

Fuel, LPG supply stable in city, says CM, urges Delhiites to avoid panic buying

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi, 15 April

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Wednesday assured residents of the national capital that supplies of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG), petrol and diesel in the city remain normal, stable and sufficient despite the prevailing global geopolitical situation.

She said all gas agencies and bottling plants in Delhi have adequate LPG stocks, and uninterrupted distribution is being ensured through multiple supply channels.

Currently, around 1.25 lakh LPG cylinders are being delivered daily, in line with regular demand, while the average delivery time remains 4-5 days. According to the CM, the government is closely



monitoring the supply system to ensure that consumers do not face any inconvenience or shortage, as meeting the needs of domestic LPG users remains a top priority.

She said that consumers are being encouraged to book refills through digital platforms such as SMS, IVRS, WhatsApp and online portals, and to enhance transparency and safety, an OTP-based delivery

authentication system has been implemented, with over 90 per cent of daily deliveries now being verified.

Under the Free Trade LPG (FTL) scheme, 5-kg LPG cylinders are being made available to migrant workers at gas agencies against valid identity proof.

Special camps and outreach drives are being conducted across all districts in coordination

with District Magistrates (DMs), Sub-Divisional Magistrates (SDMs) and Food Supply Officers (FSOs).

Quoting the State Coordinator (Delhi) and DGM (Retail), HPCL, the CM said that oil marketing companies are actively addressing consumer feedback and complaints, and, accordingly, strict action is being taken through joint teams of Civil Supplies Department and police, wherever instances of black marketing, hoarding, diversion or other irregularities are reported.

So far, over 540 raids have been carried out, leading to the seizure of more than 2,027 cylinders and the registration of 44 FIRs. The CM has appealed to residents to stay away from rumours, avoid panic buying or unnecessary stockpiling, and rely only on official sources for information.



The CBG blending mandate was 1% as of FY26, to be gradually increased to 3%, 4% and 5% in FY27, FY28 and FY29. HT

Biogas blending in city gas may pick up as fuel crunch bites

Subhash Narayan & Rituraj Baruah

NEW DELHI

Facing a gas supply squeeze amid the West Asia war, India is considering a steep increase in blending compressed biogas (CBG) into city gas networks—potentially up to 20%—in a phased manner to reduce import dependence and cushion supplies, said two people aware of the discussions.

The blending mandate for city gas distribution (CGD) entities was 1% as of fiscal year 2026 (FY26), to be gradually increased to 3%, 4% and 5% in FY27, FY28 and FY29, respectively. The government is now considering enhancing this to well beyond 5% and with a much more stringent timeline.

This underscores a policy shift towards scaling domestic CBG output, as India prioritizes

essential gas use and looks to ease pressure on liquefied natural gas (LNG) imports.

Natural gas is processed to produce piped natural gas (PNG) and compressed natural gas (CNG) as fuels for cooking and mobility, respectively.

Government is pushing for a higher adoption of piped or city gas by domestic as well as industrial users due to the acute shortage of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), the more commonly used cooking fuel.

The government's focus on compressed biogas is gaining momentum amid the energy supply crunch due to the West Asia war, with India depending on the region for 40% of its natural gas imports. The government has ordered emergency gas supply diversion measures by prioritizing essential sectors, including households, hospitals, and fertilizer produc-

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Govt plans to hike compressed biogas blending in city gas

FROM PAGE 1

tion.

"As a revamp of the biogas programme is being worked upon, there is a consideration to increase blending targets beyond 5%. It may be taken up to 20% in a graded manner in order to increase CBG adoption and lower the import dependence for liquefied natural gas (LNG)," said one of the two people mentioned above.

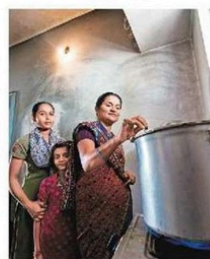
"It would require a significant increase in domestic production of CBG, as it is yet to gain momentum... Steps may be taken to support production," the person said.

Compressed biogas is clean and renewable, produced from organic waste such as agricultural residue, municipal waste, cattle dung, sewage sludge, and food waste. It is purified to produce a methane-rich gas, almost similar in composition and energy content to compressed natural gas (CNG).

City gas distribution, including piped natural gas and compressed natural gas, comprises around 20% of India's overall natural gas consumption. According to the Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB), it may reach 34% by 2040.

Queries emailed to the petroleum and natural gas ministry went unanswered.

Responding to a query on plans to enhance CBG output and adoption, Sujata Sharma, joint secretary in the petroleum and natural gas ministry, said that blending was voluntary till FY25 but since FY26, the mandates kicked in. "During April 2025–February 2026, 82,000 tonnes of CBG was procured by oil marketing companies, and this figure during the corre-



Compressed biogas is clean and renewable. MINT

sponding period of 2024–2025 was 42,700 tonnes."

"Apart from this, around 200 CBG plants have been commissioned and 317 CBG plants are under construction," Sharma added.

The second person cited above said that the blending proposal is part of a larger plan to scale up biogas.

Addressing a conference recently, Neeraj Mittal, secretary at the petroleum ministry, had said the government looks

to scale up its ongoing biogas programme and streamline the initiatives that aim to promote the green fuel.

Dinesh Kumar Sarraf, former chairman of PNGRB and state-

run ONGC, noted the need to incentivize CBG entities for scaling up output. "Achieving an ambitious target may be tough, as CBG production and adoption in the country is yet to gain momentum," Sarraf said. "Government would have to support these entities. Further, an uninterrupted supply of feedstock needs to be ensured, which has been a key obstacle for growth of this space," he said.

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

Compressed biogas is from farm residue, municipal waste, cattle dung, sewage sludge and food waste

AROUND 1.25 LAKH LPG CYLINDERS DELIVERED DAILY

LPG, fuel flow steady: CM Rekha

AIMAN FATIMA

NEW DELHI: Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Wednesday assured residents that supplies of LPG, petrol and diesel in the national capital remain stable and sufficient despite global geopolitical uncertainties. She said the government is closely monitoring the situation to ensure uninterrupted availability and prevent any inconvenience to consumers.

According to the Chief Minister, around 1.25 lakh LPG cylinders are being delivered daily across Delhi, in line with normal demand, while the average delivery time remains between four to five days. "There is no shortage of LPG, petrol or diesel either in Delhi or across the

HIGHLIGHTS

- » She said the govt is closely monitoring the situation to ensure uninterrupted availability and prevent any inconvenience to consumers
- » 'There is no shortage of LPG, petrol or diesel either in Delhi or across the country, and supplies remain adequate'
- » Over 540 raids have been conducted so far,

leading to the seizure of more than 2,027 LPG cylinders and the registration of 44 FIRs



country, and supplies remain adequate," she said, urging people not to panic or rely on rumours. Officials said all gas

agencies and bottling plants have adequate stock, and distribution is being maintained through multiple supply chan-

nels. To streamline access, consumers are being encouraged to book LPG refills through digital platforms such as SMS, IVRS, WhatsApp and online portals. An OTP-based delivery authentication system has also been implemented, with over 90 percent of deliveries now verified to ensure transparency and safety.

The government is also expanding access to fuel for vulnerable sections. Under the Free Trade LPG (FTL) scheme, 5-kg cylinders are being made available to migrant workers through special camps organised across districts in coordination with District Magistrates, Sub-Divisional Magistrates and Food Supply Officers.

Gas agency representatives are present at these

camps to assist beneficiaries.

At the same time, authorities have intensified action against black marketing and hoarding. Over 540 raids have been conducted so far, leading to the seizure of more than 2,027 LPG cylinders and the registration of 44 FIRs. Joint teams of Delhi Police and the Food and Civil Supplies Department are carrying out enforcement drives.

A central control room has also been set up at Vikas Bhawan to address consumer grievances promptly. The Chief Minister reiterated her appeal to residents to avoid panic buying and unnecessary stockpiling, and to depend only on official sources for accurate information.

Govt enhances C3, C4 allocation for pharma, packaging chemical sectors to 1,000 tonnes/day

Rishi Ranjan Kala
New Delhi

The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG) said on Wednesday that it will now make available 1,000 tonnes per day (TPD) of C3 (propane) and C4 (butanes/butenes) streams for critical sectors such as pharma, packaging and polymers.

The government introduced this scheme on April 1, under which refining companies, including petrochemical complexes have to make available certain minimum quantities of C3 and C4 streams for critical sectors under the Department of Pharmaceuticals, Department of Food & Public Distribution, and Department of Chemicals & Petrochemicals.

The allocation is based on specific quantity and refinery source as determined by the Centre for High Technology (CHT). On April 8, the government allocated

The allocation of C3 (propane) and C4 (butanes) is based on specific quantity and refinery source as determined by the Centre for High Technology

800 TPD from the C3 and C4 streams to these critical sectors. This allocation has now been raised by 25 per cent to 1,000 TPD.

Sujata Sharma, Joint Secretary in MoPNG, said an inter-ministerial Joint Working Group (JWG) had been set up to ensure availability of petrochemical feedstock supply for the domestic market.

“Based on the requests received from the Department of Pharmaceuticals, Department of Chemicals & Petrochemicals (DCPC), Department for Promotion of Industry and internal trade

(DPIIT), the provision for 1,000 TPD from LPG pool has been made for Pharma and Chemical sector companies. Since April 9, 2026, around 1,800 tonnes of propylene has been sold,” she added.

DOMESTIC SUPPLY

Despite the ongoing geopolitical situation, the government has ensured 100 per cent supply to domestic LPG, domestic PNG and CNG (transport). Besides, the supply of 5-kg FTL cylinder to migrant labour has already been doubled, based on average daily supply on March 2 and 3.

LPG supply continues to be affected by the prevailing geopolitical situation. However, no dry-outs have been reported at LPG distributorships, Sharma said.

Total commercial LPG allocation has been increased to about 70 per cent of pre-crisis levels, including 10 per cent piped natural gas (PNG) reform-linked allocation.

Since March 23, more than 14.6 lakh 5 kg free trade LPG (FTL) cylinders have been sold. Besides, PSU oil marketing companies (OMCs) have organised more than 5,000 awareness camps for 5 kg FTL cylinders since April 3 wherein more than 57,800 units were sold.

A total of 1,34,226 tonnes of commercial LPG, which is equivalent to more than 70.64 lakh 19-kg LPG cylinders, has been sold since March 14. This includes more than 8,000 tonnes of auto LPG. The average auto LPG sale by PSU OMCs in April (till April 14) is around 282 TPD against the average of 177 TPD during February 2026.

Since March, about 4.5 lakh PNG connections have been gasified and another 5 lakh customers have registered for new connections.

As on date, more than 34,200 PNG consumers have surrendered their LPG connections via the MYPNGD.in website.

CM Gupta says LPG supply adequate; over 540 raids conducted, 2,027 cylinders seized

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta has appealed to residents to refrain from spreading rumours and avoid panic booking or stockpiling of LPG cylinders, stating that supplies remain adequate in Delhi and across the country.

According to a statement from the Chief Minister's Office (CMO), over 540 raids have been conducted in connection with alleged hoarding, illegal



Chief Minister Rekha Gupta has urged people not to panic. ANI

storage and other related offences, resulting in the seizure of more than 2,027 cooking gas cylinders and the registration of 44 FIRs.

The Chief Minister said

the government is closely monitoring the supply system to ensure that consumers do not face any inconvenience or shortage.

Central control room

"A central control room has been set up at Vikas Bhawan under the Food and Civil Supplies Department to ensure the swift redressal of consumer grievances. Meeting the needs of domestic LPG users remains a top priority. Under the Free Trade LPG scheme, 5-kg LPG cylin-

ders are being made available to migrant workers at gas agencies against valid identity proof," the CMO statement read. It added, "In addition, special camps and outreach drives are being conducted across all districts in coordination with District Magistrates, Sub-Divisional Magistrates, and Food Supply Officers."

Representatives from gas agencies are present at these camps to assist and ensure access to 5-kg cylinders, the CMO also said.

Why is the Strait of Hormuz critical to global energy flows?

What is a maritime chokepoint? How does international law govern these waters?

Smriti Sudesh

The story so far:

Since late February, the Strait of Hormuz has emerged as the centre of a deepening energy and security crisis. The escalation followed U.S. and Israeli strikes on Iran, after which Tehran tightened restrictions on the narrow waterway. The situation intensified further this week when President Donald Trump ordered a U.S. naval blockade of vessels sailing to or from Iranian ports. As of April, a ceasefire has allowed a limited number of ships to pass through. However, continued threats and the U.S. blockade have kept most tankers away, reducing daily transits from around 130 vessels to just a few on several days.

What is a maritime chokepoint?

A maritime chokepoint is a narrow stretch of sea through which a large share of global trade must pass, with no easy alternative route. These are natural geographic bottlenecks created by

coastlines, islands, or narrow channels that concentrate shipping into tight corridors. Because ships cannot easily reroute, these chokepoints become critical nodes in the global trading system. Today, between 70 and 80% of the world's oil moves by sea, and much of it passes through such chokepoints. Even a single incident can disrupt traffic almost immediately. The consequences can be far-reaching. Energy prices tend to rise sharply, shipping costs increase and supply chains can be disrupted. This can lead to shortages of critical commodities, contributing to inflation and slowing economic growth.

Why is the Strait of Hormuz critical?

The Strait of Hormuz is widely regarded as the world's most important maritime chokepoint. It connects the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman and the Indian Ocean and is a primary export route for oil producers in the region. At its narrowest, the strait is just 21 nautical miles (38 km) wide. Under normal circumstances, about

21 million barrels of oil – roughly one-fifth of global consumption – pass through it each day. In addition to crude oil, large volumes of liquefied natural gas from Qatar and the UAE also move through this route. Nearly 80% of these energy flows go to Asia, making countries such as India, China, Japan, and South Korea dependent on the route.

What are the other key global chokepoints?

Beyond Hormuz, the global trading system relies on a small set of equally critical maritime chokepoints. These include the Strait of Malacca, the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, the Suez Canal, and the Panama Canal.

The Strait of Malacca runs between the Malay Peninsula and the Indonesian island of Sumatra. It forms the shortest sea route between the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea, making it a key route for trade between West Asia, Africa, and East Asia.

The Bab el-Mandeb Strait sits between the Arabian Peninsula and the Horn of

Africa. It acts as the southern gateway into the Red Sea, through which ships must pass before reaching the Suez Canal and the Mediterranean. This makes it a crucial link in the trade route between Asia and Europe.

The Suez Canal is an artificial waterway that cuts across Egypt, connecting the Red Sea to the Mediterranean. It allows ships to avoid the long journey around Africa.

Further west, the Panama Canal cuts across the narrow Isthmus of Panama, linking the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. This makes it a vital route for trade between Asia, the Americas, and Europe, eliminating the need to sail around South America.

How does international law apply to these waterways?

The movement of ships through international chokepoints is governed primarily by the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. Under its provisions, straits used for international navigation are subject to the principle of “transit passage”, which allows ships and aircraft of all nations to pass continuously and without obstruction. However, countries along the strait can regulate shipping for safety and environmental reasons, but they cannot stop ships from passing through or impose selective restrictions. This right of passage is broadly recognised under international law, though in practice, enforcement depends on naval strength and coordination between countries.

THE GIST

▼
The Strait of Hormuz is a narrow stretch through which about one-fifth of global oil and large volumes of LNG pass daily, making it central to global energy flows and trade.

▼
Blockades or threats can sharply reduce shipping, push up energy prices, disrupt supply chains.

Aiding piped gas push

Stainless steel pipes are safe and viable for PNG

Amir Ullah Khan
Yajna Prakash

As the US-Israel-Iran hostilities entered their second month and Iran's retaliatory strikes effectively choked the Strait of Hormuz, the ripple effects began to surface across global energy supply chains — testing the resilience of countries heavily dependent on imported fuels.

India was among the first to feel the strain. LPG cylinders began disappearing from shelves, depots, and doorsteps, disrupting everyday life.

The government responded by issuing the Natural Gas and Petroleum Products Distribution Order 2026, by directing the oil refineries and gas processing plants to increase LPG production by 25 per cent and introduced a 25-day inter-booking period to curb hoarding. It has also put on hold commercial supply of natural gas to hotels, restaurants, and other industries, while leaving out hospitals and educational institutions.

The government also issued an order stating that LPG supply may be discontinued within three months for households that have access to PNG but fail to switch, while acknowledging that over 6,000 PNG consumers had voluntarily surrendered their LPG connections, helping redirect supply to remote households without pipeline connectivity.

However, things have improved recently, with domestic refinery production ramped up by 40 per cent, bringing daily LPG output to 50 TMT — more than 60 per cent of India's total daily requirement of approximately 80 TMT. The shift to PNG from LPG is understandable. Not only is there greater domestic production of PNG than LPG, but it is also much easier to transport through pipelines rather than through trucks and ships as is the case with LPG.

A POWERFUL ACCELERATOR

The crisis has functioned as a powerful accelerant, with more than 2.9 lakh PNG connections — covering both domestic and commercial users — have been provided across the country in March alone. Yet, as of March 2026, India has only around 1.6 crore domestic PNG connections, with the government aiming to reach 5 crore PNG connections by 2030.

However, one major impediment behind PNG's slow take-off among many top malls,



WAR IMPACT. LPG shortage
SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

hotels and luxury housing, despite lower costs and less vulnerability in such crises are issues of safety and aesthetics. Yellow-coloured galvanised iron pipes sticking out of the buildings are not just an eyesore for the building's facade, but also a safety risk — gas leakage — given the high number of joints in these pipes and exposed to such extreme weather conditions.

There is, however, a faster, smarter alternative to rigid GI piping — Corrugated Stainless-Steel Tubing, or CSST — whose flexibility, light weight, and ease of installation could do what years of policy persuasion has failed to: make PNG connections genuinely quick, affordable, and accessible enough to drive real behavioural change at scale.

A battle-hardened pipe that flexes with ground shifts, resists hydrogen embrittlement, and seals joints tighter than GI ever could, and can be routed through walls, adds to the overall safety.

Moreover, since it installs easily without threading or welding at every turn and bends, it delivers significant savings on time and labour cost during its installation. Its flexibility allows workers to pull it like an electrical wire thereby routing it through walls, attics, crawl spaces, and even retrofitted into existing homes more easily without any safety issues.

However, like every crisis, this too presents an opportunity, a great opportunity for luxury apartment builders, restaurants, malls, hospitals, and industrial kitchens to shift to a PNG infrastructure. And, for the corrugated stainless steel tubing (CSST) industry, with its flexible, lightweight architecture, engineered for rapid, scalable deployment in complex-built environments, it could prove to be a defining moment.

Khan is Economist, and Member, Telangana Public Service Commission; Prakash is Partner at Acclime India

India doubles imports of Russian oil to €5.8 billion

SAURAV ANAND
New Delhi, April 15

INDIA'S IMPORTS OF Russian crude oil doubled in March 2026, pushing total purchases to €5.8 billion, even as Moscow's export revenues surged 52% month-on-month to €713 million per day — the highest in two years — amid rising prices and sanctions-driven shifts in trade flows.

According to Finland-based Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air, crude oil dominated India's imports at €5.3 billion, accounting for 91% of total purchases.

Coal imports stood at €337 million, while oil products were valued at €178.5 million, indicating continued diversification across fuels.

In February, India was the third-largest importer, purchasing Russian hydrocarbons worth €1.8 billion. Crude oil constituted the largest share at 81% (€1.4 billion), followed by coal (€223 million) and oil products (€121 million).

"India's imports of Russian crude oil doubled month-on-month... state-owned refineries' imports... saw a massive 148% increase," the report said, highlighting a sharp rise

SHARP RISE



Source: Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA)

in spot purchases. The state-owned Mangalore and Visakhapatnam refineries had stopped Russian imports at the end of November 2025, but purchases resumed in March 2026. "Private refineries, meanwhile, registered a more modest 66% month-on-month increase, but remained lower than the same time last year," it said.

The increase came despite a 4% decline in India's overall crude imports in March, signalling a shift towards Russian barrels rather than higher demand. State-run refiners,

including New Mangalore and Visakhapatnam, resumed Russian purchases after halting imports in November 2025.

Russia's revenue surge was driven by both price and volume dynamics. Crude export earnings rose 94% month-on-month to €431 million per day, led by a 115% increase in seaborne crude revenue to €372 million per day. Volumes rose 29%, while prices surged sharply.

Urals crude averaged \$94.5 per barrel in March, up 67% month-on-month and more than double the EU-UK price cap of \$44.1 per barrel. The dis-

count to Brent narrowed to \$6.4 per barrel, halving from previous levels.

The price rally also boosted Russia's fiscal revenues. Early estimates indicate mineral extraction tax collections rose 114% month-on-month to €7.4 billion, reflecting the direct impact of higher crude prices.

India and China together accounted for nearly 90% of Russia's crude exports in the first quarter of 2026. China remained the largest buyer with a 51% share, while India accounted for 38%.

India eyes more LNG, LPG imports from US; both sides explore SMR ties

ARCHIS MOHAN
New Delhi, 15 April

United States (US) President Donald Trump's Tuesday evening phone call to Prime Minister Narendra Modi came at a time when Washington and New Delhi are working to reset ties strained by the White House's tariff policies.

Their efforts will involve an Indian trade delegation visiting the US next week. Also, India would be increasing its imports of liquefied natural gas (LNG) and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) from the US, and the two sides are exploring an agreement on small modular reactors (SMRs).

Modi and Trump spoke for 40 minutes on Tuesday, with American Ambassador to India Sergio Gora later indicating that the two sides are poised to conclude several "big-ticket" deals soon, including in the energy sector. He added that these deals are expected to

materialise between India and the US in the coming days and weeks.

According to sources, India is keen to increase its imports of LNG and LPG from the US as part of its process to diversify import basket of energy. This comes after it faced problems because of the conflict in West Asia and the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz.

India's Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri visited Washington last week, meeting US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and other officials to discuss cooperation in defence, nuclear energy, coal gasification and liquefied petroleum gas exports. The two sides are looking at nuclear energy cooperation in the context of the Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India, legislation. But, any agreement on this will need approval from the US Congress.

Rubio is expected to visit India next month, and there is also forward move-



PM NARENDRA MODI AND US PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP DISCUSSED 'SOME BIG-TICKET DEALS, INCLUDING ON ENERGY', EXPECTED TO MATERIALISE SOON

ment on a Quad grouping meeting. Apart from India and the US, Australia and Japan are members of the Quad. On Tuesday, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar spoke to Australian foreign minister Penny Wong. On Wednesday,

Jaishankar participated in a meeting convened by Japan to discuss supply chain disruptions in the energy markets, where he underlined India's commitment to safe and unimpeded transit passage for maritime shipping. "Attacks

on merchant shipping are completely unacceptable. Global growth demands that energy markets are not constricted. As a major energy consumer, India will work with like-minded partners to develop supply chain resilience," Jaishankar said.

In his social media post in response to Modi's message of his conversation with Trump, Gora wrote: "A very positive and productive call, stay tuned." This echoed the phrase he used after the February 2 call that preceded the announcement of a trade agreement.

New Delhi is of the view that the phone call from the White House was an attempt to repair strained ties with India. It was because of the White House's imposition of high tariffs on Indian goods, signs of the Trump administration's growing engagement with Pakistan's military leadership and Washington's failure to achieve its stated objectives in the West Asia war.

Indian team to visit US next week for trade pact talks

An Indian team, led by chief negotiator, will visit the United States to begin three-day talks from April 20 on the proposed trade pact, Commerce secretary Rajesh Agrawal said on Wednesday.

"The negotiating teams will be meeting in person after a gap of about three to four months. They have been engaging virtually in the meantime."

He added, "We are looking at finalising the legal agreement, which is a

logical follow-up of the joint statement released on February 7. There is a need for further discussions and follow-up engagement to take this forward." The US has initiated investigations involving several countries, he said.

"Both sides will sit together and discuss how these issues need to be structured and addressed. India and the US will work together to finalise timelines and next steps as part of the ongoing engagement." **BS REPORTER**

City Gas Cos Redraw Playbook, Push Domestic PNG Segment

LPG shortage lifts PNG connections to record 12,000/day; firms tap spot market for natgas

Kalpna Pathak

Mumbai: City gas distribution (CGD) companies are redrawing their plans with the Iran war squeezing supplies, leading them to pivot towards domestic gas connections and a faster pipeline rollout.

In the past month, tight LPG supply pushed piped natural gas (PNG) connections to a record 12,000 per day, a fourfold surge from 3,000 earlier, forcing CGD companies to step up hiring of skilled labourers.

Companies are also scouring the spot market extensively to secure short-term natural gas supply for addressing what they are terming as a “hand-to-mouth” existence.

“If we have to proliferate in the domestic PNG section, we have to segment, build our pipelines, create our grid and make investments around the network, the meters, the material which is required,” said Rahul Tandon, business head (Gas) at Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL). “Apart from that, a lot of capex will be spent on actually deploying that material which we have bought.”

Tandon said BPCL will invest around ₹1,700 crore this fiscal year to expand its gas business.

The company is also looking at how it can increase PNG consumption per connection.

“If we can build an ecosystem where we are able to migrate a household, not just to PNG for cooking, but PNG for geysers also, at the same cost, with a marginal increase in pipeline, you are generating a consumption which gets you a better return,” said Tandon.

Traditionally the PNG segment has generated comparatively lower unit economics, making it an unattractive venture for CGD companies.

“CGD companies lay long pipelines to reach a small number of homes which pushes up infrastructure and supply costs per household,” said a senior industry official requesting anonymity. “But the revenue is not handsome. Instead, if we supply the same gas to the industrial segment, our earnings multiply. Households not only use less gas but in many cases there are fewer paying customers.”

Also, for households, the cost of securing a PNG connection has been a deterrent for which they have to pay more than ₹5,500. However, LPG cylinders continue to be subsidised.

Despite these challenges, there is a push from the government to expand the PNG network, according to companies. The Iran war has

also accelerated government support with faster approvals, reduced right-of-use costs, and coordinated

efforts between central and state authorities significantly improved execution timelines.

For Delhi-based Indraprastha Gas Ltd (IGL), total PNG connections could rise to 500,000 from 370,000.

“We have increased our manpower on the ground,” said a senior IGL official.

“The contractors have been asked to double the numbers. Thankfully, the country started the PNG drive last year which helped us be prepared.”

PNG is mainly methane with 50% gas supply coming from domestic fields like the Krishna-Godavari basin, Assam, and Gujarat, while the rest is imported liquefied natural gas (LNG), which is regasified and used.

Gas prices, which recently trended at \$18–18.5 per unit, fell sharply after a temporary ceasefire announcement,

only to rise again amid fresh tensions—making long-term contracting risky. At the same time, gas supply from the administered gas, high-pressure high-temperature (HPHT) gas, and regasified LNG (RLNG) are helping companies manage costs and ensure availability.

The PNG segment has generated comparatively lower unit economics, making it an unattractive venture for CGD firms



The Real Supply Chain Crisis

Whether it's oil & gas or crucial inputs like gallium or cobalt, import restrictions/high prices rarely produce a complete breakdown. Because markets find alternatives. What's scary is knowledge-based chokepoints. There's no easy solution. That's where GOI should focus

Pranay Kotasthane



Every few months, a new article sounds an alarm that our adversaries control some material we had never heard of before. Pattern is predictable. First comes the jaw-dropping statistic: Country X produces Y% of the world's supply of Material Z. Then the breathless conclusion: our supply chains are vulnerable, we must act. Govts oblige, with yet another industrial policy measure. By the time it is operationalised, spotlight moves to the next, obscure chokepoint. This whack-a-mole supply chain geopolitics is a weekly routine.

Problem is not that these dependencies are fictional. Some are real. But the analytical lens is permanently set to one focal length. Awash in studies documenting how dependencies were weaponised, we almost never see systematic studies of cases where weaponisation was attempted, and failed.

In scientific research, this is known as the 'negative result' – an expected effect did not materialise. Negative results are chronically underpublished, because journals prefer dramatic findings. Yet, these are indispensable for correcting false beliefs, or distorted policy.

Consider how China imposed licensing requirements on gallium and germanium exports in Aug 2023, escalating to a complete ban on US sales in Dec 2024. Gallium is essential for semiconductors and optoelectronic devices, with China accounting for roughly 99% of global low-purity production. If any case should vindicate the weaponisation thesis, this was it.

And yet, Amit Kumar and I found that while China's controls induced significant price volatility (high-purity gallium prices rose over 200%), American consumption remained largely unaffected. China's share of US gallium metal imports fell from 55% to 18%. Canada, Japan, and Germany stepped in as suppliers. Domestic recycling facilities got revived, backed by \$36mn in federal funding. Alternative materials began displacing gallium in non-defence applications.

For germanium, the picture was even more striking. Belgium and Canada already supplied over 93% of US germanium dioxide imports, making China's restrictions largely symbolic.

Beijing succeeded in raising costs, but it failed to create strategic leverage. And the reason it failed

reveals something underappreciated: international cooperation between firms and govts proved far more potent than any single country's industrial policy.

It was not American self-sufficiency that defeated China's gallium controls. It was a network that collectively absorbed the shock – Canadian processors, Japanese suppliers, German refiners, Australian recyclers. Supply chain resilience, it turns out, is a multilateral achievement, not a unilateral one.

This is not an anomaly. It is the historical norm for resource weaponisation. Cobalt was the gallium of the 1970s. One tonne went into every F-16 jet engine. US

shipping insurance. This, too, worked imperfectly. Because enforcement was leaky, and Russia redirected exports to Asia. Neither side's weaponisation delivered the decisive blow it sought.

The pattern is consistent. Commodities and intermediate goods are far more elastic than the alarmist narrative assumes. When prices spike, four forces kick in simultaneously: alternative sources become viable, substitutes are commercialised, efficiency gains reduce demand, and international partners step in to rebalance supply.

China's rare earth export controls have already pushed international prices to three times domestic Chinese levels. Under such conditions, Chinese companies themselves will find ways to circumvent restrictions – through shell companies, third-country routing, and the age-old conversion of 'black' commodities into 'white' ones.

But there is a category where weaponisation does work: knowledge-rich chokepoints. EDA software, EUV lithography, and advanced semiconductor manufacturing require decades of cumulative capability-building. You cannot spin up an alternative ASML in three years, the way you can produce an existing alternative, or enlist allied suppliers.

The distinction between commodity chokepoints and knowledge chokepoints, is the single most important analytical framework for supply chain policy.

Govts should focus their limited fiscal resources on knowledge-intensive chokepoints, where market forces alone are insufficient. For commodities, the more effective approach is international coordination: offtake guarantees, strategic stockpile-sharing arrangements, joint research funding for substitutes, and trade agreements that keep alternative supply routes open. The gallium-germanium case confirms that allied firms and govts, working in concert, redirect supply chains faster than any single country's PLI scheme.

What we need, then, is a research agenda that documents negative results, as rigorously as it documents successful weaponisation. Where did price signals redirect supply chains faster than govt intervention? Where did substitutes emerge organically? Such studies will not generate breathless headlines. But they will help govts distinguish between dependencies that genuinely need addressing, and those that markets and international cooperation are already addressing.

The writer is deputy director, Takshashila Institution



Image: AI

imported almost all of it from Zaire. Then, rebels occupied mining regions in Zaire, cutting supply and spiking prices. And yet, there was no repeat of the 1973 oil crisis. High prices made mining in Canada, Brazil, and Australia viable. Molybdenum began displacing cobalt in alloys. Efficiency improvements reduced per-unit demand. Military stockpiles provided insurance. Congo still accounts for over 70% of global supply, but cobalt itself ceased to be an indispensable material.

The same script played out with Russia's energy gambit against Europe. Putin's hope of using gas as a weapon failed. European countries slashed Russian oil imports from 26% to 3.2% within a year. Gas imports fell from 38% to 17%. Germany built a long-stalled LNG terminal at record speed. Within months, it was Europe that went on the offensive, by weaponising

Oil import bill may rise \$70bn annually

PRABHUDAS LILLADHER REPORT

Crude oil prices have risen sharply due to the ongoing West Asia conflict and are not expected to return to the earlier level of \$65 per barrel in the near term, according to a report by brokerage firm Prabhudas Lilladher. The report noted that the increase in prices is likely to persist, keeping India's import bill elevated for the coming months.

"We believe crude prices are unlikely to revert to pre-

conflict levels of \$65 per barrel," the report said on Wednesday.

India buys around 4.3 million barrels of crude every day, adding up to about \$180 billion a year. With prices now much higher, Prabhudas Lilladher estimates India's oil import bill could jump by more than \$70 billion a year. "The current spike in crude prices is likely to inflate India's import bill by more than \$70



billion per annum," the report said.

About 20% of the world's crude oil moves through the Strait of Hormuz. "The shipping route from the Strait of Hormuz is critical for maintaining oil prices within a comfortable range and this remains a big uncertainty as of now," the report noted on

Wednesday. It added that further escalation of hostilities and any impact on Bab Al-Mandeb can further squeeze oil supplies and push prices up.

The brokerage noted that the war has not just hit tankers and routes; several global natural gas and oil refineries have been destroyed. "Several global natural gas and oil refineries have been destroyed and would take quite a bit of time to come back to stream or normalise operation," the report said. **-ANI**

India, US discuss boosting partnership in energy sector to deepen economic ties

Informist

NEW DELHI

Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas Hardeep Singh Puri and US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor met here Wednesday to discuss strengthening of the energy sector partnership. The discussion also focused on seeking new growth opportunities

for the two countries. "Expanding access to reliable American energy will further deepen our economic ties and support long-term energy security and diversity for both nations," Gor said in a post on social media platform X.

In a separate social media post, Puri said, "We held productive discussions on the bilateral energy cooperation



between our countries and discussed ways to further strengthen our comprehensive energy relationship."

Earlier in the day, Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal had said a delegation of Indian officials will visit the US on Apr. 20-22 for bilateral trade talks where India aims to finalise the contours of the trade deal. This is the first meeting between India and the US since they released a joint statement on the interim trade deal in February.

India laps up most of Venezuelan, Russian crude oil

Debayan Tewari
M. Kalyanaraman
CHENNAI

Amid a global crude oil crisis triggered by the Iran war and the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, India is likely to have lapped up most of the increased crude oil shipments from Venezuela and Russia.

As per BIMCO, one of the world's largest shipping associations, global crude shipments fell 16% after the war began vis a vis first 9 weeks of the year.

"This represents a re-



The war roiled energy supplies.

duction of 7.6 million barrels per day (mbpd) to 38.4 mbpd," BIMCO said.

With global shipments down, Venezuela increased shipments of

crude oil by 0.4 million barrels per day, as did Russia from the Black Sea by 0.8 mbpd.

"Combined, this accounts for 85% of increased shipments from countries outside of the Persian Gulf. India has been the main destination for the increased shipments," BIMCO said.

The Hindu has been tracking open-source data for the past two weeks and found at least 17 tankers originating in Russia crossed the Suez Canal and bound for ports in India

carrying Russian crude. Some have reached India.

BIMCO said before the Iran war, the U.S. Energy Information Administration estimated global 2026 oil production at 79.9 mbpd. "The 7.6 mbpd reduction in seaborne shipments thereby means 9.5% of the previously expected crude oil production is currently not reaching markets. The reduction in shipments has naturally been driven by effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz."

"The United Arab Emirates managed to increase

loadings from ports east of the Strait of Hormuz by 0.7 mbpd while Saudi Arabia increased shipments from Yanbu in the Red Sea by 3.0 mbpd," it said, adding, shipments from the region fell 9 mbpd compared with earlier this year.

Even if the Strait of Hormuz is fully reopened, shortages may remain. "[I]t may take a long time for crude oil and other energy shipments to return to previous volumes," BIMCO's chief shipping analyst Niels Rasmussen was quoted as saying.



भारतीय तेल वाहक पोत जग विक्रम बुधवार को 20 हजार मीट्रिक टन एलपीजी लेकर गुजरात के कांडला बंदरगाह पर पहुंच गया। • प्रेस

एलपीजी लेकर गुजरात पहुंचा पोत

कांडला। भारतीय ध्वज लगे एलपीजी पोत जग विक्रम 20,400 मीट्रिक टन एलपीजी लेकर गुजरात के कांडला बंदरगाह पहुंच गया। अधिकारियों ने बुधवार को बताया कि पोत ने 11 अप्रैल को होर्मुज पार किया था। मंगलवार देर रात पोत को बंदरगाह के ऑयल जेट्टी नंबर एक पर लगाया गया। कार्गो उतारने की प्रक्रिया जल्द शुरू होगी और इसकी आपूर्ति देशभर में की जाएगी। पोत ऐसे समय भारत पहुंचा है जब क्षेत्र में समुद्री ऊर्जा आपूर्ति पर निगरानी है।



रुस से भारत की ओर बढ़ रहा एलएनजी टैंकर

मॉस्को। रुस के बाल्टिक सागर स्थित पोर्टोवाया प्लांट से अमेरिकी प्रतिबंधों के तहत आने वाला 1,38,200 घन मीटर क्षमता का टैंकर कुनपेंग गुजरात के दहेज एलएनजी आयात टर्मिनल की ओर बढ़ रहा है। बुधवार को एलएसईजी के शिपिंग डाटा से यह जानकारी सामने आई है। अगर भारत यह कार्गो अपने गंतव्य तक पहुंचता है तो यह भारत के लिए पाबंदी के बाद पहली आपूर्ति होगी।

'कच्चे तेल, पेट्रोल-डीजल का पर्याप्त भंडार' सरकार ने कहा, घरेलू LPG की डिमांड घटी, जंग से पहले के स्तर पर

■ NBT रिपोर्ट, नई दिल्ली

सरकार ने बुधवार को कहा कि देश में कच्चे तेल और पेट्रोल-डीजल का पर्याप्त भंडार बना हुआ है। पश्चिम एशिया में युद्ध के चलते LPG आयात पर असर पड़ा है, लेकिन घरेलू LPG सिलिंडर की सप्लाई सामान्य तरीके से की जा रही है। किसी भी डिस्ट्रिब्यूटरशिप पर सिलिंडर की तंगी नहीं है। इस बीच, 11 अप्रैल को होर्मुज के इस पार आने वाला जहाज जग विक्रम बुधवार को गुजरात के कांडला बंदरगाह पर पहुंच गया। इस पर 20400 टन LPG है।

तेल एवं गैस मंत्रालय के अधिकारियों ने बताया कि घरेलू सिलिंडर की रोजाना की बुकिंग्स 13 मार्च को बढ़कर अधिकतम 89 लाख तक गई थीं, लेकिन 14 अप्रैल को यह 43 लाख पर रही। मंत्रालय में संयुक्त सचिव सुजाता शर्मा ने कहा कि अब यह रोजाना औसतन 55 लाख के स्तर पर आ गई है, जैसा कि युद्ध के पहले का हाल था।

15 भारतीय
जहाज अभी होर्मुज
स्ट्रेट के उस पार

89 लाख तक गई थी,
घरेलू सिलिंडर की रोजाना
की बुकिंग्स 13 मार्च को

43 लाख पर रही
घरेलू सिलिंडर की
बुकिंग 14 अप्रैल को



अमेरिकी छूट खत्म तो ईरानी तेल मिलेगा?

ईरानी तेल खरीदने के बारे में अमेरिकी छूट की अवधि खत्म होने से पड़ सकने वाले असर के बारे में पूछे जाने पर अधिकारियों ने कहा कि कच्चे तेल के लिए किसी एक देश या इलाके पर निर्भर नहीं है। देश हित,

अंतरराष्ट्रीय स्थिति और बाजार को देखते हुए कई देशों से खरीद होती है। उन्होंने कहा कि होर्मुज स्ट्रेट के उस पार अभी 15 भारतीय जहाज हैं, जिन्हें लाने के प्रयास हो रहे हैं। अब तक 9 जहाज आ चुके हैं।

देश में LPG का उत्पादन भी नॉर्मल

अधिकारियों ने बताया कि रिफाइनरीज में LPG उत्पादन 45-46 हजार टन के युद्ध के पहले के स्तर पर पहुंच चुका है। कमर्शियल LPG सिलिंडर की डिमांड भी साढ़े 4-5 लाख के औसत पर आ गई है। 23 मार्च से अब तक माइग्रेट वर्कर्स के लिए 5 किलोग्राम के 14.5 लाख सिलिंडर बेचे जा चुके हैं। 14 अप्रैल को ऐसे 20 हजार सिलिंडर बेचे गए। वहीं, 1 मार्च से 14 अप्रैल तक लगभग साढ़े 4 लाख PNG कनेक्शंस को गैस सप्लाई शुरू की गई है। वहीं, उर्वरक कारखानों को गैस आवंटन उनके 6 महीने की औसत खपत के 95% पर किया जा चुका है।

हालात सामान्य • रसोई गैस की रोजाना मांग के मुकाबले देश में एलपीजी की उपलब्धता अब 12% अधिक बुकिंग 43 लाख सिलेंडर, आपूर्ति 48 लाख: सरकार

भास्कर न्यूज़ | नई दिल्ली

पश्चिम एशिया संकट के बीच देश में एलपीजी और खाद की उपलब्धता को लेकर स्थिति अब काफी हद तक सामान्य हो गई है। एक अप्रैल को एलपीजी के 72 लाख सिलेंडर की मांग के मुकाबले आपूर्ति 40.78 लाख की ही थी। 14 अप्रैल तक स्थिति पलट गई। 43.09 लाख मांग की तुलना में आपूर्ति 47.61 लाख सिलेंडर (करीब 12% ज्यादा) हुई।

रेल, सूचना प्रसारण और इलेक्ट्रॉनिक्स एवं आईटी मंत्री अश्विनी वैष्णव ने कहा कि घरेलू

एलपीजी की सप्लाई में अब कोई बाधा नहीं है। पैनिक बुकिंग भी 13 मार्च के 89 लाख से घटकर 14 अप्रैल को 43 लाख रह गई। इस बीच ऑनलाइन बुकिंग भी 84% से बढ़कर 98% हो गई है। छोटे एलपीजी सिलेंडर की रीफिलिंग और कमर्शियल में अब भी थोड़ी परेशानी है, लेकिन तेजी से स्थिति सुधारी जा रही है। 23 मार्च के बाद से 14.5 लाख 5 किलो वाले सिलेंडर बिके हैं। कमर्शियल एलपीजी सिलेंडर की मांग



रोजाना 4.5-5 लाख सिलेंडर की बनी हुई है। 20 राज्यों में कमर्शियल एलपीजी की सप्लाई बहाल हो गई है। तेजी से लोग पीएनजी (पाइपड नेचुरल गैस) पर शिफ्ट हो रहे हैं। एक मार्च से अब तक 4.5 लाख नए कनेक्शन दिए जा चुके हैं।

राज्यों ने जमाखोरी पर सख्ती बढ़ाई; 1.28 लाख छापे पड़े राज्य सरकारों ने जमाखोरी पर सख्ती बढ़ाई है। देश में कुल 1.28 लाख छापे पड़े हैं। इनमें 59 हजार सिलेंडर जब्त हुए। 1,000 से ज्यादा एफआईआर व 238 गिरफ्तारियां हुईं।

खरीफ सीजन से पहले खाद का पर्याप्त स्टॉक: वैष्णव

वैष्णव ने यह भी बताया कि खरीफ फसलों का सीजन शुरू होने से पहले खाद का बफर स्टॉक मजबूत है। देश में कुल 184 लाख टन का भंडार है। जिसमें यूरिया 65.97 लाख टन, डीएपी 22.13 लाख टन (लगभग दोगुना) और एनपीके का स्टॉक रिकॉर्ड 57.4 लाख टन है। सरकार का कहना है कि अप्रैल में मांग कम रहती है, लेकिन जून से खरीफ सीजन में मांग बढ़ेगी, जिसे पूरी करने की पूरी तैयारी है।