Business Standard, Delhi, 15/01/2026

Page No: 4, Size: 43.89cm × 51.17cm

Oil refiners may report robust Q3 performance

State-run refiners may report $10-13/barrel GRMs

SHUBHANGI MATHUR
New Delhi, 14 January

Indian oil refining and marketing companies are likely to report strong performance in the third quarter of financial year 2025-26 (Q3FY26) amid significant improvement in gross refining margins (GRMs) and healthy marketing gains due to benign crude oil prices.

Marketing margin refers to the profit booked on sale of refined products such as petrol and diesel, while gross refining margin (GRM) reflects profit booked on turning a barrel of crude oil into refined products.

Major state-run refiners include Indian Oil Corporation (IOCL), Bharat Petroleum (BPCL), Hindustan Petroleum (HPCL) and private player Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL).

Indian refiners benefitted from stronger key product cracks, which continued to trade at a premium to the benchmark, said Yes Securities in a note. The brokerage expects companies to post sequential improvement in core GRMs.

State-run oil marketers' performance would be helped by government's compensation for under-recovery on sale of LPG cylinders

The state-run refiners are expected to report GRMs within $10-13 per barrel in the third quarter of FY26, as against margins of $3-6 per barrel last year, said Elara Capital.

RIL's GRM during the quarter is likely to be $13.4 a barrel, higher than $10.4 per barrel in the same period last year. The company is likely to witness a strong 13 per cent year-on-year (Y-o-Y) Ebitda growth led by strong performance of oil-to-chemicals (O2C) business and digital services or telecom earnings, said Elara Capital. The marketing margins of the oil companies are also likely to remain healthy during the quarter amid subdued crude oil prices.

Brent crude price averaged at $63.1 per barrel during the quarter, down $10.9 a barrel year-on-year and $5 quarter-on-quarter (Q-o-Q).

The gross marketing margins for MS (petrol) and HSD (diesel) averaged around ₹7.38 and ₹5.25 a litre, respectively, in the quarter. Additionally, India's petroleum products consumption remained robust in the quarter leading to higher sales for the OMCs.

The state-run oil marketers' performance would also be supported by the government's compensation for under-recovery on sale of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) cylinders.

The overall performance of OMCs is expected to improve due to lower LPG burden and recovery of earlier LPG subsidy losses from November 2025 on a monthly basis, said Yes Securities. However, the forex losses are expected to weigh on earnings, it said.

The Union cabinet recently approved compensation of ₹30,000 crore for the three state-owned OMCs for the losses incurred on sale of LPG cylinders.

Millennium Post, Delhi, 15/01/2026

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LIGHT CRUDE FOUND IN SHILAIF PLAY, HABSHAN RESERVOIR

IOC and BPCL arm announce crude oil discoveries in Abu Dhabi onshore block

AAISHA SABIR

NEW DELHI: Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) on Wednesday announced two light crude oil discoveries in Abu Dhabi's Onshore Block-1, a development that strengthens India's overseas upstream footprint and adds momentum to the country's broader push for long-term energy security.

The discoveries were made by Urja Bharat Pte Ltd (UBPL), a 50:50 special purpose vehicle formed by IOC and BPCL's exploration and production arm Bharat PetroResources Ltd (BPRL). Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas Hardeep Singh Puri described the development as a key step toward energy self-sufficiency, saying India has reached "a milestone towards energy self-sufficiency" with the successful finding of crude oil in the concession area.

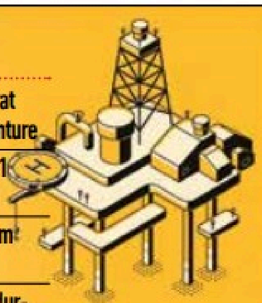
KEY POINTS

» Discoveries were made through Urja Bharat Pte Ltd (UBPL), a 50:50 IOC-BPRL joint venture

» UBPL was awarded the Onshore Block-1 exploration concession in March 2019

» The concession covers up to 6,162 sq km with 100% concession rights

» Partners invested nearly $166 million during the exploration phase



» FIRST OIL DISCOVERY WAS MADE IN EARLY 2024 AT THE XN-76 EXPLORATION WELL

According to IOC, UBPL's first oil discovery was made in early 2024 at the XN-76 exploration well, located in an unconventional play known as Shilaif. The company said that after successful hydro-fracturing operations, the well produced oil to the surface from the Shilaif formation, confirming the presence of unconventional oil resources in the block.

"In early 2024, UBPL made its first oil discovery in the Unconventional Shilaif play in XN-76 exploratory well. After successful hydrofracking operations, the well flowed light crude oil at surface from the Continued on P4

Millennium Post, Delhi, 15/01/2026
Page No: 1, Size: 12.44cm × 16.91cm

IOC and BPCL

Shilaif formation," IOC said, adding that the test results established unconventional oil potential in the concession area.

The second discovery came more recently during drilling and testing of exploratory well XN-79 02S. IOC said the well flowed crude oil from the Habshan reservoir, calling it the first oil find in that reservoir within the concession area. The company said the discovery will now be appraised and moved toward potential development.

"The well flowed light crude oil, marking it the first oil found in the Habshan reservoir in the concession area. Going forward this discovery would be appraised and matured for potential development," IOC said.

UBPL was awarded the Onshore Block-1 exploration concession in March 2019. The concession spans up to 6,162 square kilometres and grants UBPL 100 per cent concession rights, the company said. IOC and BPCL have invested nearly $166 million during the exploration phase, which has now been completed.

The next focus will be on appraisal work, with IOC stating that activities will concentrate on confirming the economic deliverability of the discovered wells. "The company is very positive with the well results and looking forward to further establishing the economic deliverability of wells during the appraisal phase," IOC said.

BPCL also disclosed the development through a stock exchange filing, stating that its 100 per cent subsidiary BPRL, through UBPL, announced the discovery in the operated block on January 13. "Such positive developments are very encouraging and certainly a significant achievement for BPRL, as an international operator," BPCL said, adding that the discoveries will contribute to India's energy security efforts. Puri said the discovery across both the Shilaif play and Habshan reservoir underlines the strength of international partnerships in securing supplies. He added that the achievement reflects the technical capability of Indian teams and is a significant step in IOC's expanding global upstream journey. IOC said the discoveries mark a major milestone for IOC and BPCL as international operators, noting that UBPL is also advancing the development of the existing Ruwais field while evaluating other hydrocarbon prospects within the concession area.

Business Line, Delhi, 15/01/2026
Page No: 2, Size: 25.43cm × 23.92cm

IOCL, BPCL subsidiary discover oil in Abu Dhabi onshore block

ENERGY PROSPECT. The development follows award of exploration concession in 2019

Our Bureau
New Delhi

Indian Oil Corporation (IOCL) and a subsidiary of Bharat Petroleum Corporation (BPCL) on Wednesday announced an oil discovery in Onshore Block 1, Abu Dhabi. The discovery was reported on Tuesday.

IOCL and BPCL subsidiary Bharat PetroResources (BRPL) jointly operate the Onshore Block 1 Exploration Concession in Abu Dhabi through a 50:50 special purpose vehicle, Urja Bharat Pte (UBPL). UBPL was awarded the Onshore Block 1 concession in early 2019 through Abu Dhabi's 2019 bid round.

Both the oil marketing companies (OMC) reported the development through a filing on the BSE.

The development follows the award of the exploration concession to UBPL in March 2019 and the successful completion of the exploration phase, during which the company invested nearly $166 million. The concession agreement covers an area of up to 6,162 sq km, granting UBPL 100 per cent concession rights.

FULL POTENTIAL. The concession agreement covers an area of up to 6,162 sq km, granting the special purpose vehicle UBPL 100 per cent concession rights

SHILAIF FORMATION

In early 2024, UBPL made its first oil discovery in the unconventional Shilaif play in the XN-76 exploratory well. After successful hydrofracking operations, the well flowed light crude oil at surface from the Shilaif formation.

The successful testing results established the presence of unconventional oil resources in Onshore Block 1. The company is positive about the well results, and is looking forward to further establishing the economic deliverability of wells during the appraisal phase.

UBPL also witnessed oil discovery during testing of the exploratory well XN-79 02S in Onshore Block 1. The well flowed light crude oil, making it the first oil find in the Habshan reservoir in the concession area. Going forward, this discovery would be appraised and matured for potential development.

BPRL is positive with the well results and looking forward to further establishing the economic deliverability of wells during the appraisal phase, the company said.

KEY ACHIEVEMENT

BPRL has also witnessed oil discovery during testing of the exploration well XN-79 02S in Onshore Block 1. The well flowed crude oil, making it the first oil find in the Habshan reservoir in the concession area, BRPL added. Such positive developments are encouraging and certainly a significant achievement for both the parent companies of UBPL, as international operators, IOCL said.

In addition, both companies through UBPL are advancing towards development of the existing Ruwais field and exploring other potential hydrocarbon prospects within the concession area, it added.

Business Line, Delhi, 15/01/2026
Page No: 7, Size: 34.74cm × 20.08cm

OPEC wants a rethink of label 'fossil fuel'

Narrative shifting to "energy addition" from "energy transition"

Richa Mishra

Last month, Haitham Al Ghais, OPEC Secretary General, on December 15, 2025, wrote "Does the 'fossil fuel' label require a rethink?"

"Precision is fundamental to science. This is particularly the case regarding accurate terminology. Unfortunately, within the discourse on future energy pathways, there is a widely used term that falls far short of the threshold of precise scientific terminology, namely 'fossil fuel' and its applicability as a description of crude oil," he wrote.

Three factors demonstrate its imprecision, according to him: The first relates to the word 'fuel.': Crude oil in and of itself is rarely used directly as a fuel. Rather it is refined into thousands of different products, some of which are fuels, many of which are not. Such oil-derived products are used in almost every economic sector and every stage of daily life.

"That is not to downplay oil's importance as a fuel. However, to define it only as a fuel mischaracterises how we use it. According to OPEC's World Oil Outlook 2025, the petrochemical industry will be the single largest contributor to global incremental oil demand growth in the period 2024-2050," he wrote.

The second factor relates to the origin of the term 'fossil fuel'. Fossilisation involves organic matter being set in stone and preserved. The formation of oil involves organic matter being cooked and transformed into liquid.

"The counterargument to this is on issues regarding climate change, we are constantly told to listen to science. Are generic terms compatible with the rigour of scientific precision? Should they be used, despite their vagueness or ambiguity, in a scientific context or discussions on the world's energy future?," he wrote.

NOMENCLATURE CHANGE

According to Tracy Schuchart, Senior Economist, Ninja Trader Live, Ninja Trader Group: "The nomenclature change wouldn't meaningfully shift the narrative because the objection isn't actually about fossils, it's about carbon emissions and climate impact. The term 'fossil fuels' became a convenient label that stuck, but the underlying critique would attach itself to whatever replacement term emerged... Think about the actual transmission channels for narrative control."

FOSSIL FUEL. Nomenclature being questioned GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

Lauri Myllyvirta, co-founder and lead analyst of the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air, said "he didn't even propose an alternative term. And he fails to mention the key issue which is why we need a term for fossil fuels — they are the energy sources that involve mobilising fossil carbon."

"The only places where I can see his point is that the "non-energy use" of oil is increasingly important and doesn't really fit the word 'fuel'. Fossil fuels and feedstocks?," he said, adding, "And the focus on fossil vs non-fossil rather than GHG footprint has given biofuels and biomass too much of an easy pass. Many uses of bioenergy are both high-carbon and highly polluting in terms of air quality."

However, energy expert Narendra Taneja, holds that "OPEC is a cartel, and their purpose is to facilitate oil producers make maximum profit. Therefore, suggesting change in the nomenclature is part of their narrative building exercise, nothing more."

In fact, the US President Donald Trump's policy towards the fossil fuel and petrochemical industries centres on an agenda aimed at achieving "energy dominance" through deregulation, increased domestic production, and tax incentives.

Millennium Post, Delhi, 15/01/2026
Page No: 12, Size: 11.17cm × 19.90cm

Stanlow refinery: Essar Energy Transition posts 'record' domestic sales

NEW DELHI: Essar Energy Transition reported record domestic fuel sales in 2025 at its Stanlow refinery in north-west England, marking its strongest performance since Essar acquired the site in 2011 and underscoring the refinery's role in the UK energy security.

The company, in a statement, said operational throughput rose 8 per cent year-on-year, with dispatch volumes from the Stanlow gantry approaching all-time highs, despite challenges of a major infrastructure transition. Growth was driven by the strong UK demand for refined products and a pan-UK supply strategy that expanded market share across key segments.

Retail and aviation businesses recorded sharp gains during the year. Essar expanded its branded retail forecourt network to 58 sites and now supplies fuel to more than 100 dealer-owned forecourts nationwide, supported by a price-drop campaign launched in December.

In aviation, the company widened its footprint to directly supply fuel at 10 major UK airports.

Fuel supply resilience was strengthened through strategic distribution hubs at Kingsbury, Northampton, Grangemouth, Oikos and Grays, enabling Essar to respond to urgent demand from rail, bus and commercial transport operators, following the closure of two of the UK's six refineries in 2025. The year also saw a USD 100 million refinery turnaround - part of a broader USD 350 million investment programme - which lifted throughput capacity by around 8 per cent and included installation of the UK's first hydrogen-ready furnace, advancing the site's decarbonisation pathway. MPOST

> 'Operational throughput rose 8% year-on-year, with dispatch volumes from the Stanlow gantry approaching all-time highs'

Venezuela crisis unlikely to hit India's crude oil imports

Rishi Ranjan Kala
New Delhi

Even though crude oil and refined products account for more than 90 per cent of India's imports from Venezuela, the US action is unlikely to materially impact New Delhi's hydrocarbons trade as the South American country accounts for less than 1 per cent of its crude oil imports.

Analysts and refiners pointed out that even if Venezuela's crude oil production is disrupted, the development is not expected to majorly impact global crude oil prices, considering it accounts for roughly 1.5 per cent of the global supply.

"While we do not anticipate any material near-term impact of the Venezuela situation on crude oil prices, investments for increasing crude oil production in Venezuela, which has vast untapped reserves, could boost oil supply globally and lead to softening of crude oil prices over the medium-to-long term, which could be a positive for India Inc," Crisil Ratings said on Tuesday.

India's direct trade with Venezuela is also insignificant, accounting for less than 0.25 per cent of its total imports. Crude oil is the primary import from Venezuela, with India sourcing roughly 1 per cent of its requirements from the South American country.

OIL SURPLUS

Last week, Jim Burkhard, Vice-President and Global Head of Crude Oil Research at S&P Global Energy, pointed out that the recent developments in Venezuela do little to alter the fact that the global oil market is facing a surplus at the start of 2026. For now, prevailing oil market fundamentals remain largely unchanged.

Crisil Ratings stressed that the price of Brent crude oil has remained almost stable over the past few days, hovering a tad above $60 per barrel. The US Energy Information Administration data also point to a similar trend.

"Whether Venezuela crude oil production grows after years of neglect is a question that will be answered over months and years, and only with significant levels of investment. For now, the prevailing oil market fundamentals remain largely unchanged," Burkhard said.

Rubix Data Sciences pointed out that the Venezuelan government in November 2025 conveyed its interest in attracting greater Indian investment and technical collaboration in mineral exploration and processing, signalling a potential in the bilateral investment agenda.

"For India, deeper investment partnerships in these areas could support long-term supply security for minerals essential to batteries, electric vehicles and clean-energy technologies," the risk management services provider added.

Economic Times, Delhi, 15/01/2026
Page No: 4, Size: 51.44cm × 46.04cm

ET Q&A **AS SAHNEY**
CHAIRMAN, INDIAN OIL CORP

Indian Oil Targets 20-30% Revenue from Non-fuel Biz by 2030: Sahney

Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) is aiming to strengthen its non-fuel business and targeting an increase in the share of revenue from gas, petrochemicals, lubricants and renewables to 20-30% by 2030, up from around 10% now, said chairman **AS Sahney**. In an interview to **Sanjeev Choudhary**, he said this shift would expand the non-fuel business to ₹2-3 lakh crore from about ₹70,000 crore at present. Asked about the unease in parts of the organisation over cost cuts, Sahney said the tightening was aimed at trimming excesses, not essentials, and the cost-discipline drive had already delivered annual savings of about ₹2,000 crore. He outlined plans to consolidate the gas business under one head while stressing that any scrapping of the positions of director (research and development) and director (pipelines) would be a government decision, not his. **Edited excerpts:**

Over the past year, since you took charge, you've sought to revitalise the organisation through the Sprint programme. How has it performed?

The Sprint is focused on the core business, customer centricity, cost consciousness, on making the company transition-ready, on leadership development and technology. We have introduced energy efficiency initiatives and profitability improvement initiatives, which are giving me ₹2,000 crore per annum (in savings). We are switching from our (expensive) captive power plants to grid power wherever the grid is cheaper and reliable. Now, at least 20% of (our power consumption) is coming from the grid. Earlier, it was much lower. We will raise it to at least 30-40%. We are trying to upgrade the products. Naphtha, bitumen, fuel oil, sulphur—these are the products which give me lower than crude return. So, when we are minimising these products, I am increasing my profitable products. More and more of naphtha is being converted into petrol.

Some divisions of the company have seen discontent over cost cuts.

We will never do any cost-cutting in any essential thing. It's the excesses that are being targeted. We are driving cost consciousness in the organisation.

Is there a plan to reduce the size of IOC's board by eliminating the positions of director (research and development) and director (pipelines)?

Frankly speaking, I don't have any idea on this because this is the decision of the competent authorities in the government.

Does the company need an independent pipeline division?

(The division's independent existence or elimination) is not important at all. What is important is we are a board of Indian Oil. For me, it is not the board of different divisions. My directors are the directors of Indian Oil. They should not be directors of one division or other division.

> **We will never do any cost-cutting in any essential thing. It's the excesses that are being targeted**

What kind of company do you want to leave behind at the end of your five-year tenure?

Five years down the line, this company will be pretty much different. Today, 85% or 90% of revenues are coming from petrol, diesel, aviation fuel, etc. What I foresee is that at least 20 to 30% of my revenues should start coming from alternative sources like gas, lubes, renewables, biofuels, petrochemicals. These verticals should generate about ₹2-3 lakh crore in revenues (IOC's total revenue today is about ₹9 lakh crore). At present, gas is a ₹30,000 crore business, petrochemicals is ₹28,000 crore. Lubes is worth ₹13,000 crore, which should rise to ₹20,000 crore.

Where do you expect your gas business to reach in four years?

It will at least double. In the last two years, we have already doubled.

What about petrochemicals?

We aim to double this also to about ₹50,000 crore. We may even do acquisition to meet the target. This will now be more focused on specialty chemicals. In lubricants, we have shifted our focus towards automotive lubes, where we were somewhat lagging.

What's your plan for the natural gas business?

We are trying to consolidate the gas business. Bulk business, which is procurement of gas and selling of gas to the industrial people, is done by the business development division, while the CGD (city gas distribution) business is under pipeline division. We are trying to consolidate them into one entity, place it under one head.

Do you see an opportunity in the nuclear business?

We are evaluating it in light of the new legislation that has come last month. If we get a good partner, we will go for it. At present, we are not engaged in talks with potential foreign partners.

Are you concerned that your stock price does not adequately reflect your financial performance?

That is a cause of concern for us, but it is ultimately market driven. So, we can't do anything other than communicate to the market that these are my plans, ambitions, growth prospects. And then I'll have to go into businesses which are given higher multiples like petrochemicals, gas, renewables or, maybe, nuclear.

Mint, Delhi, 15/01/2026
Page No: 9, Size: 16.80cm × 13.41cm

IOC-BPCL arm announces oil discoveries in Abu Dhabi

Indian Oil Corp. Ltd (IOC) and Bharat Petroleum Corp. Ltd (BPCL) on Wednesday announced oil discoveries in an onshore block in Abu Dhabi, strengthening their overseas upstream portfolio and India's energy security efforts.

Urja Bharat Pte Ltd (UBPL), a 50:50 special purpose vehicle of IOC and BPCL's exploration and production arm Bharat PetroResources Ltd (BPRL), made its first oil discovery in XN-76 exploration well in early 2024, IOC said in a statement. It has now made another oil discovery during drilling of exploratory well XN-79 02S in the block, it said.

UBPL was awarded the Onshore Block 1 exploration concession in March 2019.

The partners have invested nearly $166 million in the exploration phase, which has now been successfully completed.

IOC said the first oil discovery was made in the unconventional Shilaif play at the XN-76 exploratory well. PTI

Business Standard, Delhi, 15/01/2026
Page No: 4, Size: 40.24cm × 51.28cm

IOCL, BPCL arm announce oil discoveries in Abu Dhabi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
New Delhi, 14 January

Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOCL) and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) on Wednesday announced oil discoveries in an onshore block in Abu Dhabi, strengthening their overseas upstream portfolio and India's energy security efforts. Urja Bharat Pte Ltd (UBPL), a 50:50 special purpose vehicle of IOC and BPCL's exploration and production arm Bharat PetroResources Ltd (BPRL), made its first oil discovery in XN-76 exploration well in 2024, IOC said in a statement.

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IOC said the first oil discovery was made in the unconventional Shilaif play at the XN-76 exploratory well. Following successful hydro-fracturing operations, the well flowed oil at surface from the Shilaif formation, establishing the presence of unconventional oil resources in the block.

The partners said appraisal activities will focus on confirming the economic deliverability of the wells. A second oil discovery was recorded during testing of the XN-79 02S exploratory well, which flowed crude oil from the Habshan reservoir, marking the first oil find in this reservoir within the concession area. The discovery will be appraised and progressed towards potential development.

New opportunities

- First oil discovery in XN-76 exploration well in early 2024
- Another oil discovery during drilling of exploratory well XN-79 02S in the block
- The partners have invested nearly $166 million in the exploration phase

The firms said the discoveries represent a significant milestone for IOC and BPCL as international operators and will support efforts to enhance India's long-term energy security.

"In early 2024, UBPL made its first oil discovery in the Unconventional Shilaif play in XN-76 exploratory well. After successful hydrofracking operations, the well flowed light crude oil at surface from the Shilaif formation. The successful testing results have established the presence of unconventional oil resources in Onshore Block 1," IOC said. "The company is very positive with the well results and looking forward to further establishing the economic deliverability of wells during the appraisal phase." UBPL has also witnessed the oil discovery during testing of the exploratory well XN79 02S in the Onshore Block 1. "The well flowed light crude oil, marking it the first oil found in the Habshan reservoir in the concession area. Going forward this discovery would be appraised and matured for potential development," IOC added.

BPCL in a stock exchange filing that its 100 per cent subsidiary Bharat PetroResources Limited (BPRL) through a 50:50 special purpose vehicle - UBPL - has announced the oil discovery in operated Onshore Block 1, Abu Dhabi on January 13.

Hindu, Delhi, 15/01/2026
Page No: 13, Size: 10.77cm × 16.59cm

INBRIEF

IOCL, BPCL's exploration arm discover oil in Abu Dhabi

State-owned refiners Indian Oil Corporation Ltd. and Bharat Petroleum's exploration arm informed bourses on Wednesday that oil resources have been discovered at Abu Dhabi's Onshore Block 1 through their joint venture Urja Bharat Pte Limited (UBPL). The two refiners hold equal stakes in the joint venture. The Onshore Block 1 was accorded to a joint venture of BPCL and IOCL, Urja Bharat, for exploration and appraisal.

India's crude lifelines surge amid sanction heat

Recent geopolitical developments have seen record fuel supplies, expanded discounts on oil and robust domestic appetite for fuel

S DINAKAR
Amritsar, 14 January

Geopolitics tend to play havoc with India's oil & gas economy. This time it could be different.

India's economy suffered during the 2008 global financial crisis, when crude oil soared to a near $150 per barrel; in March 2022, when European benchmark oil Brent surged to $138 a barrel soon after Russia invaded Ukraine; and again in the same month, when LNG benchmark Japan Korea Marker soared to $85 per million British thermal units.

With imports accounting for 90 per cent of its crude oil needs, 60 percent of liquid petroleum gas (LPG, or cooking gas) and 50 per cent of liquified natural gas (LNG), India was always one of the first to feel the tremors from geopolitical uncertainties. But 2025 failed to move the needle on oil and gas prices despite stringent western sanctions, secondary tariffs, the Iran-Israel-US conflict, and sabre rattling over Venezuela before the US bombed the Latin American country this month and removed its president.

On the contrary—barring any potential fallout from protests in Iran—India is in a sweet spot on supplies and prices, offering comfort to finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman as she draws up Budget 2026.

European benchmark Brent crude slipped below $60 per barrel after the US assumed control over Venezuelan oil — but prices have since spiked to $65 per barrel after violent protests rocked Iran and US President Donald Trump announced tariffs on nations trading with Iran.

But the Indian crude oil basket – a blend of medium, sour, lower quality Dubai benchmark and lighter, sweet, better quality Brent — averaged less than $60 per barrel in January, the lowest since $55 per barrel in January 2021 during the pandemic, oil ministry data showed.

The basket may decline further to less than $50 per barrel by June, according to an SBI Research report. Other foreign brokerages peg oil to fluctuate in the $55-$60 per barrel this year. That compares with a $66 average this fiscal, according to oil ministry data.

"Oil prices are moderate, so working capital requirements will be lower," said Prashant Vasisht, senior vice president at ratings agency Icra. "LPG under-recoveries are also expected to remain lower in 2026 owing to decline in crude prices compared to 2025."

Ironically, sanctions introduced in October by the Trump administration—crippling exports of oil from Rosneft and Lukoil, Russia's two biggest producers—have tripled discounts on Russian oil, from $1.50-$2 per barrel in mid-2025, two senior traders from state refiners said.

Limited impact

"So far, the impact on Indian refiners is limited," said Singapore-based Vandana Hari, a leading energy analyst. "If the main purpose of the sanctions was to squeeze Moscow's netbacks (profit per barrel of oil after deducting costs) rather than crimp Russian volumes, that purpose has been at least partially served. Meanwhile, the crude's discounts have widened, so that helps the West's aims too."

One reason for expanding discounts is that Russia is finding it harder to find buyers for oil from its sanctioned firms. Non-sanctioned producers like Zarubezhneft and other smaller producers are pooling cargoes and offering them to India via Dubai-based trading entities, traders said.

Discounts on supplies of Russian oil have expanded by over three-fold to over $7 per barrel, prompting state-run refiner Indian Oil to import 459,000 barrels per day (bpd) in December, the highest since May 2024, data from maritime intelligence agency Kpler shows.

Competitive pricing continues to entice Indian refiners despite sanctions and a 25 per cent secondary tariff, state-run refining officials said. India imported over 1.2 million bpd in December and is on track for similar volumes this month as on date. While the share of Russian oil has shrunk by around 15 percentage points to 22 per cent in December from November, it is still India's biggest supplier of oil.

In 2025, India got away easy. Exports of fuels from India led by Reliance reached an all-time high in 2025 as refiners capitalized on discounted Russian oil and strong export margins, a senior refining official said and ship tracking data showed. Sanctions have made little difference to India's exports of petroleum products.

Indian imports of Russian crude oil fell by only 3.5 per cent in 2025 at 1.73 million bpd from 2024, Kpler data showed. But Russia retained top place, with a share nearly twice that of second place Iraq.

Reliance was the top buyer averaging 590,000 bpd last year on the back of a 500,000 bpd term contract with Rosneft—but October's sanctions by Washington forced the refiner to cut purchases by around half to 293,000 bpd in December from November while state-run refiner Indian Oil boosted purchases to a 19-month high of 459,000 bpd. Kpler data until today shows Indian Oil's purchases of Russian oil at a record 577,000 bpd and Reliance at nil.

Meanwhile Nayara Energy, a Rosneft affiliate, has continued to buy Russian oil from sanctioned Rosneft—it is sourcing its entire requirement for its 400,000 bpd refinery at Vadinar from Russia. Nayara did not comment.

State-run refiners accounted for around 56 per cent of India's Russian oil imports until date in January, with Nayara contributing the rest.

"It should be business as usual since I see no disruption in the crude sourcing channels for India," New Delhi-based Narendra Taneja, a leading energy analyst, said. ``There is plenty of oil available in the world and every oil exporting country seems to be keen to secure maximum share in the Indian crude import basket." The International Energy Agency expects an oversupply of 3.5 million-4 million bpd this year.

Venezuela and Iran

Venezuela offers no immediate gains for India though Reliance has expressed interest in importing their oil.

From a market perspective, Venezuela's current production is now too small to have a material impact on global supply, so even further disruptions would likely have only a modest effect on prices in the near term, according to a JP Morgan note. Based on Vortexa data, recent Venezuelan crude exports averaged 700-750 kbd over 2024-25.

"We can expect to see crude export momentum pick up from the Atlantic Basin especially from new projects in Guyana, Brazil and Argentina placing an additional 500-550,000 bpd of oil available for export," said Pamela Munger, head of market analysis EMEA for Vortexa. "And despite significant infrastructure hurdles ahead a wildcard for further exports could be Venezuela."

That leaves Iran, a wildcard in 2026. A war in West Asia involving Iran could spell trouble for shipments of oil and gas to India and increase volatility. But given Iran's meagre contribution to the wider oil market, prices of oil are expected to keep low. What could still upset India's crude calculations is the growing unrest in Iran and Trump's threat of another 25 per cent tariff for any country doing business with Iran. Iran can also disrupt access to the Straits of Hormuz, a critical but narrow passageway to half of India's oil imports.

"The Iran escalation is not looking good (for India)," Hari, founder of energy analysts Vanda Insights, said.

INDIAN CRUDE OIL BASKET – A BLEND OF MEDIUM, SOUR, LOWER QUALITY DUBAI BENCHMARK AND LIGHTER, SWEET, BETTER QUALITY BRENT — AVERAGED LESS THAN $60 PER BARREL IN JAN, THE LOWEST SINCE $55 PER BARREL IN JAN 2021

Oil story

India's imports from sanctioned nations ('000 barrels per day)

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Russia	100	738	1,790	1,789	1,726
Venezuela	nil	nil	nil	70	29
Iran	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil

Source: Kpler

Calm despite storm

- India is highly dependent on crude oil, natural gas and LPG imports, primarily from geopolitically sensitive West Asia and Russia
- But 2025 failed to move the needle on oil & gas prices despite stringent western sanctions and secondary tariffs
- Barring the potential fallout from protests in Iran, India remains in a sweet spot on supplies and prices
- Exports of fuels from India reached an all-time high in 2025 as refiners capitalised on discounted Russian oil and strong export margins
- State-run refiners accounted for 60% of India's Russian oil imports

Economic Times, Delhi, 15/01/2026
Page No: 4, Size: 18.76cm × 11.48cm

Essar's Stanlow Refinery Posts Record Domestic Sales in 2025

New Delhi: Essar Energy Transition reported record domestic fuel sales in 2025 at its Stanlow refinery in northwest England, marking its strongest performance since Essar acquired the site in 2011 and underscoring the refinery's role in the UK energy security.

The company, in a statement, said operational throughput rose 8% year-on-year, with dispatch volumes from the Stanlow gantry approaching all-time highs, despite challenges of a major infrastructure transition. Growth was driven by the strong UK demand for refined products and a pan-UK supply strategy that expanded market share across key segments. —**PTI**

Indian Express, Delhi, 15/01/2026
Page No: 23, Size: 5.16cm × 26.25cm

IOC, BPCL arm announce oil discoveries in Abu Dhabi onshore block

New Delhi: Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOC) and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) on Wednesday announced oil discoveries in an onshore block in Abu Dhabi, strengthening their overseas upstream portfolio and India's energy security efforts.

Urja Bharat Pte Ltd (UBPL), a 50:50 special purpose vehicle of IOC and BPCL's exploration and production arm Bharat PetroResources Ltd (BPRL), made its first oil discovery in XN-76 exploration well in early 2024, IOC said in a statement.

It has now made another oil discovery during drilling of exploratory well XN-79 02S in the block, it said.

UBPL was awarded the Onshore Block 1 exploration concession in March 2019.

The partners have invested nearly $166 million in the exploration phase, which has now been successfully completed.

The concession spans up to 6,162 square kilometres and grants UBPL 100 per cent concession rights.

IOC said the first oil discovery was made in the unconventional Shilaif play at the XN-76 exploratory well. Following successful hydro-fracturing operations, the well flowed oil at surface from the Shilaif formation, establishing the presence of unconventional oil resources in the block.

The partners said appraisal activities will focus on confirming the economic deliverability of the wells. PTI

The Indian

Economic Times, Delhi, 15/01/2026
Page No: 4, Size: 18.15cm × 11.48cm

BP Warns of up to $5 billion of Energy Transition Writedowns

BP Plc said it expects to take as much as $5 billion in write-downs from its energy transition business, just weeks after a leadership change as it pivots back to fossil fuels.

In an update ahead of earnings next month, the energy giant also flagged weak oil trading and flat production for the fourth-quarter, while net debt was reduced.

The update follows the shock ouster of chief executive officer Murray Auchincloss, who sought to reset the company after years of failed low-carbon bets and pressure from activist shareholder Elliott Investment Management. —**Bloomberg**

Times of India, Delhi, 15/01/2026
Page No: 20, Size: 9.21cm × 31.91cm

IOC, BPCL arm JV finds oil in Abu Dhabi

New Delhi: Urja Bharat, a joint venture of Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) and Bharat PetroResources — the production arm of Bharat Petroleum Corporation (BPCL) — has made oil discoveries in an onshore block in Abu Dhabi. Petroleum and natural gas minister Hardeep Singh Puri said the discovery marks a new milestone in India's quest for energy self-sufficiency.

In a statement, IOC said Urja Bharat (UBPL) made its first oil discovery at the XN-76 exploration well in early 2024 and now made another while drilling the XN-79 02S exploratory well in the same block. UBPL was awarded the Onshore Block 1 exploration concession in March 2019. The concession spans up to 6,162 square kilometres, granting UBPL 100% concession rights. The partners invested nearly $166 million in the exploration phase.

BPCL said the first oil discovery was made in the unconventional Shilaif play at the XN-76 exploratory well. "After successful hydro-fracking operations, the well flowed oil at the surface from the Shilaif formation. The testing results established the presence of unconventional oil resources in Onshore Block 1," BPCL said. TNN

तेलशोधकों की रहेगी मजबूत तिमाही!

शुभांगी माथुर
नई दिल्ली, 14 जनवरी

वित्त वर्ष 2025-26 की तीसरी तिमाही में भारत की तेलशोधन और विपणन कंपनियों का प्रदर्शन मजबूत रहने की उम्मीद है। कंपनियों का ग्रॉस रिफाइनिंग मार्जिन (जीआरएम) काफी सुधरा है और कच्चे तेल की कम कीमतों के कारण विपणन में भी अच्छा मुनाफा हुआ है।

विपणन से होने वाले मुनाफे का मतलब पेट्रोल और डीजल जैसे रिफाइंड उत्पादों की बिक्री पर होने वाला मुनाफा है, जबकि ग्रॉस रिफाइनिंग मार्जिन से कच्चे तेल के एक बैरल को रिफाइंड उत्पादों में बदलने पर होने वाले मुनाफे का पता चलता है। प्रमुख सरकारी तेलशोधन कंपनियों में इंडियन ऑयल कॉर्पोरेशन (आईओसीएल), भारत पेट्रोलियम (बीपीसीएल), हिंदुस्तान पेट्रोलियम (एचपीसीएल) और प्राइवेट कंपनी रिलायंस इंडस्ट्रीज लिमिटेड (आरआईएल) शामिल हैं। येस सिक्योरिटीज ने एक नोट में कहा, 'रिफाइनिंग के मामले में देखें तो भारतीय रिफाइनरों के लिए प्रमुख प्रोडक्ट क्रैक मजबूत थे और बेंचमार्क से प्रीमियम पर रिपोर्ट करना जारी रखेंगे। हमें उम्मीद है कि कंपनियां रिफाइनिंग इन्वेंट्री और मार्केटिंग के आकस्मिक नुकसान के साथ कोर जीआरएम में क्रमिक सुधार की सूचना देंगी।'

बढ़ेगा मुनाफा

- ऊंचे रिफाइनिंग मार्जिन और कच्चे तेल की कम कीमतों के कारण होगा तीसरी तिमाही में मजबूत प्रदर्शन
- सरकारी तेलशोधकों से वित्त वर्ष 2026 की तीसरी तिमाही में 10 से 13 डॉलर प्रति बैरल के बीच जीआरएम रहने की उम्मीद
- कच्चे तेल की कीमतें कम रहने के कारण इस तिमाही के दौरान तेल कंपनियों का विपणन मुनाफा भी मजबूत रहने की आस
- भारत में पेट्रोलियम उत्पादों की खपत भी इस तिमाही में अधिक रही है, जिससे तेल विपणन कंपनियों की बिक्री बढ़ी

वहीं एलारा कैपिटल ने कहा कि वित्त वर्ष 2026 की तीसरी तिमाही में सरकारी तेलशोधकों का जीआरएम 10 से 13 डॉलर प्रति बैरल रहने की उम्मीद है, जबकि पिछले साल की समान अवधि में मार्जिन 3 से 6 डॉलर प्रति बैरल था।

इस तिमाही के दौरान आरआईएल का जीआरएम 13.4 डॉलर प्रति बैरल रहने का अनुमान है, जो पिछले साल की समान अवधि के 10.4 डॉलर प्रति बैरल से अधिक होगा। इलारा कैपिटल ने कहा है कि कंपनी सालाना आधार पर 13 प्रतिशत की मजबूत इबिटा वृद्धि दर्ज कर सकती है, क्योंकि इसका ऑयल-टु-केमिकल्स (ओ2सी) कारोबार और डिजिटल सेवाएं या टेलीकॉम से कमाई अच्छी रही है।

कच्चे तेल की कीमतें कम रहने के कारण इस तिमाही के दौरान तेल कंपनियों का विपणन मुनाफा भी मजबूत रहने की संभावना है। तिमाही के दौरान ब्रेंट क्रूड की औसत कीमत 63.1 डॉलर प्रति बैरल रही, जो सालाना आधार पर 10.9 डॉलर प्रति बैरल और तिमाही आधार पर 5 डॉलर प्रति बैरल कम है।

इस तिमाही के दौरान सकल विपणन मुनाफा पेट्रोल और डीजल के लिए औसतन क्रमशः 7.38 और 5.25 रुपये प्रति लीटर रहा है। इसके साथ ही भारत में पेट्रोलियम उत्पादों की खपत भी इस तिमाही में अधिक रही है, जिससे तेल विपणन कंपनियों की बिक्री बढ़ी है।

रसोई गैस (एलपीजी) सिलिंडरों की बिक्री पर तेल कंपनियों को होने वाले नुकसान की भरपाई केंद्र सरकार करेगी, जिससे इनके प्रदर्शन को समर्थन मिलेगा। येस सिक्योरिटीज ने कहा, 'कुल मिलाकर तेल विपणन कंपनियों का प्रदर्शन पिछली तिमाही से बेहतर रहेगा और इसे एलपीजी के बोझ में कमी आने से भी समर्थन मिलेगा। विदेशी मुद्रा की हानि का कमाई पर नकारात्मक असर पड़ने की उम्मीद है।'

केंद्रीय मंत्रिमंडल ने हाल ही में 3 सरकारी तेल विपणन कंपनियों को रसोई गैस सिलिंडर की बिक्री पर हुए नुकसान के लिए 30,000 करोड़ रुपये के मुआवजे को मंजूरी दी है।

अबू धाबी के अपतटीय ब्लॉक में हुई तेल खोज

इंडियन ऑयल कॉरपोरेशन लिमिटेड (आईओसी) और भारत पेट्रोलियम कॉरपोरेशन लिमिटेड (बीपीसीएल) ने बुधवार को अबू धाबी के एक अपतटीय ब्लॉक में तेल खोज की घोषणा की। इससे उनके विदेशी कारोबार और भारत के ऊर्जा सुरक्षा प्रयासों को मजबूती मिली है।

आईओसी ने एक बयान में कहा कि ऊर्जा भारत पीटीई लिमिटेड (यूबीपीएल) ने 2024 की शुरुआत में एक्सएन-76 कुएं में अपनी पहली तेल खोज की थी। यूबीपीएल, आईओसी और बीपीसीएल की खोज एवं उत्पादन इकाई भारत पेट्रोरिसोर्स लिमिटेड (बीपीआरएल) का 50:50 प्रतिशत की हिस्सेदारी वाला एक विशेष उद्देश्यीय इकाई (एसपीवी) है। बयान के अनुसार अब इसी ब्लॉक में कुएं एक्सएन-79 02एक की खुदाई के दौरान तेल की एक और खोज की गई है। यूबीपीएल को मार्च 2019 में ये ब्लॉक दिया गया था। साझेदारों ने खोज चरण में लगभग 16.6 करोड़ अमेरिकी डॉलर का निवेश किया है, जो अब सफलतापूर्वक पूरा हो गया है। यह रियायत क्षेत्र 6,162 वर्ग किलोमीटर तक फैला है और यूबीपीएल को 100 प्रतिशत रियायत अधिकार प्रदान करता है। कंपनियों ने कहा कि ये खोज अंतरराष्ट्रीय परिचालकों के रूप में आईओसी और बीपीसीएल के लिए एक मील का पत्थर हैं और भारत की दीर्घकालिक ऊर्जा सुरक्षा को बढ़ाने के प्रयासों का समर्थन करेंगी। भाषा

भारतीय तेल कंपनियों ने अबु धाबी में खोजा तेल

नई दिल्ली | इंडियन ऑयल कॉर्पोरेशन और भारत पेट्रोलियम कॉर्पोरेशन ने अबु धाबी में दो तेल खोज की घोषणा की है। पहली खोज एक्सएन-76 कुएं में 2024 की शुरुआत में हुई, जबकि दूसरी एक्सएन-79 02एस कुएं में दर्ज की गई। दोनों के संयुक्त उपक्रम ऊर्जा भारत प्रा.लि. ने 6,162 वर्ग किमी वाले ऑनशोर ब्लॉक-1 में ये खोज की है। इस प्रोजेक्ट में अब तक 1,494 करोड़ रु. का निवेश हुआ है।