



GAIL to set up 600 MW solar project:



GAIL (India) Limited has signed an agreement with TUSCO Limited to set up a 600 MW solar power project at Jhansi in Uttar Pradesh. The deal underscores GAIL's push towards low-carbon and sustainable energy

solutions. Officials from GAIL and THDC were present at the signing. The project will strengthen GAIL's renewable energy portfolio while expanding its business footprint in Uttar Pradesh and supporting India's clean energy transition goals.

Rebound likely

CRUDE CHECK. However, it can be temporary

Akhil Nallamuthu

bl. research bureau

Crude oil prices fell sharply last week, particularly on Friday on the news that the Strait of Hormuz will be opened. However, uncertainties still prevail.

Nevertheless, Brent crude oil futures on the Intercontinental Exchange (ICE) (\$90.40/barrel) and crude oil futures in the domestic market (₹7,666/barrel) were down 5.1 per cent and 9.8 per cent respectively. Here is our analysis:

BRENT FUTURES (\$90.40)

Brent crude oil futures, which was largely oscillating in the range of \$94-100 in the recent sessions, breached the support at \$94 on Friday. It marked a low of \$86.09 before ending the session at \$90.40.

Despite the sell-off, the contract managed to stay above the 50-day moving average, now at \$89.20. So, from the current level, there might be a minor rally, possibly to the \$96-100 range.

In case the downtrend resumes, Brent futures can drop to \$85 or even to \$80.

But if \$100 is breached, the



price can rise to \$105 or \$110.

MCX-CRUDE OIL (₹7,666)

Crude oil futures (May) was range-bound between ₹8,250 and ₹8,750. But on Friday, the contract broke below the ₹8,250-₹8,000 support band.

From the current level, there is a support ahead at ₹7,500, where the 50-day moving average coincides. On the back of this, there could be a rally to ₹8,250-₹8,750 range.

If the contract starts falling again, crude oil futures can drop to ₹6,500 or to ₹6,000. But in case the price surpasses the hurdle at ₹8,750, the upswing can extend to ₹9,500 or ₹10,000.

Trade strategy: Traders can buy crude oil futures now at ₹7,666. Target and stop-loss can be ₹9,500 and ₹7,150 respectively. But, note that volatility can remain high, and so, risk-averse traders can stay out.

Govt approves maritime insurance pool

RAJESH KUMAR

■ New Delhi

As the conflict in West Asia disrupts crude and gas supply chains—partly due to reduced vessel movement linked to insurance constraints—the Union Cabinet, on Saturday, approved creation of the Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool (BMI pool) with a sovereign guarantee of ₹12,980 crore to facilitate continuous maritime insurance coverage.

The decision comes against the backdrop of increasing uncertainty in global shipping insurance, with premiums surging and availability becoming inconsistent due to geopolitical tensions. Recently, conflict in West Asia has disrupted cargo movements in and around the

Clubs (IGP&I) and Lloyd's of London, for third-party liability coverage.

Ships transporting goods such as oil, gas, food, and other commodities require insurance to protect against risks including accidents, piracy, war, oil spills, and cargo damage.

Top sources said this reliance exposes India's shipping trade to vulnerabilities, especially in scenarios where coverage may be withdrawn due to sanctions and political developments.

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Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool



Strait of Hormuz, with many shipowners halting operations. Insurance companies have also become cautious, with some unwilling to provide coverage due to heightened war-related risks.

Traditionally, Indian ships rely heavily on international insurers, particularly the International Group of Protection and Indemnity



Govt approves maritime insurance pool

The scheme aims to address rising insurance premiums and tighter approvals for shipping cover, which are currently being granted on a case-by-case basis.

This will also ensure that Indian trade continues to have access to affordable insurance for vessels carrying cargo from any international origin to Indian ports and vice versa, even when transiting through volatile maritime corridors. "With increased global volatility and geopolitical instability, maritime trade has been impacted with increased risk of losses for cargo and vessels, resulting in increased insurance costs and uncertainty in the continuous availability of insurance.

Further, Indian vessels depend heavily on the International Group of Protection and Indemnity (IGP&I) Club for P&I insurance covering third-party liabilities such as oil pollution liability, Wreck removal, Cargo damage, Crew injury and repatriation, Collision liabilities, and so on. Accordingly, there was a need for a domestic maritime risk coverage pool to maintain sovereignty and continuity of trade in the face of withdrawal of coverage due to sanctions or due to geopolitical tensions," the Government said in a statement.

The pool will cover major maritime risks, including hull and machinery, cargo, protection and indemnity (P&I), and war risks. The policies will be issued by pool members, leveraging the Pool's combined underwriting capacity of around ₹950 crore. Coverage will apply to India-flagged vessels, India-controlled ships, and vessels with India as the origin or destination. The proposed framework will run for 10 years, with provision for extension up to 15 years.



A decompressor unit installed at Prestige High Fields, as part of the piped natural gas (PNG) infrastructure that regulates gas pressure for safe distribution at the gated community in Hyderabad, a resident operating a PNG meter at Malaysian Township in Hyderabad. *scowari / ianxun*

Once a piped dream, now a necessity

Disruptions triggered by the West Asia war have upended LPG supply chains, pushing households, hotels and industries, alike, to turn to piped natural gas (PNG). Across Telangana, Gas distribution companies, are speeding up network expansion, though adoption remains largely urban and cluster-driven. While PNG offers uninterrupted supply and more convenience, challenges such as infrastructure costs and last-mile connectivity persist, even as the State positions it as a more reliable, cleaner alternative to conventional cooking fuel, writes **N. Ravi Kumar**

Between back-to-back client calls and site visits, Nihal (name changed) finds himself adding a rather unusual task to his to-do list: tracking down plumbers. Odd as it may sound, but for officials at the Gasugan Gas Ltd (GGL), it has become routine. As Hyderabad witnesses a sharp rise in demand for piped natural gas (PNG) connections, plumbers and allied tradesmen have suddenly become critical to keeping up with installations.

For years, PNG remained in the background, overshadowed by the well-established and reliable liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) network. But that recently changed when the conflict in West Asia disrupted key maritime routes, tightening India's LPG imports. Almost overnight, attention shifted to PNG. As shortages deepened, especially for commercial users, a system once considered niche began drawing interest from households, hotels and industries alike.

"We came across stories of people waiting up to 25 days to book an LPG refill, and some even turning to the black market," says Raintree Park Welfare Association president R. Sai Choudary, adding, "But for the 500 apartments in our residential community with PNG connections, there were no such hassles." Daily routines continued uninterrupted, say vice-president Satyanarayana Mallapudi and former president K.R.K. Prasad.

At least 100 more residents in the 1,776-apartment Malaysian Township in Kakatpally, have signed up for PNG connections, Choudary shares. While BGL had laid the pipeline network across the complex, the remaining work involves extending the line to individual kitchens and activating connections after residents pay a refundable security deposit of ₹7,000 each.

This local trend reflects a wider shift across Telangana. From Kakatpally to Karimnagar, demand for PNG has risen across the geographical areas allotted to City Gas Distribution (CGD) companies by the Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board. Sensing a big opportunity to reduce reliance on imported LPG, the Centre has also stepped in, directing States directing States to ease permissions for pipeline-laying infrastructure and linking higher commercial LPG allocation to PNG usage.

Defined territories, ambitious targets
Across Telangana, the CGD landscape is divided into nine geographical areas, each allotted to a specific operator. BGL, authorised in October 2009 for Hyderabad, is among the forerunners in the country. Megha Engineering Group has secured five geographical areas while Indrap Oil Corporation, Torrent Gas and Maharashtra Natural Gas have one each. Unlike conventional markets, these entities operate within defined territories, leaving little room for direct competition. All the companies have been set targets in terms of pipeline infrastructure (inch km), domestic PNG connections and compressed natural gas (CNG) stations for automobiles. Their consumer base also includes commercial establishments such as restaurants and canteens, as well as industrial units. At the heart of their operations is the 48-inch, bidirectional East-West Pipeline stretching from Kalinadi in Andhra Pradesh to Bharuch in Gujarat. Operated by Pipeline Infrastructure Ltd, the network spans 1,855 km, including spur and dedicated lines.

In terms of viability, it is the growing number of household connections that stands out. For K.Venka, a dentist residing in Malaysian Township, the transition has been seamless. In the few months since switching to PNG, she says there have been no concerns around usage, access or availability.

While there is a difference between LPG and PNG in terms of their calorific value, it is marginal, explains Mallapudi, who has years of experience in the oil industry. Pricing, too, remains broadly comparable. Unlike LPG, PNG is metered, billed bi-monthly and operates on a post-paid system. BGL officials say options such as pre-paid connections and smart meters are also being explored to streamline usage and billing. A standard domestic LPG cylinder of 14.2 kg currently costs ₹965 in Hyderabad, often with additional informal charges demanded by the delivery staff. PNG, on the other hand, is priced at ₹81 per standard cubic metre or one unit, with industry sources suggesting that roughly 750 grams of LPG is equivalent to one unit of PNG.



The transition does require minor adjustments. Existing LPG stoves need a slight modification to the nozzle to allow for better gas flow, although some newer models are compatible with both fuels, says Prasad.

For users, the advantages are practical and immediate: uninterrupted supply, no hassle for booking refills, and freedom from the logistical hassles associated with cylinder deliveries. Concerns ranging from noise and floor damage to the discomfort of letting delivery personnel into homes, especially for senior citizens, are also eliminated. The absence of cylinders in kitchens adds a layer of safety too.

Urban bias and infrastructure gaps

But the shift is not uniform. PNG adoption shows an urban bias, and even in cities for those residing in apartment complexes. Extending the network to semi-urban and rural areas, or even to colonies with independent houses within cities, remains a challenge. Higher capital expenditure for operators and logistical difficulties of laying pipelines in densely populated areas with narrow roads continue to slow expansion.

Building on the Centre's nudge to all States, the Telangana government issued a Government Order last month to ease the rollout of CGD infrastructure. The move simplifies approvals for laying pipelines, permits round-the-clock work and waives certain charges. This was followed by a coordination meeting with the departments concerned and CGD operators to fast-track execution on the ground.



In the few months since switching to PNG, there have been no concerns around usage, access or availability.

K.VENKA, dentist, Malaysian Township, Kakatpally

The broader gains include lower carbon emissions and a more sustainable energy mix for the State. BGL sources say several large generic drug manufacturers in Hyderabad have begun using PNG alongside LPG. Industrial users such as a major glass manufacturer and the Ramangundam Fertiliser and Chemicals plant are also on the network. For many micro and small enterprises, however, switching remains a challenge due to high investment costs, existing volume-based discounts on LPG and the flexibility that cylinders offer for works such as welding.

In the near term, commercial establishments located close to existing pipelines are well positioned to transition. Nuresh, the manager of Benaguru Bhavan in Gachibowli, says operations remained largely unaffected during the LPG crunch. "We use PNG for cooking and hence, did not face any issue. When prices rose, we slowed down supply of items such as set dotes that take longer to cook. But otherwise it has been smooth. The flame is consistent and we don't have to worry about replenishing LPG cylinder stocks," he points out.

Similar efficiencies are cited by star hotels. Apart from kitchens, PNG is also used for laundry and boilers, with operators pointing to better cost control compared to commercial LPG, where some fuel often goes unutilised. That said, kitchens typically require compatible burners when switching to PNG.

With these advantages, CGD companies are stepping up outreach to both commercial users and households, particularly in high-rise buildings where network extension is more viable. However, scaling up still hinges on high investment in core infrastructure and availability of more tradesmen like plumbers. And sources in the oil industry say that operators often seek firm customer commitments before expanding aggressively. In Malaysian Township, residents credit BGL for having laid the backbone network in advance and extending pipelines up to individual apartments.

Meanwhile, CNG, the transport counterpart of PNG, continues to see steady uptake. Autorickshaw driver P. Rajappa says that while queues at outlets have become longer in recent weeks, supply has remained consistent.

Even as groundwork expands, CGD companies are pressing ahead with aggressive rollout plans, betting on recent government relaxations to speed up work. Syed Madhubhai, senior manager (CGD) at Indian Oil Corporation for Jagdal Peddapally Karimnagar Rajanna Sircilla Gas, says, "We have established nine CNG stations across the four districts. Since trunk connectivity is available at Ramangundam, PNG connections have been extended to three localities. Of the nearly 800 connections, 265 are live," he says.

Growth potential and challenges

Growth in domestic PNG remains moderate for now, largely due to the limited presence of high-rise apartments. That, however, is expected to go up after works to lay a 6,570 km pipeline from Ramangundam to Karimnagar, is completed by the first quarter of 2027. Once operational, the stretch is expected to unlock huge growth in both domestic and commercial segments. The network will subsequently extend to Peddapally and from Karimnagar further to Rajanna Sircilla and Jagdal over the next two years.

Within the industry, a section of CGD players believe that PNG adoption could be further sped up if supported by incentives on the lines of LPG schemes such as the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana.

Acknowledging that the government's push to PNG is unprecedented, Telangana LPG Distributors Association president Jagan Mohan Reddy says piped gas is the need of the hour but the targets set by CGD companies are too ambitious. "I wish they could get it," he says, expecting the impact of PNG in the near term to be largely local or limited to some areas of the Gas as LPG still holds a strong advantage in terms of portability, especially for tenants and households that relocate frequently. Property owners, who let out on rent, may also hesitate to opt for permanent pipeline connections.

Policy changes are also throwing up implementation challenges. In the wake of the law, the government has mandated that households shifting to PNG surrender their LPG connections. While residents in Malaysian Township say they have not received any such communication from distributors, Reddy says identifying and mapping such households will not be an easy task. Complications could arise in independent houses with multiple kitchens or tenants.

For some residents, delays on the ground are a more immediate concern. S. Prakash Rao, who lives in MES Colony in Venkatapuram, Ahal, says it has been four years since pipelines were extended up to individual kitchens in the area, but without developing the underground network. Neighbourhood areas, such as the locality behind Rashid Hospital in Sachitra, already have access to PNG, leaving residents of Venkatapuram still waiting for the service to go live.

Things
MUMBAI
MONDAY, APR 19
BSE: 60.39 SET: 18.92
NIFTY: 22,777 SET: 21,899

MONDAY, APR 20
BSE: 60.39 SET: 18.92
NIFTY: 22,777 SET: 21,899

TUESDAY, APR 21
BSE: 60.39 SET: 18.92
NIFTY: 22,777 SET: 21,899

Mumbai Weather max min
Mumbai Airport 34 25
Pune 40 27
Mumbai City 34 25

Mumbai Today
24°C The weather will be dry. Day will be warm. Night will be pleasant.

Mumbai Tomorrow
23°C Morning will be pleasant with mist and haze. Day will be warm. Night also will be pleasant. Dry weather to prevail.

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THE HINDU
Hinduism is a complex and ancient religion with a rich history and diverse practices. It is one of the world's oldest religions, with roots dating back to the Indus Valley civilization. The Hindu pantheon is vast, with numerous deities and gods, including Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva. Hinduism is characterized by its emphasis on dharma (duty) and karma (action). It is a religion of tolerance and acceptance, and it has a long history of coexistence with other religions. Hinduism is a way of life, and it is practiced by over a billion people around the world.

रूसी तेल खरीद पर अमेरिका का फिर यूटर्न

- छूट की मियाद 16 मई तक बढ़ाई, भारत के लिए सस्ते ईंधन का रास्ता खुला

वाशिंगटन/नई दिल्ली (एजेंसी) : वैश्विक ऊर्जा संकट के बीच भारत के लिए एक रहत भरी खबर सामने आई है। अमेरिका ने रूसी तेल पर लगे प्रतिबंधों में दी गई छूट को आगे बढ़ा दिया है, जिससे भारत जैसे देशों को रियायती दरों पर कच्चा तेल खरीदने का मौका मिलता रहेगा। यह फैसला न सिर्फ भारत की ऊर्जा सुरक्षा के लिए अहम है, बल्कि अंतरराष्ट्रीय बाजार में तेल की कीमतों को स्थिर रखने की कोशिश भी माना जा रहा है। अमेरिकी ट्रेजरी विभाग ने रूसी तेल की खरीद पर दी गई छूट को 16



मई तक बढ़ा दिया है। इस नई व्यवस्था के तहत देशों को समुद्र में लदे रूसी कच्चे तेल और पेट्रोलियम उत्पादों की खरीद जारी रखने की अनुमति मिलेगी। यह कदम पहले दी गई 30-दिवसीय छूट के समाप्त होने के बाद उठाया गया है। हालांकि, इस लाइसेंस में ईरान, क्यूबा और उत्तर कोरिया से जुड़े लेन-देन को बाहर रखा गया है। अमेरिका का उद्देश्य साफ है, वैश्विक

बाजार में तेल की कीमतों को नियंत्रण में रखना और सप्लाय चैन को बाधित होने से बचना।

रूस का भारत को आश्वासन: इस

बीच भारत में रूस के राजदूत डेनिस अलीपोव ने आश्वासन दिया है कि उनका देश भारत को एनर्जी का एक्सपोर्ट बढ़ाएगा। इसमें कच्चा तेल, एलपीजी और एलएनजी शामिल है। उन्होंने कहा कि रूस ने भारत के लिए तेल की सप्लाय बढ़ा दी है और वह भारत को उसकी जरूरत का पूरा तेल देने को तैयार है। रूसी राजदूत ने कहा कि भारत एक भरोसेमंद पार्टनर है।



रूस के कच्चे तेल पर अमेरिका का यूटर्न

नई दिल्ली। अमेरिका ने एक बार फिर अगले एक महीने तक दुनिया के तमाम देशों को समुद्र में फंसे रूस के वरुड ऑयल तथा दूसरे पेट्रोलियम उत्पादों को खरीदने की अनुमति दे दी है। अमेरिका द्वारा रूस के तेल की खरीदारी की अनुमति देने से कच्चे तेल की कीमत में और गिरावट आने की उम्मीद बन गई है। इससे पहले अमेरिका की ओर से कहा गया था कि दुनिया के देशों को रूस और ईरान से वरुड ऑयल खरीदने के लिए दी गई अस्थायी छूट को आगे जारी नहीं रखा जाएगा। इस बात की पुष्टि अमेरिका के ट्रेजरी सेक्रेटरी स्कॉट बेसेंट ने भी की थी।

बेसेंट ने अपने बयान में साफ किया था कि रूस के कच्चे तेल को खरीदने की छूट 11 अप्रैल को ही खत्म हो गई थी, जबकि ईरानी तेल को खरीदने के लिए छूट की तिथि 19 अप्रैल को खत्म हो जाएगी। इस तिथि को अब और आगे नहीं बढ़ाया जाएगा। अमेरिका के ट्रेजरी डिपार्टमेंट ने अपनी वेबसाइट पर रूस और ईरान के पेट्रोलियम उत्पादों की खरीदारी करने के लिए लाइसेंस जारी करने का ऐलान कर दिया।