Business Line, Delhi, 17/09/2025
Page No: 2, Size: 18.94cm × 43.02cm

Why higher ethanol blending has not reduced crude oil imports

Sucheta Naveen
Chennai

India's ethanol blending programme has been in the news of late, with consumers resisting the move to increase the proportion. Ethanol blending in petrol has increased from 4.2 per cent in FY18 to 18.9 per cent in FY25, bringing India within touching distance of its E20 target for FY26. But increased blending has not brought down crude oil imports or retail prices of petrol materially.

DATA FOCUS.

India's ethanol blending programme began in 2003 when public sector oil market companies were told to sell 5 per cent ethanol-blended petrol (E5) in certain regions. The National Policy on Biofuels was amended in 2022 to advance the target of E20 from 2030 to 2025-26. The primary objective of ethanol blending is to reduce the crude oil import bill, reduce emissions and to create additional revenue for farmers producing ethanol.

IMPORTS UNAFFECTED

But the increase in ethanol blending proportion has not really arrested crude oil imports. Imports increased from 234 million tonnes in FY24 to 243 million tonnes in FY25, registering a growth of 3.8 per cent. This is higher than the pre-pandemic growth rate of 2.8 per cent in FY19.

With ethanol-blended fuel limited to petrol or motor spirits, the impact of the blending on overall crude oil imports may not be much, said Madan Sabnavis, Chief Economist, Bank of Baroda. Other byproducts of crude, such as diesel and naphtha, also impact the overall demand for crude oil imports. Diesel demand could be subdued due to sluggish manufacturing activity. But an increase in e-commerce could increase demand for diesel.

Sustained demand for petrol or motor spirits, despite increased electric vehicle adoption, could be another factor behind the increase in crude oil imports. Petrol consumption increased 7.5 per cent in FY25, growing at a higher rate compared to FY24. Lack of adequate public transport in urban areas and an increase in the working population appears to be driving increased petrol consumption.

HIGH PRICES

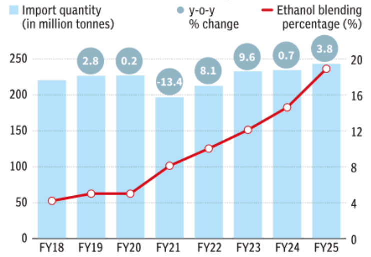
The retail selling price of petroleum products has also remained elevated, declining only marginally in FY24.

Prices climbed from ₹76.9 per litre in FY18 to ₹109.3 per litre in FY22, coinciding with post-pandemic economic recovery and supply chain disruptions as well as the crude oil price spikes triggered by the Russia–Ukraine conflict. Prices have since moderated, easing to ₹101 per litre in FY25.

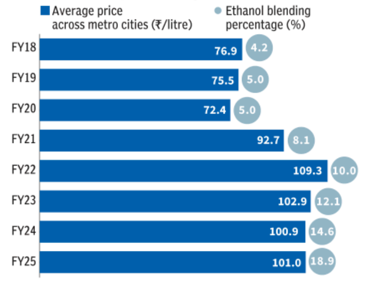
The price is not a limiting factor in fuel as the prices of petrol and diesel are controlled and the rates are fixed by the government, according to Sabnavis. The gains and losses are distributed between the OMCs and the government, depending on the international crude price. Consumption is unlikely to take a hit because of the fuel prices.

No impact

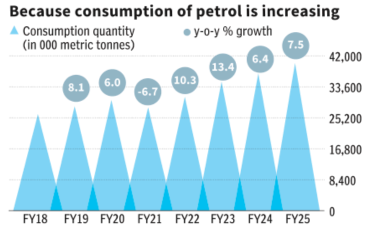
Crude oil imports rise in FY25 despite 19% ethanol blending



Retail prices of petrol stay elevated



Because consumption of petrol is increasing



Source: PPAC, NITI Aayog

Mint, Delhi, 17/09/2025
Page No: 2, Size: 9.68cm × 7.33cm

LNG demand drops in 2025 as buyers wait for supply wave

India's annual liquefied natural gas (LNG) demand is set to contract in 2025 for the first time in years, as buyers hold out for a surge in production that is expected to push down prices. India bought about 16mt of LNG in the eight months through August, down 10% from a year earlier, as per ship-tracking data compiled by *Bloomberg*.

REUTERS

BLOOMBERG

Business Line, Delhi, 17/09/2025
Page No: 2, Size: 5.98cm × 12.25cm

Nayara raises supply to HPCL post EU sanctions

Nayara Energy has raised fuel sales to state retailer Hindustan Petroleum Corp after the Russia-backed refiner's exports were hit by European Union sanctions, a government source said on Tuesday. Since the imposition of sanctions, Nayara has been operating its 4,00,000 barrel-per-day (bpd) Vadinar refinery at 70-80 per cent capacity. Higher local sales of refined fuels would help the company to sustain its refinery runs, the source added. "We would like them (Nayara) to operate at as high capacity as it can," the source said. REUTERS

Indian Express, Delhi, 17/09/2025
Page No: 15, Size: 26.51cm × 27.83cm

SLIGHTLY HIGHER THAN THE PAST COUPLE OF MONTHS

India's Russian oil imports robust in Sept so far, crude loadings from ports stable

SUKALP SHARMA
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 16

RUSSIAN OIL deliveries at Indian ports for the first half of September were robust, and slightly higher than the past couple of months, suggesting that the growing US rhetoric in July against New Delhi's hefty oil imports from Moscow did not have any meaningful impact on Indian refiners' crude sourcing behaviour at the time. Crude loadings at Russian ports so far in September, although slightly lower than pre-August levels, are also evidently stable even as the situation remains fluid, according to preliminary tanker data and industry insiders.

Typically, contracts for Russian crude supplied to India are finalised six-eight weeks before delivery, which means that the volumes imported in the first half of September correspond largely to contracts from July, when US President Donald Trump began to publicly target India over its Russian oil purchases. According to trade experts, Russian oil deliveries to India in late September and October would provide a clear picture of the impact of Trump's tariff tantrums as the secondary tariff on Indian goods was announced by Washington in early August as a "penalty" for buying Moscow's crude.

India's Russian oil imports in the first 16 days of September were at 1.73 million barrels per day (bpd), per provisional vessel tracking data from global real-time data and analytics provider Kpler. The import volumes for full July and August stood at 1.59 million bpd and 1.66 million bpd, respectively.

Crude oil tanker Nevskiy Prospect, owned by Russia's tanker group Sovcomflot, transits the Bosphorus in Istanbul. *Reuters File*

As for oil loadings at Russian ports, September 1-16 volumes loaded for India were at 1.22 million bpd, but the actual figure could be close to 1.6 million bpd as a number of tankers laden with Russian crude are headed towards Egypt's Port Said and are not reflecting their final destination. Industry watchers expect a large share of this oil to also come to India, given many of these tankers have regularly discharged crude at Indian ports over the past few months. A similar trend was also observed in August loadings for India, which are also estimated at around 1.6 million bpd, including some cargoes that are expected to reflect their final destination only once they transit the Suez Canal. The journey time for tankers transporting Russian crude to Indian ports through the Suez Canal—the main supply route—typically ranges between three and four weeks.

Indian refiners' heavy imports of Russian crude are seen as a lever that the Trump administration believes it can use to force the Kremlin's hand into ending the Ukraine war. Oil exports are the biggest source of revenue for Moscow, and New Delhi is the second-largest buyer of its oil after Beijing. But despite US rhetoric and imposition of 25 per cent secondary tariff over the 25 per cent tariff imposed earlier on most Indian goods, India has shown no signs of backing down on Russian oil imports.

New Delhi has termed the Trump administration's action "unjustified and unreasonable" and said these imports began as its traditional supplies were diverted to Europe, with the US having "actively encouraged such imports by India for strengthening global energy markets stability". The Joe Biden administration had encouraged India to increase Russian oil imports following Russia's February 2022 invasion of Ukraine as the West began shunning Moscow's oil. The reason was simple: Russia is a major oil exporter and if a bulk of its oil goes off the market for dearth of buyers, international oil prices could shoot up, something that the US itself did not desire.

The key question has been whether Indian refiners will meaningfully cut their appetite for Russian crude. While July and August saw a decline in deliveries of Russian crude at Indian ports as compared to earlier months, industry insiders attributed that largely to shrinking discounts on Moscow's oil, and not American pressure, as those cargoes would have been booked weeks before Donald Trump upped the ante against India in July and announced additional tariffs on Indian goods early August. The discounts

The Indian government has consistently maintained that the country will buy oil from wherever it gets the best deal, as long as the oil is not under sanctions. There are no sanctions on Russian oil; it is only subject to a price cap imposed by the US and its allies that applies if Western shipping and insurance services are used for transporting the oil. India's public sector refiners have stated that they have not received any signal or directive from the government on the issue, and they will continue to buy Russian oil as long as it remains economically and commercially viable.

India is the world's third-largest consumer of crude and depends on imports to meet around 88 per cent of its requirement. Russian crude, which usually comes at a discount, has helped India save billions of dollars' worth of foreign exchange over the past three years.

While there is a domestic trade-off at play—the prohibitive cost of sky-high US tariffs on India's small and medium exporters versus the relatively lower savings accrued by large refiners by buying discounted Russian crude—Trump's public posturing has made it difficult for India to cut back on Russian oil immediately even if it wanted to. It is clear that New Delhi does not want to compromise on its strategic autonomy and is unwilling to be dictated to by Washington on whom it should be doing business with, particularly when it comes to Russia—an old and key strategic partner.

When Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, Moscow's share in New Delhi's oil imports was less than 2 per cent. With much of the West snubbing Russian crude following the invasion, Russia began offering discounts on its oil to willing buyers. Indian refiners were quick to avail the opportunity, leading to Russia—earlier a peripheral supplier of oil to India—emerging as India's biggest source of crude within a matter of months, displacing the traditional West Asian suppliers. Currently, Russia accounts for more than a third of India's oil imports by volume.

EXPLAINED

E. Crude buying cycle key

TYPICALLY, CONTRACTS for Russian crude supplied to India are finalised six-eight weeks before delivery, which means that the volumes imported in the first half of September correspond largely to contracts from July, when US President Donald Trump began to publicly target India over its Russian oil purchases.

Business Standard, Delhi, 17/09/2025
Page No: 4, Size: 38.60cm × 24.82cm

Will 'assess' ethanol-blending plan before setting higher targets: Puri

SUDHEER PAL SINGH
New Delhi, 16 September

The government will "assess" the national ethanol blending programme before setting higher targets, said Hardeep Singh Puri, Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas, on Tuesday amid a controversy over the initiative's impact on vehicles.

The programme aims to reduce the country's reliance on crude oil imports and cut carbon emissions by mixing ethanol with petrol. It had a goal of achieving 20 per cent ethanol blending in petrol (E20) by 2025-26. The target was originally set for 2030 but was advanced due to its success.

"We had the target of 20 per cent blending — for which the target date was 2030 and we have done it six years in advance. I will put a full stop there; we will assess where we have to go, Puri said. "All the stories you hear that we are now going to do another leapfrogging. We have to come to those conclusions — when the ecosystem is absorbing all this."

India had achieved ethanol-blending targets of 1.4 per cent in 2014 and 10 per cent in November 2022, five months in advance, as part of focus on sustainability, Puri said at the KPMG ENRich programme.

Financial Express, Delhi, 17/09/2025
Page No: 3, Size: 19.84cm × 21.93cm

SLIGHTLY HIGHER THAN THE PAST COUPLE OF MONTHS

India's Russian oil imports robust in September so far

SUKALP SHARMA
New Delhi, September 16

MORE SHIPMENTS

■ Russian oil imports in the first 16 days of Sept were at **1.73 mn bpd**

■ The import volumes for July stood at **1.59 mn bpd**

■ For August, it stood at **1.66 mn bpd**

■ As for oil loadings at Russian ports, Sept1-16 volumes loaded for India were at **1.22 million bpd**

■ But the actual figure could be close to **1.6 mn bpd**

RUSSIAN OIL DELIVERIES at Indian ports for the first half of September were robust, and slightly higher than the past couple of months, suggesting that the growing US rhetoric in July against New Delhi's hefty oil imports from Moscow did not have any meaningful impact on Indian refiners' crude sourcing behaviour at the time. Crude loadings at Russian ports so far in September, although slightly lower than pre-August levels, are also evidently stable even as the situation remains fluid, according to preliminary tanker data and industry insiders.

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Millennium Post, Delhi, 17/09/2025
Page No: 11, Size: 22.89cm × 20.88cm

Puri dismisses claims of biofuels damaging engines as 'rubbish'

'All stories you hear about biofuels being harmful for engines, there's a lot of 'BS'. And I don't know what that means, but it's a specializer'

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Tuesday dismissed claims of biofuels damaging automobile engines as rubbish and said petrol blended with 20 per cent ethanol is environmentally safe to use.

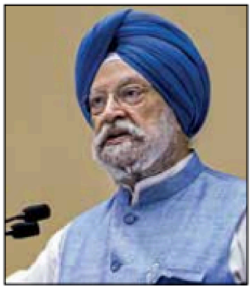
"All the stories you hear about biofuels being harmful for engines, there's a lot of 'BS' - 'B' capital, 'S', capital. And I don't know what that means, but it's a specializer," he said at KPMG's annual energy and resources conclave, ENRich 2025 here.

Though he did not specify, he implied a cuss word for 'rubbish'.

Petrol blended with 20 per cent ethanol extracted from sugarcane or foodgrains, is safe to use, he said.

With all of the 90,000-plus petrol pumps across the country selling only E20 petrol (80 per cent petrol and 20 per cent ethanol), some motorists complained about the impact on older vehicles.

Carmakers added to the confusion by initially saying E20 fuel had not been tested for compatibility with older vehicles, but later backtracked to say they were safe to use.



Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri

> Petrol blended with 20 per cent ethanol extracted from sugarcane or foodgrains, is safe to use, the minister said

Puri and his ministry have repeatedly dismissed fears around the use of E20 as unfounded but said older vehicles may need to replace some rubber parts and gaskets which is a "simple process".

Puri on Tuesday said the percentage of ethanol blended in petrol in 2014 was 1.4 per cent which has now reached 20 per cent. "And I want to put a full stop there. We will now assess where we have to go. All the stories you hear that we are now going to do another leap-frog, etc, we haven't come to that conclusion," he said.

Highlights

- With all of 90,000+ petrol pumps across the country selling only E20 petrol some motorists complained about the impact on older vehicles
- Carmakers initially said E20 fuel had not been tested for compatibility with older vehicles, but later backtracked
- Puri and his ministry have repeatedly dismissed fears around the use of E20 as unfounded but said older vehicles may need to replace some rubber parts and gaskets which is a 'simple process'

On the criticism about the use of E20, he said people write about interviewing somebody who is an automobile engineer whose 2021 or 2022 purchased car was doing very well until E20 came.

But the important point is to find which car was being used by the automobile engineer and where he lives. "If he lives in Gurugram or in Delhi and goes to Gurugram everyday, I can give you 21 reasons why the efficiency of the car we talked about (will go down)." For a country that is 88 per cent dependent on imports to meet its oil needs, biofuels and cleaner energy are imperative of the time, he said.

Going by projections made by the International Energy Agency, the Indian demand for energy will rise three times the global demand for the next two decades. "25 per cent of the increase in demand (globally) will come from India."

Puri said India had 700 GCCs in 2010 which have grown to 1800 now and will rise to 2200 by 2030. They employ 1.9 million professionals and generate $65 billion in annual revenue. By 2030, this will grow to 2.8 million jobs and over $100 billion in revenue.

Responding to social media chatter about the impact of 20 per cent ethanol-blended petrol on vehicles, Puri's ministry had last month stated that concerns over a drastic drop in fuel efficiency are misplaced, adding that the fuel in fact offers improved acceleration.

Doping petrol with 20 per cent ethanol extracted from sugarcane or maize is a national programme aimed at cutting emissions and raising income of farmers, which is being sought to be "derailed" by some by fomenting fear and confusion, it had said.

On August 4, the ministry had in a post on X said: "Ethanol, being lower in energy density than petrol, results in a marginal decrease in mileage, estimated at 1-2 per cent for four-wheelers designed for E10 and calibrated for E20, and around 3-6 per cent in others."

Social media posts have pointed out that the calorific value of ethanol is 29.7 as compared to 46.4 of petrol and so the energy produced per litre is 65 per cent of petrol.

E10 is petrol mixed with 10 per cent ethanol.

Social media posts also cite June 2021 Niti Aayog report to state that E20/E27 in E10 cars degrades rubber/plastic, corrodes metal, harms fuel systems, cuts mileage and may lead to need for part upgrades.

Financial Express, Delhi, 17/09/2025
Page No: 8, Size: 10.56cm × 23.28cm

Russian oil dilemma

India should consider alternative sources at no additional cost

INDIA'S DEPENDENCE ON Russian oil remains contentious with the US notwithstanding President Donald Trump's friendship with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and affirmation of special relations between the two nations. Trump admits that levying 50% tariffs on Indian goods—which include secondary sanctions of 25% for buying Russian oil—was not "an easy thing to do" and caused a rift with India. These oil purchases are likely to attract even higher sanctions as the US President seeks to reduce oil revenues that fund Russia's 42 month-long war in Ukraine. During his Senate confirmation hearings, the US ambassador-designate to India, Sergio Gor, emphasised that persuading India to move away from Russian oil was a "top priority" for the Trump administration. The US President has urged North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Group of 7 allies to levy up to 100% tariffs on China and India. US commerce secretary Howard Lutnick also stated that the US will sort out the trade deal once India stops buying Russian oil.

India will therefore find it difficult to continue buying Russian oil as it seeks to ink a trade deal and bolster its special relations with the US. Discontinuing such purchases no doubt will impact its energy security as the availability of deeply discounted crude eased pressure on its external accounts. Since 2023, Moscow has provided 36% of India's requirements of 5 million barrels of oil a day. On the face of it, New Delhi's oil imports from Moscow remain resilient as volumes in the first fortnight of September surpassed imports in August as a whole. This reflects the timing of contracts fixed six-eight weeks in advance and that the true impact of US tariffs will surface from late September and October, according to Kpler's lead research analyst, refining and modelling. But there are signs of change with India seeking to balance between discounted Russian oil and reliable West Asian supplies to ensure security and avoid over-exposure to geopolitical shocks. The Adani Group recently banned the entry of sanctioned vessels at its ports like Mundra.

While India has the sovereign right to access oil from any source, a favourable conjuncture exists to rationally consider non-Russian options as well. Global oil prices are heading to lower levels with Brent crude spot prices slumping to $67 a barrel in the first fortnight of September from $79 a barrel in January, largely due to the unwinding of voluntary production cuts by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and its allies. This decision to boost output in a market that is awash with oil supplies—to win market share at the expense of rivals—will intensify downward price pressures. Prices are likely to hit an average of $59 a barrel in the October-December quarter and $50 a barrel in early 2026, according to the US Energy Information Administration.

Such prices are bound to narrow, if not eliminate, the differential between Urals crude, that is favoured by Indian refiners, and Brent spot prices. The prospect of sourcing cheaper oil also exists from the US, the world's biggest oil-producing nation, as Big Oil braces for a prolonged period of lower crude prices. The dynamics of the global oil market widen the options for India, the world's third largest importer, to consider switching to alternative sources of supplies at no additional cost and reduce its dependence on Russian oil.

Economic Times, Delhi, 17/09/2025
Page No: 11, Size: 37.20cm × 27.07cm

Strategic Reserves Needed Across Crude Value Chain: Nayara Chief

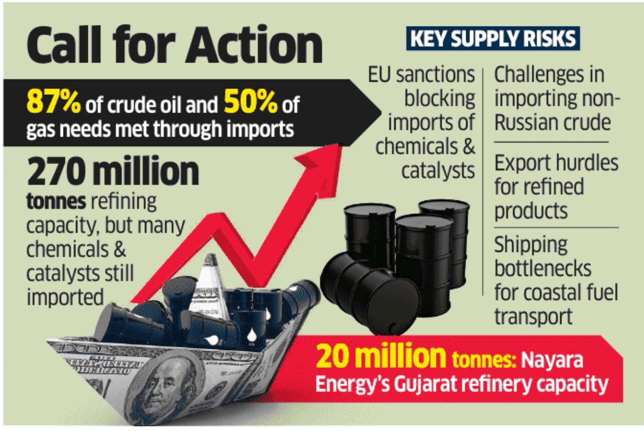
Fortify supply lines as geopolitical shocks may last 15 years, says Prasad Panicker

Our Bureau

New Delhi: India must not only expand its strategic petroleum reserves but also build dedicated storage for chemicals and catalysts—critical to refinery operations—to shield against geopolitical shocks, said Prasad Panicker, chairman of sanctioned refiner Nayara Energy, which is grappling with supply disruptions after EU curbs.

Rosneft-backed Nayara Energy is facing challenges in importing non-Russian crude and in exporting refined products, affecting its runs. It is also reportedly dealing with shortages of chemicals and catalysts as sanctions have blocked supplies from key European vendors.

"There is a gap. I fully agree, we need to have more strategic reserves," Panicker told an industry conference on Tuesday. "When I'm talking about strategic reserve, it should not be for crude alone. There are essential chemicals, catalysts, etc., which also need to be adequate so that operations are not impacted."



Panicker did not refer to Nayara Energy in his comments at the conference.

Expanding refining capacity alone will not make the country resilient, he said, adding, "On a long term, we have to create an ecosystem that all technologies, services and chemical catalysts and other materials are indigenously available. It is a sad factor that even though we have 270 million tonnes of refining capacity, we still have to buy many chemicals and catalysts from abroad."

The world is facing "maximum disturbance" today due to geopolitical shocks, and that is going to persist for another 15 years, he said.

Since India depends on imports for 87% of its crude and half of its gas needs, global supply chains remain critical, Panicker said. "Some of the choke points are a real concern," he added, citing how a brief Suez Canal blockage in 2021 sent ripples through the global supply chain.

Separately, a government official said Nayara Energy's fuel supplies to domestic retailers will remain unaffected despite the refiner's difficulties in securing ships for coastal transport.

Nayara Energy operates a 20 million tonnes refinery in Gujarat and operates 6,600 retail outlets across the country. It also supplies fuels to state-run Hindustan Petroleum Corporation for retailing.

Hindustan Times, Delhi, 17/09/2025

Page No: 14, Size: 29.61cm × 11.03cm

CCI raids Jindal SAW, Maharashtra Seamless

Reuters
feedback@livemint.com

NEW DELHI: India's antitrust inspectors have conducted surprise raids at steel pipe makers Jindal SAW and Maharashtra Seamless as part of an investigation into alleged bid rigging, two people with direct knowledge of the matter said on Tuesday.

The raids were conducted at the offices of Jindal SAW and Maharashtra Seamless in and around New Delhi on Monday, and the search operation has now concluded, the two sources said.

Under its rules, details of ongoing bid rigging investigations by the Competition Commission of India remain confidential, and the regulator did not respond to a request for comment. In a statement on Tuesday, Jindal SAW said it "extended full cooperation to the authorities during the course of their investigation".

Maharashtra Seamless did not respond to requests for comment.

The case was triggered by an ONGC complaint in 2023. MINT

Shares of Jindal SAW dropped as much as 2.6% following news of the raids, which was first reported by Reuters, while Maharashtra Seamless fell as much as 1.6% in Tuesday's trade.

Jindal SAW is part of India's OP Jindal Group, which has many businesses in the steel and power sectors.

The case was triggered by a complaint from the state-run Oil and Natural Gas Corporation in 2023, related to bidding for certain tenders by the steel pipe companies, the two sources said. ONGC did not respond to a request for comment.

TN govt body issues notice to ONGC over hydrocarbon project

Divya Chandrababu
letters@hindustantimes.com

CHENNAI: The State Environmental Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA) has issued a notice to the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd (ONGC) on the environmental concerns over a hydrocarbon exploratory project in Ramanathapuram district, officials in the state government said.

"SEIAA has issued a notice to ONGC asking for the status of the Petroleum Exploration License (which they have to obtain from the department of natural resources)," finance minister Thangam Thennarusu, who also holds the Environment and Climate Change and Forests portfolio, told HT.

The SEIAA had earlier granted ONGC clearance to carry out an environmental impact study on hydrocarbon reserves in Ramanathapuram dated March but it came to light in August and the move faced backlash from locals, environmentalists and political parties. On August 25, Thennarusu had said that the DMK-ruled government will not allow such projects in Tamil Nadu.

"Following that, the Ramanathapuram district collector wrote to SEIAA of the government's decision to withdraw the clearance given," said an official not wishing to be named.

"SEIAA has now issued a notice to ONGC seeking an explanation on why the clearance granted should not be withdrawn."

SEIAA HAD EARLIER GRANTED ONGC CLEARANCE TO CARRY OUT AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STUDY ON HYDROCARBON RESERVES IN MARCH 2025

Officials in the natural resources department could not confirm the status of the exploration licence but confirmed that only after their approval can ONGC start work.

According to the Protected Agricultural Zone (PAZ) Act, which was enacted by the state in 2020, Tamil Nadu bans exploration of hydrocarbons, natural gas, coal-based methane, and shale gas in the districts falling within the Cauvery delta regions, said the official.

The delta region that comes under the Act includes districts such as Nagapattinam, Thanjavur, Cuddalore, Pudukottai. Locals have been demanding that Ramanathapuram and Sivagangai district be included in the Act since they are agricultural districts too.

Farmers and fishermen in Ramanathapuram had been protesting for the Centre to cancel the hydrocarbon project meant for ONGC's exploration by digging 20 wells that were proposed to spread across 1,403 sq km in Ramanathapuram.

"Each well would have been drilled to depths of 2,000–3,000 metres and it would take up to four months," the official said.

Tamil Nadu based environmental organisation Poovulagin Nanbargal has been opposing this project since 2023 since the digging for the proposed exploratory wells would damage the farm lands on shore, notified bird sanctuaries and other ecologically fragile areas as well as the coastal ecosystem since it is,close to the Gulf of Mannar Marine National Park.

"The ONGC has not responded to the notice on why the environmental clearance should not be withdrawn," Prabhakaran Veeramani of Poovulagin Nanbargal told HT. "We will continue to oppose it until the government issues an order cancelling the project."

Following the initial environmental clearance even the ruling DMK's ally, Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (MDMK) appealed for it to be revoked saying it posed a threat to fishermen's livelihood and the environment.

Opposition AIADMK and PMK, both allies of the BJP in Tamil Nadu AIADMK also demanded that the project be scrapped.

Activists, locals and political parties have consistently opposed hydrocarbon projects in Tamil Nadu.

Times of India, Delhi, 17/09/2025
Page No: 2, Size: 11.83cm × 22.57cm

Puri hints at ethanol pause, trashes E20 engine damage claims

New Delhi: Oil minister **Hardeep Singh Puri** on Tuesday hinted at reassessment of a proposal to raise ethanol blending of petrol, even as he trashed claims of engine damage and lower mileage being caused by E20 fuel with 20% ethanol blending being sold in the market at present.

Pointing out that ethanol blending of petrol has risen from 1.4% in 2014 to 20% at present, Puri said he wants "to put a full stop there". "We will assess where we have to go. All stories you hear that we are now going to do another leapfrog, etc. We haven't come to that conclusion," he added.

Puri let loose at critics of E20, who have been hogging media platforms to voice concerns over the fuel's alleged adverse impact on older petrol engines. Automakers had initially said E20 had not been tested for compatibility with older vehicles but later backtracked to say it was OK. "All stories you hear about biofuels being harmful for engines, there's a lot of 'BS' — 'B' capital, 'S' capital. And I don't know what that means, but it's a specialiser," he said at an industry event. Though he did not specify, the BS obviously implied a cuss word for 'rubbish'.

An inter ministerial panel is looking at taking ethanol blending of petrol to 30% by 2030. TNN

Business Standard Sec -II, Delhi, 17/09/2025
Page No: 1, Size: 104.01cm × 33.63cm

THE COMPASS

Attractive valuations limit downside risks for upstream players

DEVANGSHU DATTA

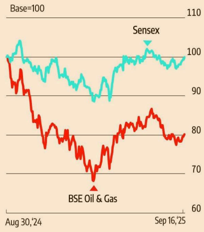
There is a clear downtrend in the global oil and gas (O&G) market as demand is slow while supply is at a surplus. In August, Brent crude settled at $67.4 per barrel (bbl), down 3 per cent month-on-month (M-o-M) and a decline of 14.6 per cent year-on-year (Y-o-Y). Some analysts are estimating a drop below the $60 mark given Chinese industrial slowdown, OPEC plus signalling higher supply from October, and elevated inventory levels.

Moreover, there may have been a structural shift post-pandemic in demand for oil since work-from-home has cut transportation needs alongside increasing electric vehicle or EV penetration.

India's upstream players, ONGC and Oil India are down 18 per cent and 32 per cent respectively over the past 12 months, and valuations imply crude will trend well below long term average. Compared to global peers, Indian upstream players trade at a steep discount with investors cautious about policy specifics like regulated pricing (administered price mechanism or APM gas prices and windfall taxes in the past), as well as weak production growth.

Both companies are now entering a growth phase however. ONGC will gain via KG Basin, Daman, DSF, and the BP-TSP partnership while Oil India can drive a gas ramp-up via pipeline expansions and NRL's capacity expansion. Rising New Well Gas (NWG) allocation where higher prices may be charged strengthens the outlook, particularly for Oil India.

Given higher production and cheap valuations, the stocks could bounce



from these levels. ONGC and Oil India are among the cheapest globally. On first half of financial year 2028 (H1FY28) enterprise value to operating profit basis (adjusted for investments), they trade at between 2.9 times-3.6 times versus global average of 4.2 times. On reserves, the gap is clearer, enterprise value per barrel is seen at $6.0 (ONGC) and $5.4 (OIL), which is half the global average of $11.9. Cash flow is acceptable at $29.4/bbl (ONGC) and $22.6 (OIL) per bbl with operating profit broadly in line with global flows.

Given the NWG factor, the discount on account of capped APM realisations may change. Policy reforms such as APM gas price liberalisation, premium-priced NWG, windfall tax removal, opening new exploration areas, among others makes a reasonable case for re-rating.

Equating current share prices to likely discounted cash flows, the market seems overtly pessimistic. Discounted cash flow models imply these valuations justify crude realisations at between $45-55/barrel, which is well below the long-term averages of $65/bbl.

ONGC's near-term growth levers include the KG Basin ramp-up (45 kbpd oil, 9-10 mmscmd gas peak by FY27), Daman (5 mmscmd by FY27), DSF-II (4 mmscmd from FY28), and potential BP-TSP upside which cannot be estimated yet.

Oil India's growth levers are anchored by a larger drilling programme and addressing gas transportation bottlenecks with the DNPL capacity doubling to 2.5 mmscmd (end-2025), and IGGL's grid rollout by FY27 with NRL's refinery expansion (end-CY25) addressing demand constraints.

For ONGC, NWG share of gas production rose from 13 per cent FY26 to 27 per cent FY28, adding an estimated ₹ 2,600 crore to operating profit by FY28 (about 3.5 per cent of FY25 operating profit). Oil India sees negligible NWG benefits today. Post-NRL expansion and North-east grid rollout, NWG share could however exceed 50 per cent of gas by FY28, driving ₹1,300 crore of operating profit (14 per cent of FY25 operating profit). This suggests the share valuations are hitting a point of maximum pessimism.

With no exports, sanctions-hit Nayara ups fuel supply to HPCL

SHUBHANGI MATHUR
New Delhi, 16 September

Nayara Energy has increased supply of refined petroleum products to state-run Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) as Russia's Rosneft-backed refinery's exports tanked to zero following sanctions by the European Union (EU), a top government official said.

"Nayara would supply (petroleum) products to domestic companies, mainly to HPCL, and some other small players such as Shell," the official said on the sidelines of an event in New Delhi.

Nayara Energy, which is 49 per cent owned by Russian oil major Rosneft, was directly sanctioned by the EU under the group's 18th sanctions package announced on July 18. The sanctions completely eroded the refinery's petroleum exports to Europe.

Nayara's increased supply of refined products to HPCL would aid the company in offsetting the impact of sanctions. The company could access trucks and pipelines to supply products from its Vadinar refinery in Gujarat to HPCL's terminals, the official said.

IN THE ABSENCE OF EXPORTS AND RESTRICTED CRUDE OIL SUPPLY, NAYARA ENERGY IS CURRENTLY OPERATING AT A SUB-OPTIMAL LEVEL OF 60-80% OF ITS CAPACITY

Nayara is primarily increasing supply to HPCL as India's other oil marketing companies (OMCs), including Indian Oil Corporation (IOCL), Bharat Petroleum Corporation (BPCL) and Reliance Industries (RIL) have sufficient refining capacity to meet their demand.

In the absence of exports and restricted crude oil supply, Nayara is currently operating at "sub-optimal levels" of 60-80 per cent of its refining capacity, the official added.

After the July sanctions on Nayara's Gujarat refinery, Russia has been the sole crude oil supplier to the firm. Other suppliers, including Iraq and Saudi Arabia, have halted crude oil supply to the refinery.

Nayara's crude oil imports tanked to zero from both Iraq and Saudi Arabia in August and September, showed data from Kpler, a global shipping data and analytics provider. The refinery's oil imports from the two nations stood at 93,000 barrels per day (bpd) and 32,000 bpd, respectively, in July.

Meanwhile, the company's crude oil imports from Russia came in at 331,000 bpd in the first-half of September, while August imports were at 242,000 bpd, data showed.

"Post-sanctions, the refinery has been facing operational challenges related to compliance, shipping, payment channels, and lower crude imports. However, we now see these issues gradually being resolved, and expect the refinery to manage operations closer to its economical or rated capacity," said Sumit Ritolia, lead research analyst, refining & modelling, Kpler.

The EU sanctioned the refinery, with a capacity of 20 million tonne per annum (mtpa), in an attempt to pressure Russia to end war with Ukraine and limit the financial capabilities of Moscow. Nayara imports significant quantity of Russian crude oil, which is processed in its Gujarat refinery to be later exported to several markets, including Europe.

Nayara has a retail network of 6,500 petrol pumps.

Business Standard Hindi, Delhi, 17/09/2025
Page No: 4, Size: 25.69cm × 40.45cm

नायरा एनर्जी ने हिंदुस्तान पेट्रोलियम को आपूर्ति बढ़ाई

शुभांगी माथुर
नई दिल्ली, 16 सितंबर

नायरा एनर्जी ने सरकारी कंपनी हिंदुस्तान पेट्रोलियम कॉरपोरेशन लिमिटेड (एचपीसीएस) को परिष्कृत पेट्रोलियम उत्पादों की आपूर्ति बढ़ा दी है। वरिष्ठ सरकारी अधिकारी ने बताया कि दरअसल, यूरोपियन यूनियन (ईयू) के प्रतिबंधों के बाद रोसनेफ्ट समर्थित नायरा एनर्जी की इस रिफाइनरी से निर्यात अचानक गिरकर शून्य हो गया है।

अधिकारी ने एक कार्यक्रम में अलग से बताया, 'नायरा उत्पादों (पेट्रोलियम)की आपूर्ति घरेलू कंपनियों में मुख्यतौर पर एचपीसीएल और कुछ छोटी कंपनियों शैल को करेगी।'

नायरा एनर्जी में रूस की दिग्गज तेल कंपनी रोसनेफ का 49 प्रतिशत स्वामित्व है। यूरोपियन यूनियन ने 18वें प्रतिबंध पैकेज की घोषणा 18 जुलाई को की थी।

इससे नायरा एनर्जी की रिफाइनरी से यूरोप को होने वाला निर्यात पूरी तरह खत्म हो गया था।

नायरा के परिष्कृत उत्पादों के एचपीसीएल को अधिक आपूर्ति करने से कंपनी पर प्रतिबंधों का असर कम होगा। कंपनी ट्रक और पाइपलाइन के जरिए गुजरात स्थित एचपीसीएल के टर्मिनल को उत्पादों की आपूर्ति कर सकती है।

नायरा प्रमुख तौर पर एचपीसीएल को प्राथमिक तौर पर आपूर्ति बढ़ा रही है जबकि भारत की अन्य तेल कंपनियों जैसे इंडियन ऑयल कॉरपोरेशन (आईओसीएल), भारत पेट्रोलियम कॉरपोरेशन (बीपीसीएल) और रिलायंस इंडस्ट्रीज (आरआईएल) के पास अपनी मांग को पूरा करने के लिए पर्याप्त रिफाइनिंग क्षमता है।

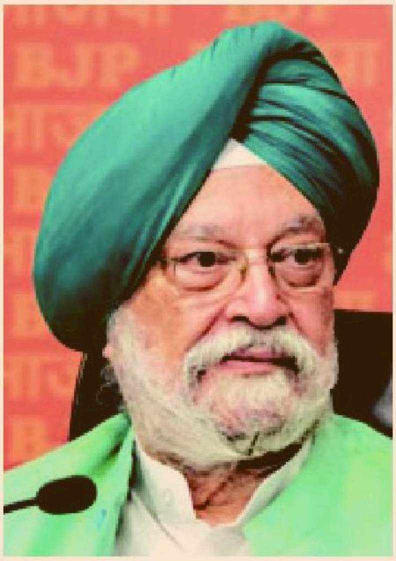
अधिकारी ने बताया कि निर्यात नहीं होने और कच्चे तेल की बाधित आपूर्ति के कारण अभी नायरा अपनी रिफाइनिंग क्षमता का 60 से 80 प्रतिशत ही उपयोग कर रही है।

आकलन के बाद नया लक्ष्य

सुधीर पाल सिंह
नई दिल्ली, 16 सितंबर

पेट्रोलियम और प्राकृतिक गैस मंत्री हरदीप पुरी ने पेट्रोल में एथनॉल मिश्रण के प्रभाव की चिंताओं के मद्देनजर मंगलार को कहा कि राष्ट्रीय एथनॉल मिश्रण कार्यक्रम के नए लक्ष्य निर्धारित करने से पूर्व 'आकलन' किया जाएगा।

इस कार्यक्रम का लक्ष्य पेट्रोल में एथनॉल का मिश्रण कर देश की कच्चे तेल के आयात पर निर्भरता कम करना और कॉर्बन उत्सर्जन को घटाना है। इस कार्यक्रम ने 2025-26 तक पेट्रोल में 20 प्रतिशत एथनॉल मिश्रण के लक्ष्य को हासिल कर लिया था। यह लक्ष्य वास्तविक रूप से वर्ष 2030 के लिए निर्धारित किया गया था लेकिन यह समय से पहले हासिल कर लिया गया। पुरी ने नई दिल्ली में आयोजित कार्यक्रम में बताया कि हमने 20 प्रतिशत मिश्रण का लक्ष्य तय किया था - इसकी लक्ष्य तिथि 2030 थी लेकिन हमने इस लक्ष्य को छह वर्ष पूर्व हासिल कर लिया है। मैं यहां पर विराम लगाऊंगा, हम आकलन करेंगे और फिर आगे बढ़ेंगे। उन्होंने बताया, 'आपने सभी कहानियां सुनते हैं कि हम तेजी से आगे बढ़ने जा रहे हैं। हमें उन निष्कर्षों पर पहुंचना ही होगा - जब पारिस्थितिकीतंत्र सभी को अपना रहा है।'



हरदीप पुरी
पेट्रोलियम व प्राकृतिक गैस मंत्री

पुरी ने केपीएमजी इनरिच कार्यक्रम में बताया कि भारत ने 2014 तक 1.4 प्रतिशत एथनॉल मिश्रण के लक्ष्य को हासिल कर लिया था। देश ने निरंतर ध्यान केंद्रित करने के कारण पांच महीने पहले नवंबर 2022 में 10 प्रतिशत मिश्रण के लक्ष्य को हासिल कर लिया था।

वाहन मालिकों और निर्माताओं ने इंजन की सेहत, माइलेज और ईंधन के मूल्य को लेकर सवाल उठाए थे। तेल मंत्रालय ने बीते माह वाहनों या इंजनों पर ई 20 ईंधन के प्रभाव को नकार दिया था। पुरी ने 'इंजन पर बायोफ्यूल के प्रभाव की खबरों' की प्रामाणिकता को नकारते हुए कहा, 'यदि एक व्यक्ति रोजाना दिल्ली से गुरुगांव तक गाड़ी लेकर जाता है तो वाहन की दक्षता 1 से 2 प्रतिशत कम आने के 21 कारण हैं।'

पुरी ने कहा कि सरकार ने 2016 के बाद से तेल और गैस के क्षेत्र में कई सुधारों को लागू किया। इनमें 'लैंडमार्क' ऑयलफील्ड (विनियमन और विकास) संशोधन अधिनियम ने निजी क्षेत्र को तेल की खोज करने और उत्पादन को अधिक आकर्षक बना दिया है।

Deshbandhu, Delhi, 17/09/2025
Page No: 11, Size: 15.88cm × 19.39cm

सरकारी इनिशिएटिव्स से तेल कंपनियों को मिलेगी मदद

नई दिल्ली, 16 सितम्बर (एजेंसियां)। वैश्विक अनिश्चितता के माहौल में भारत सरकार की ओर से जरूरी इनिशिएटिव्स लेने से ऑयल मार्केटिंग कंपनियों (ओएमसी) को मदद मिलेगी। यह जानकारी मंगलवार को जारी एक रिपोर्ट में दी गई।

बीते छह महीनों में अमेरिका द्वारा कच्चे तेल के लिए रूस पर निर्भरता कम करने का दबाव बनाए जाने, डॉलर के मुकाबले रुपए का मूल्य कम होने और अन्य कारणों के चलते भारतीय ऑयल मार्केटिंग कंपनियों के रिफाइनिंग मार्जिन पर दबाव बढ़ा है। एचएसबीसी ग्लोबल इन्वेस्टमेंट रिसर्च की रिपोर्ट में कहा गया कि भारत सरकार ओएमसी के ऐसे निर्णयों को समर्थन दे रही है,

जो इन कंपनियों के सर्वोत्तम वाणिज्यिक हितों में हैं और साथ ही वित्त वर्ष 24 में हुई एलपीजी अंडर-रिकवरी का भुगतान करने का वादा भी कर रही है। इसके परिणामस्वरूप बीते छह महीनों में ओएमसी शेयरों में 14-23 प्रतिशत का उछाल दर्ज किया गया है, जबकि निफ्टी में इस दौरान 12 प्रतिशत की तेजी दर्ज की गई है। रिपोर्ट में बताया गया कि रिफाइनिंग मार्जिन में अंतरिम अवधि में वृद्धि हुई और फिर गिरावट हुई।