



# Govt extends piped gas drive; 310,000 connections added

**SHUBHANGI MATHUR**

New Delhi, 31 March

The government on Tuesday extended National Piped Natural Gas (PNG) drive 2.0 by three months until June 30 to accelerate adoption amid liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) shortage in the country.

The initiative, which is aimed at improving PNG connectivity across the country to increase the share of gas to 15 per cent in the country's energy basket, was earlier scheduled to end on March 31. Under the initiative, the government aims to extend natural gas pipeline connectivity to an additional 37 geographical areas (GAs) not connected to the national gas pipeline, and 44 districts not connected with the PNG network.

India added more than 310,000 new PNG connections in March across domestic and commercial users, and issued another 270,000 PNG connections, the government said in a press release.

The government has been encouraging users to switch to piped gas as the country struggles to secure LPG

supplies amid the West Asia conflict. The Centre has also threatened to cut LPG supply to consumers if they fail to switch to PNG in areas where connectivity exists.

City gas distribution (CGD) companies are offering incentives to promote PNG connections. Indraprastha Gas Ltd and GAIL Gas Ltd are provid-

ing free gas worth around ₹500 for domestic consumers. Mahanagar Gas Ltd has waived registration charges of about ₹500 for domestic PNG consumers and security deposits for commercial users. Bharat Petroleum Corporation has also announced a waiver of security deposits for all commercial connections.

To ensure cooking fuel for domestic consumption, the government has relaxed kerosene distribution rules for the next 60 days. Select petrol pumps, operated by state-run oil-marketing companies, have been permitted to distribute kerosene, including in 21 states and Union territories that have been declared "kerosene-free."

**UNDER THE INITIATIVE, THE GOVERNMENT AIMS TO EXTEND NATURAL GAS PIPELINE NETWORK TO AN ADDITIONAL 37 GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS NOT CONNECTED TO THE NATIONAL GAS PIPELINE**