRINT showing results, Indian Oil gains retail dominance

IOC in April unveiled Project SPRINT that looks to make it future-ready by fashioning businesses to meet changing global energy landscape

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: Indian Oil Corporation's (IOC) transformative project SPRINT has started to show results with improved operational performance at refineries and the company is regaining leadership position in fuel retail expansion, Chairman Arvindar Singh Sahney said.

India's largest oil firm in April unveiled Project SPRINT that looks to make the firm future-ready by fashioning businesses to meet changing global energy landscape and stay relevant and profitable.

SPRINT stands for strengthening core businesses of oil refining, petrochemicals and fuel marketing, propel cost optimisation to increase profitability, reinforce customer centricity, integrate technology and innovation, nurture leadership and talent, and be transition-ready. IOC called SPRINT a transformation project that will keep the firm rooted in its core strengths, while at the same time preparing for an eventual transition away from fossil fuels.

"To sustain leadership in a changing energy landscape, the company must evolve with speed and agility — and with this vision, we launched Project SPRINT at the beginning of this fiscal year," he said. "SPRINT is our transformation framework to sharpen competitiveness and create long-term value."

IOC called SPRINT a transformation project that will keep the firm rooted in its core strengths, while at the same time preparing for an eventual transition

Highlights

- At heart of SPRINT are 3Cs — core, cost, customer & 3Ts: tech, talent, transition, IOC Chairman Arvindar Singh Sahney said
- 'One of our refineries is on track to become 1st PSU refinery in India to achieve a Quartile-1 global ranking in the prestigious Solomon Benchmarking Index'
- 'On operational front, the company's cost-optimisation initiatives across business segments are progressing well'

Addressing the company's annual shareholder meeting, he said at the heart of SPRINT are the 3Cs — core, cost, customer — and 3Ts: technology, talent, transition. "The results are already visible. Based on our internal assessments, one of our refineries is on track to become the first PSU refinery in India to achieve a Quartile-1 global ranking in the prestigious Solomon Benchmarking Index, with official results expected later this year," he said.

The Solomon Index is a globally recognised benchmarking tool primarily used in the refining and petrochemical industries to measure and compare efficiency on different parameters. "In retail, nearly half of all new PSU OMC outlets commissioned since April 2025 have been IOC's, strengthening our footprint in urban centres and along highways," he said. "Non-fuel revenues at our outlets grew 49 per cent year-on-year in the first four months of this financial year -- a clear marker of rising customer trust and enhanced value."

IOC traditionally was a market leader in fuel retailing, controlling roughly half of the market. But in recent years, it lost out on marketing to fellow public sector companies as well as private sector firms due to defused focus.

This resulted in rivals gaining market share. Since Sahney took over, IOC has renewed focus on recapturing the market share and is back to commanding about 42 per cent of the market share of all petroleum products sold in the country.

It has increased its share in bulk diesel by 10 percentage points, wrestling ground from Reliance Industries and Rosneft-backed Nayara Energy after reversing margin-first playbook in favour of market dominance.

"On the operational front, the company's cost-optimisation initiatives across business segments are progressing well, ensuring efficiency, competitiveness, and sustained profitability," he said. To strengthen its core business, IOC is scaling capacity to refine crude oil into fuels like petrol and diesel from the present 80.75 million tonnes per annum to 98.4 million tonnes by 2028, with major expansions at Panipat, Gujarat, and Barauni, he said.

To move this energy swiftly and sustainably, IOC is expanding its pipeline network -- the country's most extensive -- to 22,000 km with 21 projects under execution. These include pipeline extensions and new storage facilities in Nepal.

Alongside refining and pipelines, IOC is targeting petrochemicals as the next growth engine, expanding capacity from the current 4.3 million tonnes per annum to over 13 million tonnes capacity by 2030, with a sharp focus on specialty chemicals to reduce import dependence and enhance margins.

The firm will continue to expand its 40,000-plus fuel retailing network, adding new-age sources such as EV chargers, battery-swapping stations and CNG and LNG dispensing outlets. Alongside core business, IOC is investing Rs 2.5 lakh crore in energy transition that will help it achieve net-zero operational emissions by 2046, he said

Millennium Post, Delhi, 01/09/2025
Page No: 1, Size: (8.15cm x 9.08cm)

Commercial LPG cylinder price slashed by Rs 51.50

NEW DELHI: Oil marketing companies (OMCs) have cut the price of a 19 kg commercial LPG cylinder by Rs 51.50, effective September 1, offering relief to commercial users nationwide. In Delhi, the revised retail price will be Rs 1,580 per cylinder. Domestic 14.2 kg LPG cylinders remain unchanged. This marks the third consecutive monthly reduction, following a Rs 33.50 cut on August 1 and a Rs 58.50 drop on July 1. Officials said the price adjustments reflect global LPG trends and aim to ease costs for businesses that rely on commercial gas cylinders for operations, including restaurants and small-scale industries. MPOST

Hindu, Delhi, 01/09/2025
Page No: 7, Size: (38.68cm x 39.45cm)

India's economic churn, the nectar of growth

Hardeep S. Puri

is Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas, Government of India

Indian civilisation has long believed that trial precedes triumph. Like the churning of the ocean, *Samudra Manthan*, where turbulence yielded nectar, our economic churns have always produced renewal. From the crisis of 1991 came liberalisation and from the COVID-19 pandemic came a digital surge. And, today, from the cacophony of doubters calling India a "dead economy" emerges the fact-rich story of resilience: faster growth, stronger buffers, and broader opportunity.

The economic data-energy security link

Consider the latest GDP numbers. Real GDP grew 7.8% in Q1 FY 2025-26, a five-quarter high. Crucially, this growth is broad-based: Gross Value Added is up 7.6%, with manufacturing 7.7%, construction 7.6%, and services approximately 9.3%. Nominal GDP expanded 8.8%. This is not an arbitrary spike – it reflects rising consumption, robust investment, and the payoff from steady public capex and logistics reforms that reduce costs across the economy.

India is now the world's fourth-largest economy, and the fastest-growing major one, outpacing even the first and second largest, the United States and China. On present trajectories, India is poised to overtake Germany and become the third-largest economy in market exchange terms before the decade ends. India's momentum matters globally; independent estimates show that India already contributes over 15% of incremental world growth. The Prime Minister has set a clear ambition – raising India's share toward 20% as reform deepens and new capacity comes online.

Markets and rating agencies have recognised this discipline. S&P Global delivered India's first sovereign rating upgrade in 18 years, citing robust growth, monetary credibility and fiscal consolidation. That upgrade lowers borrowing costs and widens the investor base. It also punctures the "dead economy" narrative: independent assessors of risk have voted with their ratings.

Equally important is who benefits. Between 2013-14 and 2022-23, 24.82 crore Indians moved out of multidimensional poverty. That shift rides on basic-services delivery at scale – bank accounts, clean cooking fuel, health cover, tap water – and on direct transfers that empower the poor to make choices. This scale of growth amid the world's most vibrant democracy and with remarkable demographic challenges is distinctive. India's model values consensus-building, competitive federalism, and last-mile delivery through digital rails. It is slower to announce, faster to implement, and built to last. When critics compare us to authoritarian sprints, they miss the point: India is building a marathoner's economy.

As India's Petroleum Minister, this writer can attest to how India's energy security supports this rapid growth. India, today, stands as the third largest energy consumer, fourth largest refiner, and fourth largest liquefied natural gas importer in the world. India operates over 5.2 million barrels per day of refining capacity, with a clear road map to expand beyond 400 million tonnes per annum by the end of the decade.

India's energy demand, which is projected to double by 2047, will account for nearly a quarter of incremental global demand, making India's success central to global energy stability. The government's approach has been to combine security with reform. Exploration acreage has expanded from 8% of sedimentary basins in 2021 to over 16% in 2025, with a target of covering one million square kilometres by 2030. The drastic reduction of so-called 'No-Go' areas by 99% has unlocked vast potential, while the Open Acreage Licensing Policy (OALP) ensures transparent and competitive bidding. New gas pricing reforms linking prices to the Indian crude basket and offering 20% premiums for deepwater and new wells have spurred investment.

A story of energy transition

India's energy story is not only about hydrocarbons; it is also about transition. Ethanol blending has surged from 1.5% in 2014 to 20% today, saving over ₹1.25 lakh crore in foreign exchange and paying more than ₹1 lakh crore directly to farmers. Over 300 compressed biogas plants are being rolled out under Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation, with a 5% blending mandate targeted by 2028. Oil public sector units (PSU) are leading the charge in green hydrogen.

Much heat has been generated in some quarters about India's purchase of Russian crude. Let us separate fact from noise. Russian oil has never been sanctioned like Iranian or Venezuelan crude; it is under a G-7/European Union price cap system deliberately designed to keep oil flowing while capping revenues. There have been 18 rounds of such packages, and India has complied with each one. Every transaction has used legal shipping and insurance, compliant traders and audited channels. India has not broken rules. India has stabilised markets and kept global prices from spiralling.

Some critics allege that India has become a "laundromat" for Russian oil. Nothing could be further from the truth. India has been the fourth-largest exporter of petroleum products for decades – long before the Ukraine conflict – and its refiners process a basket of crudes from across the globe. Exports keep supply chains functioning. Indeed, Europe itself turned to Indian fuels after banning Russian crude. The volume of exports and refining margins – Gross Refining Margins or GRMs – remains broadly the same. There is no question of profiteering.

Equally important, India acted decisively to shield its citizens when global prices spiked after the Ukraine conflict. Oil PSUs absorbed losses of up to ₹10 per litre on diesel; the government cut central and State taxes and export rules mandated that refiners selling petrol and diesel abroad must sell at least 50% of petrol and 30% of diesel in the domestic market.

These measures, at considerable fiscal cost, ensured that not a single retail outlet ran dry and that Indian households saw stable prices. The larger truth is this – there is no substitute for the world's second-largest producer supplying nearly 10% of global oil. Those who are pointing fingers ignore this fact. India's adherence to all international norms prevented a catastrophic $200-per-barrel shock, aligning with its civilisational values of *Vasudheiva Kutumbakam*.

It is the same, 'Made in India' for the world vision that shapes the new industrial revolution taking shape in India. This spans semiconductors, electronics, renewables, defence and speciality chemicals powered by production linked incentives and the Pradhan Mantri Gati Shakti logistics backbone. The momentum in semiconductors is now reaching a new scale – a testament to policy seriousness and execution. The Cabinet recently approved four additional semiconductor manufacturing projects under the India Semiconductor Mission. The Prime Minister's visit to a semiconductor facility in Japan, on August 30, 2025, and renewed Japanese investment commitments, underline a shared road map for resilient, trusted tech supply chains.

The digital economy multiplies these gains. India leads the world in real-time payments; the Unified Payments Interface's ubiquity raises productivity for small businesses, and India's startup ecosystem is translating innovation into exports of services and solutions. When digital rails meet hard infrastructure, the effect is compounding – lower friction, higher formalisation, and a virtuous circle of investment and consumption.

India's scoreboard has the answers

The arc ahead is promising. Independent projections (EY) suggest that by 2038, India could emerge as the world's second-largest economy in purchasing power parity (PPP) terms, with a GDP above $34 trillion. This trajectory rests on steady reforms, human capital and abundant, clean, reliable energy for every enterprise and household.

The test of a great civilisation lies in its crucible moments. When doubted in the past, India responded with Green Revolutions, IT Revolutions, and the quiet dignity of millions lifting themselves through education and enterprise. Today's moment is no different. India will keep its gaze steady, its reforms relentless, and its growth rapid, democratic, and inclusive – so that the benefits reach the most underserved. To the naysayers, the scoreboard is the answer. Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, Viksit Bharat is not an aspiration. It is a deliverable – and the numbers are simply the latest chapter in that larger story.

India's fact-rich story of resilience, growth and energy security will silence the 'global doubters' who call it a 'dead economy'

Mint, Delhi, 01/09/2025
Page No: 7, Size: (37.52cm x 42.55cm)

Russian oil discounts likely to hold despite new EU caps

Indian refiners to get around $3 per barrel discount from September even after fresh curbs

Rituraj Baruah
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NEW DELHI

India's oil refiners are expected to benefit from discounts on Russian oil even after a new price cap imposed by the European Union (EU) takes effect next month, three people in the know of the developments said.

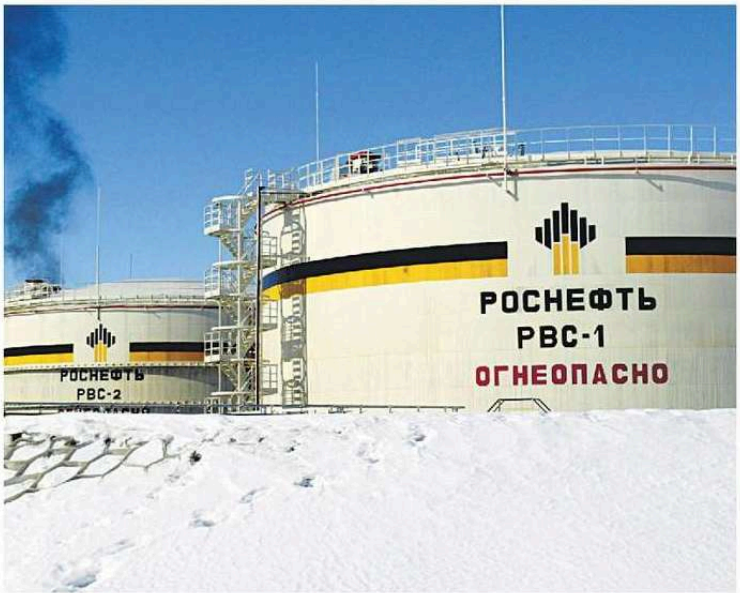
The discounts are expected to remain at the current levels of around $3 per barrel. In July, the EU capped prices of Russian oil at $47.6 per barrel effective 3 September, 15% below $60 per barrel implemented since December 2022.

"The discounts are likely to continue in September too as the new price cap kick in. After US pressure to discontinue purchase of Russian oil, discounts somewhat increased to around $3 per barrel," said one of the two people mentioned above.

The EU's 19 July statement announcing new measures against Russia said: "The EU is curtailing Russia's energy revenues through a number of different measures. The EU is lowering the price cap for crude oil from $60 to $47.6 per barrel, to align it with current global oil prices and is introducing an automatic and dynamic mechanism to modify the oil price cap and ensure that this price cap is effective. Oil exports still represent one third of the Russian government's revenues."

Queries sent to Indian Oil Corp., Bharat Petroleum Corp. Ltd, Hindustan Petroleum Corp. Ltd, and Russian-state owned oil producer Rosneft, remained unanswered.

India has continued to purchase Russian oil despite US pressure. Russia emerged as the top crude supplier to India in FY22. Although the import of Russian oil has somewhat declined amid shrinking discounts compared to the highs of 2022 and geopolitical volatility, Russia remains India's top supplier.



India has continued to purchase Russian oil despite US pressure. AP

India imported oil worth $16.18 billion from Russia during April-July FY26, lower than $19.46 billion in the same period of last fiscal, commerce ministry data showed. The share of Russian oil in value terms currently stands at nearly 32%, compared to 38% of India's overall import basket a year ago.

Stakeholders also expect the volume of Russian supplies to remain unimpacted by the new price cap and sanctions of more 'shadow fleets' by the EU. A trader on condition of anonymity said that with price caps coming in, informal trading also gains momentum, and the volumes are not impacted.

"When the price cap of $60 was imposed, shadow fleets increased dramatically. The network has grown since. Once the cargo changes hands to formal traders, it enters the formal business. We may see an increase in these fleets," the trader said.

A shadow fleet is a clandestine network of ships, often old and poorly maintained, used to transport oil surreptitiously, evading international sanctions, price caps, and oversight.

Although the price is capped, Russian oil has not been sanctioned, as in the case of Venezuela and Iran.

"When the $60 price cap was imposed in 2022, discounts were offered by Russian suppliers; so, a similar trend may be expected now on the oil price. Further, higher prices can be adjusted in insurance and freight which are outside the ambit of the price cap," said Prashant Vasisht, senior vice president and co-group head, corporate ratings, Icra Ltd.

In December 2022, Brent crude oil prices were around $78-80 per barrel. On a landed basis, at that time, discounts were $8-9 per barrel for India. Brent is currently trading around $67 per barrel.

An official said, "It is worth considering why the West has chosen not to bring Russian oil under sanctions. India has refrained from purchasing LNG and LPG from any of the sanctioned projects from Russia." The official further said that no crude oil purchased from Russia by India has been exported at higher prices as alleged by US officials.

Another official with a state-run PSU noted that India uses clean fleets to import Russian crude oil, and EU sanctions on some fleets would also not impact supplies.

The US has attempted to pressure India to stop Russian oil purchases. It has imposed 25% additional tariff over and above the previously announced 25% over India importing cheap Russian oil and "profiteering" from the discounted prices.

India has maintained that its decisions on energy supplies would depend on demand requirements and energy security.

On 20 August, Russia's deputy trade representative to India, Evgeniy Griva told reporters that Russia offers India a discount of about 5%.

"There is some mechanism on how to supply crude oil (to India). Now we can't discuss it... there is a very special mechanism," Griva said, adding that Russia typically offers about 5% discount to Indian buyers," Griva had said.

PETRO POWER

IN July, the EU capped prices of Russian oil at $47.6 per barrel, effective 3 September

INDIA bought $16.18 bn of Russian oil in April-July FY26, lower than $19.46 billion same time last fiscal

THOUGH price is capped, Russian oil is not sanctioned, as in the case of Venezuela and Iran

INDIA maintains that its decisions on energy would depend on demand and energy security

Business Line, Delhi, 01/09/2025
Page No: 2, Size: (12.46cm x 36.67cm)

PNGRB in talks with States to rationalise VAT on natural gas, CNG

Rishi Ranjan Kala
New Delhi

Top officials, including the Chairman of the Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB), are in talks with State governments to rationalise VAT on natural gas and CNG, a measure critical for an inclusive market and affordable access to cleaner fuels.

States generate revenue by levying value added tax (VAT) on the sale of natural gas, piped natural gas (PNG) and compressed natural gas (CNG).

The PNGRB leadership has held several deliberations with Chief Ministers, Lieutenant Governors or Chief Secretaries of more than a dozen States, including Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh, it said.

"These high-level engagements focused on key policy and operational issues critical to the city gas distribution (CGD) sector. The discussions emphasised the importance of rationalising VAT on domestic natural gas and CNG to make clean fuels more economically viable for consumers," the oil and gas sector regulator added.

Over the past two years, PNGRB's sustained efforts have led to VAT reductions on natural gas in Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu.

MAJOR CHALLENGE

The regulator emphasised that high and differential VAT rates create an uneven playing field, discourage investment in States with higher tax rates and ultimately affect the end-user prices for both domestic and commercial/industrial consumers. For comparison, while some States levy VAT as low as 5 per cent on natural gas, others impose rates exceeding 20 per cent, leading to substantial cost variations.

The selling price of domestic PNG in India varies from around ₹45 per standard cubic meter (SCM) in Tripura to ₹63 in Uttarakhand. Similarly, CNG price varies from roughly ₹74.60 per kg in Puducherry to ₹103.80 in Uttarakhand.

The PNGRB told the States that rationalising VAT is critical for fostering a stable, competitive and inclusive natural gas market, essential for accelerating India's clean energy transition and ensuring affordable access to sustainable fuel for consumers. Citing instances, the regulator provided the example of Bihar, which notified a reduction in VAT on CNG and PNG from 20 per cent to 12.5 per cent, and reduced the VAT rate on PNG for industrial use from 20 per cent to 5 per cent. This will benefit about 1.9 crore households and 38.41 lakh potential PNG consumers.

Overall, the reduction in VAT would lead to higher gas consumption. For instance, rationalising VAT and implementing effective CGD policies by the States have boosted adoption of CNG vehicles, with the number on the road rising steadily from 58.61 lakh in March 2023 to 81.95 lakh by March 2025.

Hindustan Times, Delhi, 01/09/2025
Page No: 14, Size: (37.07cm x 14.68cm)

India now prepares to add biofuel to diesel

Manas Pimpalkhare & Subhash Narayan
manas.pimpalkhare@livemint.com

NEW DELHI: India is preparing to extend its biofuel push to the diesel-guzzling construction equipment sector, with plans to blend biofuels into diesel that powers heavy carriers, cranes, bulldozers, and other large machinery.

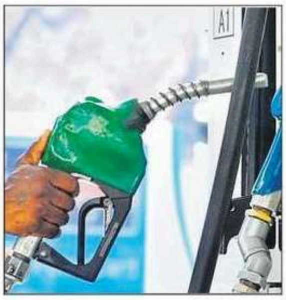
Inter-ministerial consultations between the road transport and highways ministry and the heavy industries ministry have been started to operationalize the plan, according to two officials directly aware of the development.

Construction equipment, which consumes 3–4% of the country's annual 91 million tonnes of diesel, could be the first to face mandatory biofuel blending before a nationwide rollout of 10% blended fuel.

So far, India has been blending ethanol into petrol, with the country having already achieved 20% blending.

The work on biofuel blending in diesel for construction equipment vehicles has started with a discussion between the two ministries," said one of the officials cited above, requesting anonymity.

The initiative aims to help India trim its massive crude oil import bill, the official said. It also aligns with the country's twin goals of moving towards net-zero emissions and boosting farmer incomes through greater use of biofuels.



The initiative aims to help India trim its massive crude oil import bill. MINT

India paid an import bill of $137 billion to ship in 234 million tonnes of crude oil in FY25.

Email queries sent to both ministries on 28 August remained unanswered. Union minister for road transport and highways Nitin Gadkari has maintained that the 4 billion litres of annual diesel usage by construction equipment vehicles can be an opportunity for biofuel blending to cut India's crude imports.

Industry leaders are willing to accept biofuel blending as a method of reducing emissions and cutting fuel imports. Deepak Shetty, chief executive officer and managing director of JCB India, a leading construction equipment maker, told *Mint* the company welcomes this initiative.

"We view these developments positively, as they align with our commitment to sustainable innovation and India's broader goals of reducing pollution, cutting fossil fuel imports, and advancing towards net-zero emissions," he said. Construction equipment vehicle makers have earlier invested in battery-powered electric vehicles as well as hydrogen-powered vehicles to decarbonize the sector. While battery-electric power works for compact machines, it is not practical for larger machines in our industry, said Shetty.

Business Standard, Delhi, 01/09/2025
Page No: 20, Size: (22.28cm x 156.45cm)

KRANTI NATION
PRANJAL SHARMA

Oil industry makes the digital leap

The fossil fuel industry is going digital, even as many believe that its era has ended. Renewable energy may be expanding, but oil and gas remain the centre of the global geopolitical theatre. Amid worries about its role in greenhouse emissions, the industry continues to pump out black gold with more than a little help from digital and emerging technologies.

It is doubling down on new technologies to improve quality and efficiency in extractions. In many cases, technology is helping the industry to accelerate sustainable and low-waste operations. Digital oilfields represent a strategic transformation in the oil & gas sector, where advanced software, data analytics, and automation are integrated to drive smarter and more profitable operations. While the concept of such an oilfield covers a wide range of technologies, its core purpose is to enhance decision-making, streamline workflows, and get greater value from assets. By enabling real-time monitoring, predictive maintenance, and data-driven production optimisation, a digital

FOSSIL FUEL COMPANIES ARE SETTING UP DIGITAL OILFIELDS TO IMPROVE EFFICIENCY, CUT COSTS, AND ENHANCE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AMID FOCUS ON RENEWABLE ENERGY

oilfield helps reduce operational costs and improve recovery rates. It also fosters seamless collaboration across teams and geographies, supports faster and more informed decisions, and ensures that data from across the enterprise is unified and actionable.

The global oil & gas automation and control market was worth $26.87 billion in 2019 and it is expected to grow to $41.8 billion by 2030, according to Statista.

The fossil fuel industry is turning to digital solutions to have more energy options, reduce cost and improve customer satisfaction, according to Cognizant, which provides some of these technologies. The information technology (IT) company says it helped a Saudi oil and gas company achieve 200 per cent improvement in efficiency by automating its plant. The automation solution "doubled the operational efficiency and helped generate a one-time cost savings of $150,000 as well as an expected annual cost savings of $5.6 million."

Schlumberger, a more than 100-year-old oil and gas exploration company, has reinvented itself as an energy technology provider called SLB. It offers connected rig equipment that are monitored remotely, allowing maintenance to be performed precisely. Similarly, connected wellhead systems leverage real-time data to ensure consistent performance and operational reliability.

The Indian oil and gas industry has also embraced technology: from discovery to delivery. State-owned Oil India Limited uses advanced technologies across its upstream and midstream operations. Over the decades, the company says it has deployed "state-of-the-art, fit-for-purpose" solutions that span the entire hydrocarbon value chain: from exploration and development to production and transportation.

These include digitalisation and automation as key enablers of operations improvement. Oil India uses internet-of-things sensors, advanced data analytics, and artificial-intelligence-powered predictive maintenance systems to improve asset reliability, extend equipment life, and reduce downtime and operating costs. ONGC, another state-owned company, says it's developing "digital twins" in engineering and operations. The concept involves creating systems with augmented and virtual reality capabilities for collaboration, training, and equipment maintenance in oil and gas fields with predictive analytics.

Global energy companies are working with Indian technology companies for digital transformation. Aramco Digital, the technology subsidiary of Aramco, and LTI Mindtree, a unit of India's Larsen & Toubro, have announced a strategic joint venture for IT services. NextEra, as the joint venture company is called, is part of Saudi Arabia's plan to accelerate digitisation of its economy. A statement by LTI Mindtree and Aramco Digital said that NextEra will create "future-ready solutions that enhance operational efficiency, enable intelligent decision-making, and deliver seamless customer experiences."

With fluctuating energy prices and increasing competition from renewable energy, companies are under pressure to cut costs. Automation and digital solutions provide significant savings by reducing manual labor, preventing equipment failure, and streamlining operations.

Times of India, Delhi, 01/09/2025
Page No: 14, Size: (25.85cm x 20.48cm)

E20 ethanol-blended petrol hits vehicle mileage, users bear brunt

Dipak.Dash@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: The admissions by the automobile industry and the govt that ethanol-blended petrol (E20) can cause a drop in a vehicle's mileage in the range of 2%-6% is a double whammy for consumers as they keep paying higher price for fuel but their vehicles run less.

Take the example of Surender Pal Singh, a Delhi-based automobile engineer, who claimed the mileage of his less than three-year-old car reduced significantly in the last 4-6 months. "The average mileage of my car was around 17-17.5 km on Delhi roads when I bought it. The mileage slipped to 16.5 km last year and I thought it may be because of my driving habits and traffic conditions. But 4-5 months back I saw the mileage touching 14.5 km," Singh claimed.

On social media, several car owners asked why they should keep paying the price for a fuel that gives them less mileage

Singh claimed that recently, he switched to "premium fuel", which is about Rs 7 costlier, and the fuel mileage has improved, adding that he himself drives his car.

Several car users have posted such observations and complaints on social media, raising questions why they should keep paying the price for a fuel that gives them less mileage.

In fact, govt think tank Niti Aayog in its 2021 report on 'Roadmap For Ethanol Blending in India 2020-25' had recommended that "for better acceptability of higher ethanol blends in the country, retail price of such fuels should be lower than normal petrol to compensate for the reduction in calorific value and incentivise switching to the blended fuel".

Mint, Delhi, 01/09/2025
Page No: 2, Size: (27.30cm x 29.98cm)

India now eyes adding biofuel to diesel

Manas Pirmpalkhare &
Subhash Narayan

NEW DELHI

India is preparing to extend its biofuel push to the diesel-guzzling construction equipment sector, with plans to blend biofuels into diesel that powers heavy carriers, cranes, bulldozers, and other large machinery.

Inter-ministerial consultations between the road transport and highways ministry and the heavy industries ministry have been started to operationalize the plan, according to two officials directly aware of the development.

Construction equipment, which consumes 3–4% of the country's annual 91 million tonnes of diesel, could be the first to face mandatory biofuel blending before a nationwide rollout of 10% blended fuel.

So far, India has been blending ethanol into petrol, with the country having already achieved 20% blending.

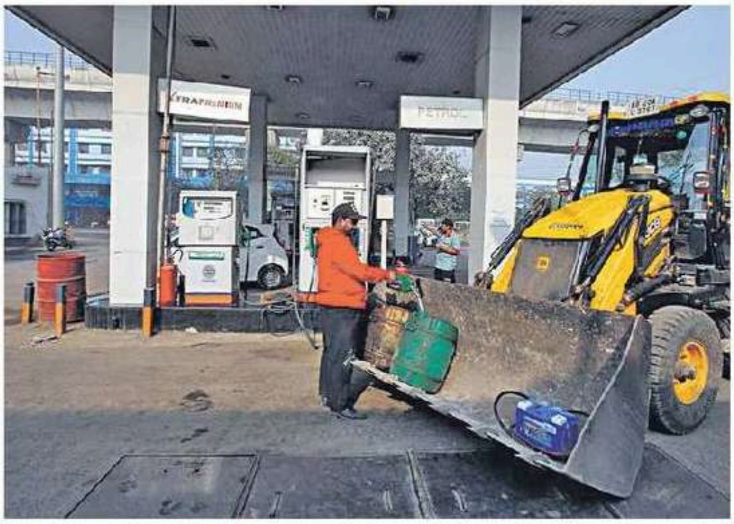
The work on biofuel blending in diesel for construction equipment vehicles has started with a discussion between the two ministries," said one of the officials cited above, requesting anonymity. The initiative aims will help India trim its massive crude oil import bill, the official said. It also aligns with the country's twin goals of moving towards net-zero emissions and boosting farmer incomes through greater use of biofuels.

India paid an import bill of $137 billion to ship in 234 million tonnes of crude oil in FY25.

Email queries sent to both ministries on 28 August remained unanswered. Union minister for road transport and highways Nitin Gadkari has maintained that the 4 billion litres of annual diesel usage by construction equipment vehicles can be an opportunity for biofuel blending to cut India's crude imports.

Construction equipment could be the first to face mandatory biofuel blending before it is rolled out nationally

Industry leaders are willing to accept biofuel blending as a method of reducing emissions and cutting fuel imports.



Construction equipment sector consumes 3–4% of India's annual 91 million tonnes of diesel supply . REUTERS

Deepak Shetty, chief executive officer and managing director of JCB India, a leading construction equipment maker, told *Mint* the company welcomes this initiative. "We view these developments positively, as they align with our commitment to sustainable innovation and India's broader goals of reducing pollution, cutting fossil fuel imports, and advancing towards net-zero emissions," he said. Construction equipment vehicle makers have earlier invested in battery-powered electric vehicles as well as hydrogen-powered vehicles to decarbonize the sector. While battery-electric power works for compact machines, it is not practical for larger machines in our industry, said Shetty.

Biofuel blending, while a reputed method of reducing emissions and decreasing import dependence, has also seen controversy.In recent months, there has been an outcry over a hit to vehicle performance and mileage on use of E20 fuel, a mix of 20% ethanol into petrol.

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For an extended version of this story, go to livemint.com.

Punjab Kesari, Delhi, 01/09/2025
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प्रेम नगर में घर-घर पहुंची गैस

पूर्वी दिल्ली, (पंजाब केसरी): मुस्तफाबाद विधानसभा से गैस सिलेंडर से आजादी की मुहिम को रफ्तार देते हुए दिल्ली विधानसभा के डिप्टी स्पीकर एवं स्थानीय भाजपा विधायक मोहन सिंह बिष्ट ने प्रेम नगर इलाके में पीएनजी गैस पाइप लाइन का उद्घाटन किया। उन्होंने कहा कि घर-घर गैस का कनेक्शन हो जाने के बाद क्षेत्र में रहने वाली उनकी माताओं और बहनों को हर महीने गैस सिलेंडर बुक करने और उसके आने का इंतजार नहीं करना पड़ेगा। विधायक कार्यालय प्रतिनिधि कपिल बंदूनी ने बताया कि उद्घाटन कार्यक्रम के मौके पर जिलाध्यक्ष मास्टर बिनोद, निगम चेयरमैन पुनीत शर्मा, बी.डी. जोशी, स्थानीय आरडब्लूए के पदाधिकारी एवं बड़ी संख्या में स्थानीय लोग उपस्थित रहे।

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बेहतर स्थिति में नजर आ रहीं तेल विपणन कंपनियां

देवांशु दत्ता
मुंबई, 31 अगस्त

सीमित भंडार और यूरोपीय संघ में नई मांग को देखते हुए वैश्विक रिफाइनिंग परिदृश्य भारतीय रिफाइनरियों और तेल विपणन कंपनियों के लिए अनुकूल दिख रहा है। छोटी क्षमताएं बंद करके और पुरानी रिफाइनरियों को उन्नत बनाकर अपने रिफाइनिंग क्षेत्र को मजबूत करने की चीन की इच्छा ने भी अल्पकालिक आपूर्ति में नरमी को जन्म दिया है। इस बीच, कच्चे तेल और गैस की कीमतें स्थिर हैं और भारतीय रिफाइनर ब्रेंट की तुलना में छूट पर रूसी आपूर्ति हासिल करना जारी रखे हुए हैं।

इसलिए, वित्त वर्ष 26 की जुलाई-सितंबर तिमाही में तेल विपणन कंपनियां उच्च सकल रिफाइनिंग मार्जिन (जीआरएम) हासिल कर सकती हैं और 4.1 डॉलर प्रति बैरल के बेंचमार्क सिंगापुर जीआरएम को आसानी से पार कर सकती हैं। चेन्नई पेट्रोलियम, मैंगलोर रिफाइनरी ऐंड पेट्रोकेमिकल्स, भारत पेट्रोलियम , हिंदुस्तान पेट्रोलियम, इंडियन ऑयल और रिलायंस इंडस्ट्रीज सभी को उच्च जीआरएम से लाभ हो सकता है। चीन के पास आज दुनिया भर में सबसे बड़ी रिफाइनिंग क्षमता है, जिसकी रिफाइनिंग क्षमता 2025 तक 2.1 करोड़ बैरल प्रति दिन तक पहुंच जाएगी। 2023 में उपयोग लगभग 88 फीसदी तक पहुंच जाएगा। 2024 में चीन की रिफाइनरियां अपनी क्षमता के केवल 75 फीसदी पर ही चलेंगी। नए मेगा प्लांट और पेट्रोकेमिकल-एकीकृत कॉम्प्लेक्स चालू हो रहे हैं। लेकिन चीनी उन्नयन के अल्पकालिक-मध्यावधि प्रभाव आपूर्ति में कमी के रूप में सामने आएंगे। रूसी छूट (जो अप्रैल-जून तिमाही में कुछ समय के लिए घटकर 1.5 डॉलर प्रति बैरल रह गई थी) अब बढ़कर 2 से 3 डॉलर प्रति बैरल हो गई है, जबकि ब्रेंट क्रूड 67 डॉलर प्रति बैरल से नीचे गिर गया है।

इसलिए, यूरोप में व्यवधानों और कम वैश्विक भंडार के कारण भारतीय रिफाइनरियां बेहतर स्थिति में हैं। भारत के लिए, क्रैक्स में प्रत्येक 1 डॉलर प्रति बैरल की वृद्धि 0.1-0.5 डॉलर प्रति बैरल के बीच उतार-चढ़ाव में तब्दील होती है। सिंगापुर बेंचमार्क की तुलना में यहां जीआरएम प्रीमियम 7.3-7.5 डॉलर प्रति बैरल के बीच है।

चेन्नई पेट्रोकेमिकल्स आधुनिक सुविधाओं वाली एक शुद्ध रिफाइनरी (ओएमसी नहीं) है, जो डीजल और एयर टर्बाइन फ्यूल के उत्पादन को अधिकतम करने के कारण उच्च रिटर्न और लाभांश प्रदान कर सकती है। इसकी जीआरएम संवेदनशीलता ऊंची है और प्रति बैरल 1 डॉलर की जीआरएम वृद्धि से प्रति शेयर आय (ईपीएस) में 38 रुपये और एबिटा में करीब 750 करोड़ रुपये की वृद्धि होती है।

एमआरपीएल को भी लाभ होगा क्योंकि वह अपना 30 फीसदी से अधिक कच्चा तेल रूस से छूट पर प्राप्त करती है। प्रति बैरल जीआरएम में 1 डॉलर की वृद्धि से ईपीएस में 4 रुपये की वृद्धि होती है। उच्च नकदी प्रवाह बैलेंस शीट को कम करने में मदद करेगा, जहां कुल ऋण 13,500 करोड़ रुपये है, जिसमें से 7,500 करोड़ रुपये कार्यशील पूंजी है।

तेल विपणन कंपनियों के लिए विपणन मार्जिन मजबूत है और एलपीजी घाटा कम हुआ है। तेल की कम कीमतें मजबूत ऑटो ईंधन विपणन मार्जिन (वर्तमान में 5-9 रुपये प्रति लीटर) के लिए सहायक हैं। एलपीजी की गिरती कीमतों के कारण वित्त वर्ष 2026 की दूसरी तिमाही में प्रति सिलेंडर एलपीजी घाटे में वित्त वर्ष 2026 की पहली तिमाही की तुलना में 30-40 फीसदी की कमी आई है। सरकार द्वारा एलपीजी घाटे के लिए 30,000 करोड़ रुपये के मुआवजे पर अधिक जानकारी की प्रतीक्षा है, लेकिन यह स्पष्ट रूप से एक सकारात्मक पहलू है, चाहे इसकी संरचना कैसी भी हो। तेल विपणन कंपनियों ने वित्त वर्ष 2026 की पहली तिमाही में इन्वेंट्री घाटा पहले ही दर्ज कर लिया है और स्थिर ब्रेंट कीमतों को देखते हुए (जबकि कार्यशील पूंजी की आवश्यकता कम हो गई है) आगे इन्वेंट्री घाटा होने की संभावना नहीं है।

इन्वेंट्री घाटे के कारण वित्त वर्ष 26 की पहली तिमाही की आय अनुमान से कमजोर रही। वित्त वर्ष 25 की चौथी तिमाही की तुलना में वित्त वर्ष 26 की पहली तिमाही में क्रमिक आधार पर एचपीसीएल के लिए कर पश्चात लाभ (पीएटी) में 30 फीसदी की वृद्धि हुई।

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ऊर्जा सुधारों की बन रही रूपरेखा

सुधीर पाल सिंह
नई दिल्ली, 31 अगस्त

नवीन और नवीकरणीय ऊर्जा मंत्री प्रह्लाद जोशी ने कहा कि सरकार ऊर्जा क्षेत्र में सुधारों के अगले चरण को लागू करने के लिए रूपरेखा तैयार करने के अंतिम चरण में है। इसमें निजी भागीदारी को बढ़ावा देने के लिए परमाणु ऊर्जा कानूनों में आवश्यक संशोधन और एडवांस्ड केमिस्ट्री सेल उत्पादन से जुड़ी प्रोत्साहन (एसीसी-पीएलआई) योजना के लिए बोली लगाने वालों का चयन किया जाना शामिल है।

महत्त्वपूर्ण ऊर्जा क्षेत्रों में हो रहे काम की स्थिति के बारे में जोशी ने कहा कि सरकार नई योजना के तहत हरित हाइड्रोजन को रसोई गैस और हीटिंग के लिए इस्तेमाल को लेकर जल्द ही परियोजना प्रस्ताव आमंत्रित करेगी। साथ ही सरकार एक नई बायो एनर्जी योजना भी विकसित करेगी। इसके अलावा नवंबर में सीओपी-30 से पहले भारत के तीसरे राष्ट्रीय स्तर पर निर्धारित योगदान (एनडीसी) को भी अंतिम रूप दिया जाएगा।

जोशी ने बिज़नेस स्टैंडर्ड की प्रश्नावली के लिखित जवाब में कहा, 'परमाणु ऊर्जा क्षेत्र में निजी क्षेत्र को अनुमति देने के लिए इन अधिनियमों (परमाणु ऊर्जा अधिनियम, परमाणु क्षति के लिए नागरिक दायित्व अधिनियम) में संशोधन पर चर्चा करने के लिए परमाणु ऊर्जा विभाग द्वारा समितियों का गठन किया गया है। समितियों द्वारा प्रस्तुत सिफारिशों पर इन विधायी संशोधनों को अंतिम रूप देने के लिए विचार-विमर्श किया जा रहा है।'परमाणु ऊर्जा के बदले स्वरूप के तहत डिजाइन, निर्माण और परमाणु बिजली संयंत्रों के संचालन में निजी क्षेत्र की भागीदारी की मांग की जा रही है। बिजली मंत्रालय परमाणु ऊर्जा परियोजनाएं स्थापित करने की प्रक्रिया में तेजी लाने के लिए परमाणु ऊर्जा विभाग, राज्य सरकारों और उद्योग के साथ मिलकर काम कर रहा है।

ऊर्जा भंडारण के क्षेत्र में हुई प्रगति पर जानकारी देते हुए मंत्री ने कहा कि ग्रिड-स्केल स्थिर ऊर्जा भंडारण के इस्तेमाल का समर्थन करने के मकसद से एसीसी-पीएलआई योजना की 10 गीगावाट प्रति घंटा (जीडब्ल्यूएच) क्षमता के लिए बोली लगाने वालों के चयन को अंतिम रूप नहीं दिया गया है और बोली दस्तावेज पर काम अंतिम चरण में है।

उन्होंने कहा कि सरकार ने ऊर्जा भंडारण प्रणालियों को बढ़ावा देने और विकसित करने के लिए एक नैशनल फ्रेमवर्क प्रकाशित किया है। इसके अलावा ऊर्जा भंडारण प्रणालियों वाली नवीकरणीय ऊर्जा परियोजनाओं के लिए इंटर-स्टेट ट्रांसमिशन सिस्टम (आईएसटीएस) शुल्क पर छूट दी है, और लगभग 43 गीगावॉट प्रति घंटे बैटरी ऊर्जा भंडारण प्रणालियों के विकास के लिए व्यवहार्यता अंतर वित्तपोषण को मंजूरी दी है।

हरित हाइड्रोजन पर आधारित अर्थव्यवस्था विकसित करने के प्रयासों के बारे में जोशी ने कहा कि नवीन तरीकों और मार्गों का उपयोग करके हरित हाइड्रोजन के उत्पादन और उपयोग के लिए पायलट परियोजनाओं के कार्यान्वयन के लिए नैशनल ग्रीन हाइड्रोजन मिशन (एनजीएचएम) के तहत योजना दिशानिर्देश जारी किए गए हैं। उन्होंने कहा, 'इसका मकसद खाना पकाने और हीटिंग जैसे कार्यों के लिए ईंधन के रूप में हरित हाइड्रोजन के उपयोग से जुड़ी पायलट परियोजनाओं का समर्थन करना है। इस योजना के तहत प्रस्ताव जल्द ही आमंत्रित किए जाएंगे।'

> **विकेंद्रीकृत अनुप्रयोगों जैसे रसोई गैस और हीटिंग के ईंधन के रूप में हरित हाइड्रोजन के उपयोग को बढ़ावा देने के लिए सरकार जल्द ही परियोजना प्रस्ताव आमंत्रित करेगी। सरकार एक नई जैव ईंधन योजना भी विकसित करेगी।**
>
> **प्रह्लाद जोशी,**
> नवीन और नवीकरणीय ऊर्जा मंत्री

सौर और पवन ऊर्जा आपूर्ति की अनिश्चितता के प्रबंधन के प्रयासों पर टिप्पणी करते हुए जोशी ने कहा कि सरकार ने हरित ऊर्जा उत्पादन की बेहतर भविष्यवाणी और रियल टाइम निगरानी के लिए 13 अक्षय ऊर्जा प्रबंधन केंद्र (आरईएमसी) स्थापित किए हैं। मंत्री ने कहा कि पवन ऊर्जा क्षमता बढ़ाने के काम में तेजी लाने के लिए मंत्रालय राज्यों के साथ काम कर रहा है, जिससे परियोजनाओं के लिए सरकारी जमीन चिह्नित की जा सके और जहां सरकारी जमीन अपर्याप्त है, राज्यों को निजी जमीन के अधिग्रहण के लिए प्रोत्साहित किया जा रहा है। जोशी ने कहा, 'परियोजनाओं को लागू करने के लिए और वृद्धि का वातावरण तैयार करने के लिए यह महत्त्वपूर्ण है। मंत्रालय ने खासकर पवन ऊर्जा संपन्न राज्यों (तमिलनाडु, महाराष्ट्र, कर्नाटक, गुजरात, राजस्थान, मध्य प्रदेश, केरल, आंध्र प्रदेश) से पवन ऊर्जा की क्षमता वाली जमीनों को पवन ऊर्जा या पवन सौर हाइब्रिड परियोजनाओं के लिए सुरक्षित रखने को कहा है, जिससे जमीन का रणनीतिक और अधिकतम उपयोग हो सके।'

Virat Vaibhav, Delhi, 01/09/2025
Page No: 15, Size: (6.93cm x 17.54cm)

आईओसी के प्रोजेक्ट स्प्रिंट के नतीजे दिखने शुरू

नई दिल्ली। इंडियन ऑयल कॉरपोरेशन (आईओसी) के प्रोजेक्ट स्प्रिंट ने रिफाइनरियों में बेहतर परिचालन प्रदर्शन के साथ परिणाम दिखाना शुरू कर दिया है और कंपनी ईंधन खुदरा विस्तार में नेतृत्व की स्थिति फिर से हासिल कर रही है। कंपनी के चेयरमैन अरविंदर सिंह साहनी ने यह जानकारी दी। देश की सबसे बड़ी तेल कंपनी ने अप्रैल में प्रोजेक्ट स्प्रिंट की शुरुआत की थी, जिसका उद्देश्य कंपनी को भविष्य के लिए तैयार बनाना है। यह परियोजना वैश्विक ऊर्जा परिदृश्य में हो रहे बदलावों के अनुरूप व्यवसायों को ढालने और कंपनी को प्रासंगिक तथा लाभदायक बनाए रखने पर केंद्रित है। कंपनी की वार्षिक शेयरधारक बैठक को संबोधित करते हुए साहनी ने कहा, बदलते ऊर्जा परिदृश्य में नेतृत्व बनाए रखने के लिए, कंपनी को गति और चपलता के साथ आगे बढ़ना चाहिए और इस नजरिए के साथ हमने चालू वित्त वर्ष की शुरुआत में प्रोजेक्ट स्प्रिंट पेश किया। उन्होंने कहा, स्प्रिंट हमारी प्रतिस्पर्धात्मकता को तेज करने और दीर्घकालिक मूल्य बनाने के लिए हमारा परिवर्तन ढांचा है। साहनी ने कहा, परिणाम पहले से ही दिखाई दे रहे हैं।

Oil prices set to fall as oversupply and demand uncertainty weigh on outlook

For consumers, lower prices may ease inflationary pressures, particularly in energy-importing nations

Issac John
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Global oil prices are increasingly facing downward pressure as supply outpaces demand and traders weigh the impact of shifting geopolitical and trade dynamics.

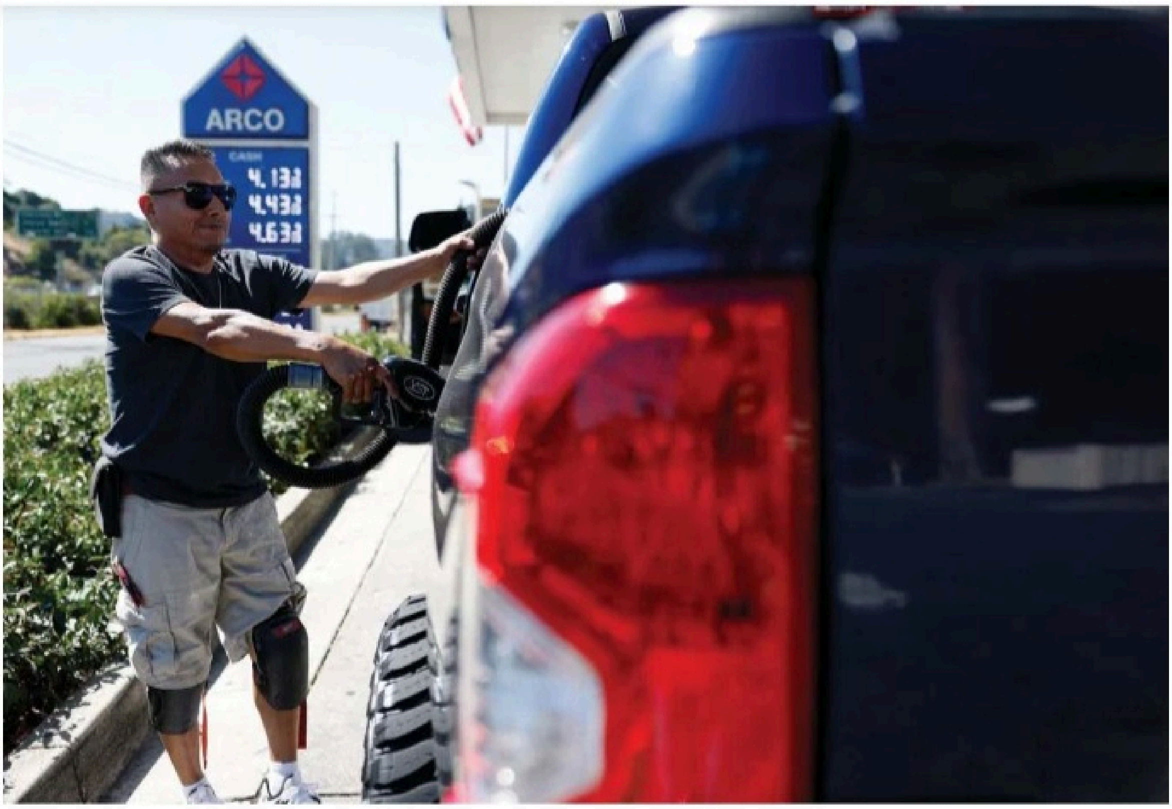
With the summer consumption peak behind and fresh supply entering the market from Opec+ and non-Opec producers, analysts expect Brent crude and West Texas Intermediate (WTI) prices to weaken further into the final quarter of 2025 and the early part of 2026.

For consumers, lower prices may ease inflationary pressures, particularly in energy-importing nations. But for producers, the outlook underlines a prolonged period of tighter margins and heightened competition. Unless demand surprises to the upside or geopolitical disruptions persist, oil prices appear set for a gradual but sustained decline into early 2026, oil market experts say.

According to a Reuters poll of nearly three dozen economists, Brent crude is forecast to average $67.65 per barrel this year, slightly below last month's projection of $67.84. WTI, the US benchmark, is expected to average $64.65 per barrel, broadly unchanged from July estimates. These projections imply a steady softening trend from the year-to-date average of around $70 for Brent. On Friday, Brent futures closed at $68.12, while WTI settled at $64.01.

Behind the bearish outlook is a combination of oversupply and weakening demand. Opec+, which includes major producers such as Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Russia, has accelerated output increases in recent months to protect market share. Eight Opec+ producers are currently pursuing raised production targets, a move that has added volumes just as global demand growth shows signs of slowing. "Crude prices remain range-bound, with geopolitical tensions being more than offset by expectations for an oversupplied market into the final quarter and beyond," analysts at Saxo Bank observed in a note.

Investment banks also share this cautious outlook. Goldman Sachs, Morgan Stanley, and JPMorgan collectively forecast Brent to average $63.57 per barrel in the fourth quarter of 2025, while WTI is projected at just above $60.30, according to a Wall Street Journal survey. Commonwealth Bank of Australia analyst Vivek Dhar also sees Brent sliding to $63 by year-end, citing persistent oversupply and fading seasonal demand.



Victor Sanchez pumps gas into his truck at an Arco gas station on August 28, 2025 in Mill Valley, California. Market participants are now looking to next week's Opec+ meeting for signals on whether the group might recalibrate production strategy. — AFP FILE

> **"Crude prices remain range-bound, with geopolitical tensions being more than offset by expectations for an oversupplied market into the final quarter and beyond."**
>
> **Analysts**
> At Saxo Bank

At the same time, uncertainty about US trade and tariff policies is clouding demand expectations. President Donald Trump's recent decision to double tariffs on Indian imports to 50 per cent has heightened fears of weaker trade flows and reduced oil demand. India, the world's third-largest importer, has so far defied Washington's calls to stop purchasing Russian oil, creating further unpredictability in the global supply chain.

Traders are also keeping an eye on geopolitical flashpoints. Earlier price gains driven by Ukrainian attacks on Russian oil export terminals quickly faded as reports of possible ceasefire talks surfaced, easing concerns about supply disruptions. Phil Flynn, senior analyst at Price Futures Group, suggested the demand pessimism may be overstated. "Supply from Opec is supposed to increase, but we're not seeing it in the US. I think things are going to stay tight," he said.

Indeed, US crude inventories showed higher-than-expected draws in late August, hinting that demand in industrial and freight sectors remains resilient even as the summer driving season ends with the Labour Day holiday.

> **"We see late-summer draws, but with Opec+ barrels coming to market and weak macroeconomic indicators, prices are likely to remain capped."**
>
> **Ole Hvalbye**
> Analyst at SEB Bank

However, the broader trend points to a supply-heavy market. Non-Opec producers, including US shale operators, continue to add barrels at a pace that reinforces the glut narrative. Meanwhile, Chinese demand—the key swing factor over the past two years—has been inconsistent as economic recovery slows. With growth concerns persisting in Europe and currency volatility in emerging markets, the demand side appears unlikely to absorb the extra supply meaningfully in the near term.

Ole Hvalbye, analyst at SEB Bank, noted that while US inventories remain supportive in the short term, the balance of risks skews to the downside. "We see late-summer draws, but with Opec+ barrels coming to market and weak macroeconomic indicators, prices are likely to remain capped," he said.

Market participants are now looking to next week's Opec+ meeting for signals on whether the group might recalibrate production strategy.

While the alliance has shown resolve to regain market share, prolonged price weakness could eventually test the cohesion of its members. For now, the consensus remains that Brent will slide into the low-to-mid $60s by year-end, with WTI hovering just above $60.

Australian, , 01/09/2025
Page No: 0, Size: (35.59cm x 23.42cm)

Gas industry frays over future of LNG as lobbying intensifies

COLIN PACKHAM

Australia's $90bn liquefied natural gas industry is splintering over how to confront looming shortages on the east coast as rival camps descend on Canberra in a lobbying blitz aimed at shaping Albanese government reforms.

Representatives from the country's largest gas producers are understood to have scheduled or have already held private meetings with ministers, advisers and senior bureaucrats, seeking to frame the rules that will govern the domestic gas market for the next decade.

At stake is who bears the burden of averting a supply crunch that the Australian Energy Market Operator has warned could hit Victoria and NSW as early as 2029 – and potentially sooner if demand rebounds faster than expected. Any shortfall would threaten manufacturing jobs, drive up household energy bills and intensify political pressure on Canberra to intervene more aggressively in the gas export market.

Australia is the world's second-largest LNG exporter, but the east coast market has in recent years been categorised by uneasy compromise between the needs of global buyers and domestic consumers. The Albanese government launched a wide-ranging review of the sector earlier this year, insisting all options were on the table. That review has fractured an industry once famed for presenting a united front.

Australia's largest east coast exporter, Australia Pacific LNG in which Origin Energy owns a 27.5 per cent stake, is arguing for sweeping reforms that would rewire the domestic market and impose stricter obligations on rival producers to prioritise local buyers. By contrast, Santos – operator of the Gladstone LNG project and the subject of a $36bn indicative takeover approach from Abu Dhabi's state-owned oil giant ADNOC – is believed to be supportive of a more modest package of tweaks, but critically will resist efforts for it to shoulder the burden. The tensions have spilled into public view.

APLNG in August tacitly called for rules that Santos' Gladstone LNG project should not be allowed to source extra gas from the domestic market to cover export shortfalls – a swipe at a contentious practice.

While couched in polite language, the critique underscores how competition between LNG producers is increasingly bleeding into the political debate.

APLNG and Shell through its Queensland Curtis LNG facility produce more gas than they export. Under Australian energy market rules, they both must offer these uncontracted volumes to the domestic market.

In contrast, Santos has no surplus. All the LNG it produces, it sells. But it does not produce enough gas to meet those contracted deals so is forced to buy from the domestic market, much to the frustration of its rivals. During periods when supply is tight, APLNG and Shell have borne the brunt of government demands.

Santos has not released its submission to the inquiry and people familiar with the thinking of the company insist inhibiting its ability to source gas from the domestic market would effectively force the break-up of export contracts, leaving regional allies short.

That argument has been promoted by diplomats and by influential foreign executives.

Continued on Page 18

Lobbying intensifies on LNG

Continued from Page 15

During a speech in Parliament House last year, Takayuki Ueda, boss of Japanese energy giant Inpex, accused Australia of "quiet quitting" the gas industry. He said Australia could jeopardise global security by undermining confidence in its gas industry.

Proponents of "fundamental" change reject the argument – insisting Santos would be given plenty of time to increase supply to meet its contractual shortfall.

Labor has yet to indicate how it intends to alter market rules but reform advocates believe the tide is turning on Santos.

"There is APLNG, BlueScope and now the Australian Competition & Consumer Commission all calling for wholesale change. The ACCC's submission makes it clear that Santos has adequate reserves," said an industry executive not authorised to talk to the media.

Still, the company has its defenders. Supporters say Santos has behaved rationally in securing long-term supply deals that enabled developers to bring gas to market, often at a lower cost than producing from its own fields. Santos also points to its proposed Narrabri gas project, earmarked entirely for the domestic market, though the development remains bogged down.

Labor has yet to reveal how far it is prepared to go, but with pressure mounting from heavy industry, consumer watchdogs and within the gas sector itself, Canberra faces a combustible choice between incremental reform and a structural reset of the east coast gas market.

German Gas Reserves Reach Key 70% Threshold, Easing Winter Risks

By Petra Sorge and Jenni Thier

August 31, 2025 at 12:23 PM GMT+5:30

Germany has filled its gas reserves to a critical storage level two months ahead of schedule, easing fears about winter heating shortages that only recently fueled talk of potential government intervention.

As of Friday, Germany's gas storage sites were 70% full — a threshold the government aimed to reach by Nov. 1. Earlier this year, slow injections rattled Europe's gas market as traders saw little incentive to stockpile. But falling summer gas prices have since spurred a rapid build-up.

Europe is weeks away from the start of its heating season, and with laggards such as Germany accelerating the pace of injections, it's now much better prepared than many market participants dared predict just a few months ago. The continent — which stopped receiving large amounts of Russian pipeline flows in 2022 — builds up a fuel buffer each summer to ensure there's enough gas to get through winter.

While Berlin had signaled it wouldn't intervene in filling reserves unless absolutely necessary, reaching 70% puts Germany safely within the European Union's recently revised legal storage requirements. Some of its storage sites — including the largest in Rehden — still haven't met domestic legal filling targets, but an economy ministry spokesperson said other facilities as well as the nation's LNG terminals help to ensure supply security.

Egypt signs $340 mln oil, gas exploration deals with global firms

By Reuters

August 30, 20251:01 PM GMT+5:30Updated August 30, 2025

CAIRO, Aug 30 (Reuters) - Egypt has signed four agreements with international firms worth more than $340 million to explore oil and gas in the Mediterranean and Nile Delta, the Petroleum Ministry said on Saturday.

The deals, signed by the state-owned Egyptian Natural Gas Holding Company (EGAS), provide for the drilling of 10 wells as part of the ministry's efforts to boost exploration and production.

Egypt, once a regional exporter, has increasingly turned to imports to meet rising domestic demand as output declines from aging fields and investment lags in new ones.

Gas production in May was 3,545 million cubic metres, down more than 40% from March 2021, according to the Joint Organisations Data Initiative (JODI).

The first deal, with oil giant Shell (SHEL.L),, is worth $120 million and covers three wells in the Mediterranean's Merneith offshore area, the ministry said.

Italy's Eni (ENI.MI), signed a $100 million agreement to drill three wells in the East Port Said offshore block.

A third agreement, worth $109 million, went to Arcius Energy, a joint venture 51% owned by BP (BP.L),and 49% by ADNOC's investment arm XRG, to operate in the North Damietta offshore area.

The ministry also announced a $14 million deal with Russia's Zarubezhneft to drill four wells in the onshore North El-Khatatba block in the Nile Delta.

US oil production hit record high in June, EIA says

By Georgina Mccartney and Shariq Khan

August 29, 202510:05 PM GMT+5:30Updated August 29, 2025

HOUSTON, Aug 29 (Reuters) - U.S. crude oil production hit a record high in June, rising 133,000 barrels per day to 13.58 million bpd, according to data released by the Energy Information Administration as part of its Petroleum Supply Monthly series.

Crude production in top-producing state Texas rose 11,000 bpd to 5.72 million bpd, the highest since April, the EIA data showed. In second-largest producer New Mexico, output was up 40,000 bpd month-over-month to 2.24 million bpd, its highest since March.

Output from the U.S. federal offshore Gulf region rose to its highest since October 2023, gaining 67,000 bpd to hit 1.92 million bpd in June, according to the EIA.

Product supplied of crude and petroleum products in the U.S., a proxy for demand, rose 684,000 bpd in June to its highest since October 2024, at 21 million bpd.

Gasoline demand rose 205,000 bpd in June to 9.23 million bpd, its highest since July 2024, while jet fuel demand hit its highest since August 2018 over the same period, gaining 84,000 bpd to 1.85 million bpd.

Gross natural gas production in the U.S. lower 48 states rose to a record 120.7 billion cubic feet per day in June, up from 120.2 bcfd in May, according to the agency's 914 production report.

That compares with the prior monthly all-time high of 120.5 bcfd in March.

In top gas-producing states, monthly output in June rose by 0.7% to 36.8 bcfd in Texas, and by 1% to 21.5 bcfd in Pennsylvania, the EIA said.