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# BP Sees Growing Opportunities in India: CEO

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## Our Bureau

**New Delhi:** Energy firm BP sees “growing business opportunities” in India, its global chief executive Murray Auchincloss said in a statement on Wednesday. The board of London-headquartered BP is holding a meeting in India this week, said a company statement.

This is the second time BP’s board is meeting in India. The first meeting was held in 2013, about two years after company took a 30% interest

in Indian upstream projects managed by Reliance Industries for \$7.2 billion.

“We see growing business opportunities, including through our world-class partnership with Reliance, producing the country’s gas and growing our joint retail presence. In turn, India’s highly skilled engineering and scientific talent can help us deliver our targets more effectively, efficiently and rapidly,” Auchincloss said.

He along with other board members met petroleum and natural gas minister Harde-



ep Puri on Tuesday. BP, in alliance with RIL, is engaged in natural gas production and fuel retailing in India. BP and RIL partnered with state-run Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) to bid for a western offshore block in the just-concluded exploration licensing round.

ONGC is also seeking to partner with a global oil firm

to help boost output from its flagship Mumbai High field which has producing for about half a century.

India is seeking to attract international firms to its exploration sector as they have access to big capital and advanced technologies which could come in handy to boost domestic output that’s been falling for years. India’s crude output has fallen by a fifth in the past decade.

# BP board meets in India for energy talks

PTI

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NEW DELHI

**T**he board of global energy giant BP plc is holding its meeting in India, reflecting the importance of the country and its confidence in the opportunities it presents, the firm said on Wednesday.

The board of BP began a five-day visit on 23 September, holding board sub-committee meetings as well as meeting government leaders and business partners. In between, it will hold its full board meeting.

This is the second time that the board is holding its meeting in India. The firm's board had visited India in May 2013, two years after the firm spent \$7.2 billion in buying a 30% stake in 23 oil and gas blocks of Reliance Industries Ltd. Just like 2013, the BP board met oil minister Hardeep Singh Puri over dinner on Tuesday evening, flew to Gadimoga in Andhra Pradesh for a visit to the landing point of gas produced from deepsea in Krishna Godavari basin, and will meet partner Reliance Industries officials in



The bp board visited India in May 2013 previously. BLOOMBERG

Mumbai. It will also visit the company's global business services centre in Pune.

Recognizing India's key role in global energy demand, during their visit the board will also hold meetings with the Indian government and BP's business partners, as well as visiting key bp India locations. The statement, however, did not elaborate on the meetings or the venue of the board meeting.

BP is one of the largest international energy firms in India, with a century-long business presence and having invested over \$12 billion across energy value chain in the country.

## Petrol and diesel prices may fall after 5 October: Report



**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE**

NEW DELHI, 25 SEPTEMBER

Petrol and diesel prices may be reduced for the first time since March 2024 after October 5, according to CLSA.

The remarks came after the comments from India's Oil Secretary, Pankaj Jain, suggesting a price drop last month and media reports indicating that the Maharashtra's state elections are expected in early November.

CLSA notes that Maharashtra is a crucial battleground, and the BJP-led alliance may consider lowering fuel prices as a populist move.

Notably, the fuel prices have not changed since March 2024.

According to the media reports, Jain said that the state-run oil marketing companies (OMCs) may consider reducing petrol and diesel prices if international crude prices stay low for an extended period.

CLSA also believes that

the government may also raise excise duty on petrol and diesel, along with any retail fuel price cut. Excise duty is a type of indirect tax levied on the manufacture or production of goods within a country.

In the context of petrol and diesel, excise duty is a tax imposed by the central government on the production or sale of these fuels within India.

As per the brokerage, Brent crude prices have cooled off below \$75 per barrel, despite OPEC's proactive steps to keep prices high. CLSA notes that the government may opportunistically raise excise duty.

The reports said the sharp decline in crude oil prices is positive for Indian oil marketing companies like Indian Oil, Bharat Petroleum Corporation and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation.

However, a potential rate cut and excise duty hike make these oil marketing companies vulnerable.

Central government levies an excise duty of Rs 19.8 and Rs 15.8 per liter on petrol and diesel, respectively.

These duties stand 40 per cent and 50 per cent lower compared to their peak levels in 2021. This duty was last cut when oil prices were above \$100 per barrel.

# OPEC: India's oil demand to grow by 8 mb/d between 2023 and 2050

**Rishi Ranjan Kala**  
New Delhi

Oil demand in India, the world's third largest crude oil importer, is likely to grow by 8 million barrels per day (mb/d) between 2023 and 2050, which is the highest rate of growth globally, OPEC's World Oil Outlook (WOO) report reveals.

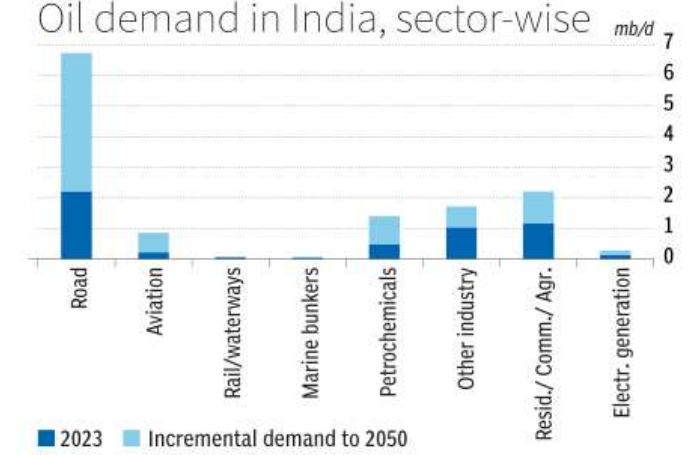
According to WOO 2050, oil demand in the world's fastest growing emerging economy is expected to grow from 5.3 mb/d in 2023 to 13.3 mb/d in 2050.

"Extending the outlook's time horizon to 2050 amplifies the role of India, other Asian nations, Africa and the Middle East as the key sources of incremental demand in the coming years," the report said.

"Combined demand in these four regions is set to increase by 22 mb/d between 2023 and 2050. India alone will add 8 mb/d to its oil demand during the forecast period. China's oil demand is projected to increase by 2.5 mb/d," it added.

## DRIVING SECTORS

India's current oil demand composition is characterised by a relatively high share of diesel/gasoil, which accounts for around 35 per cent of the total demand. In fact, the share of diesel/gasoil is set to



Source: OPEC

expand to 38 per cent by 2040 before declining to 37 per cent in 2050, mainly due to expanding freight transport and industrial production. Some demand growth for this product also comes from the petrochemical industry, and the commercial and agriculture sectors. Accordingly, diesel demand is projected to increase by 3 mb/d from around 1.9 mb/d in 2023 to 4.9 mb/d in 2050.

OPEC's World Oil Outlook till 2050 projects that road transportation constitutes the primary key area where more than half of the overall demand increase is expected to materialise.

"This will be mainly driven by the significant expansion of the country's passenger car fleet, from less than 50 million in 2023 to more than 240 million in

2050 (excluding two-wheelers). Moreover, the number of commercial vehicles is set to more than quadruple during the period to 2050 on the back of strong GDP growth," it added.

# BJP made farmers 'urjadata': Gadkari

## Urges them to provide stubble to energy sector for production of biofuels

**NITISH SHARMA**  
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

**KURUKSHETRA, SEPTEMBER 25**

Amid the ongoing tussle between the farmers and the BJP, Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari said earlier farmers were called 'annadata' only, now the BJP government had made them 'urjadata' too.

As the paddy harvest has started, he called upon the farmers not to burn the stubble. "I observed paddy stubble being burnt, and I request the farmers not to burn it as there are technologies and plants to prepare CNG and LNG from stubble. Earlier, we used to call farmers 'annadata', but our government has made farmers 'urjadata' too." Gadkari addressed gather-



### WILL DOUBLE INCOME

“Flex-fuel engine vehicles are coming and ethanol pumps are being opened in the country, it will increase the income of farmers. Hydrogen is the future and trust me farmers will produce hydrogen. Nitin Gadkari, UNION MINISTER

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari at a rally in Thanesar, Kurukshetra.

ings in support of party candidates Subhash Sudha in Thanesar and Nayab Singh Saini in Ladwa. Keeping his focus on farmers, he said: "Diversification of agriculture towards energy and power sector is the need of this coun-

try if we want to develop smart villages and ensure welfare of farmers and labourers. We are working with the aim to eliminate pollution, develop villages and generate employment. All such things are happening because there

is a right government with right policies in the centre."

He said "After Independence, the Congress ruled this country for 60-65 years but failed to develop the nation, and people started leaving villages. Farmers committed suicide, and

they were not given the priority. But the BJP introduced various welfare policies for farmers."

He also highlighted the various ongoing and upcoming projects in Haryana and said "Haryana is transforming at a rapid pace. We are carrying out projects worth around Rs 2 lakh crore. I know Kurukshetra needs a ring road, and before this election, I approved this project." He said he would also consider the demand for the Ladwa bypass, which has been a major poll issue here.

"This election will not determine the future of Congress and BJP, but it will decide the future of the people of Haryana. To develop Haryana, make farmers prosperous, and end corruption, I request you to vote for the BJP," he said.



## Oil India in talks to start exploration in Nagaland

ARUNIMA BHARADWAJ  
New Delhi, September 25

**STATE-OWNED UPSTREAM** company Oil India is looking to start exploration activities in Nagaland and is engaged in discussions with the state and central government for the same, a top official of the company told *FE*. Additionally, the state-run company is hopeful of starting oil production from its block in Gabon in central Africa in the next financial year.

“We have a total of 30 blocks under the OALP (Open Acreage Licensing Policy). We have already drilled all wells under the awarded OALP blocks, except in Nagaland. We are pursuing the ministry and they have set up a high power committee involving OIL, ONGC, government officials, to discuss the issue with the Government of Nagaland and resume exploration,” the official said.

The company has a 3,000 sq km area in its possession in Nagaland.

# Board of bp holds meetings in India

**FE BUREAU**  
New Delhi, September 25

**THE BOARD OF** British multinational oil and gas major bp is holding meetings in India, underscoring its commitment to develop its business here. The bp board began a five-day visit to India on September 23, holding board sub-committee meetings as well as meeting government leaders and business partners. In between, it will hold its full board meeting.

This is the second time the company's board is holding a meeting in India. The board had visited the country in May 2013, two years after the company spent \$7.2 billion in buying a 30% stake in 23 oil and gas blocks of Reliance Industries (RIL). "The five-day visit of the bp board reflects bp's significant and growing presence in India and its commitment to further develop its businesses in and with the country," the company said.

After meeting Union minister for petroleum and natural gas Hardeep Singh Puri, bp chairman Helge Lund said, "By leveraging our combined experience and expertise with our partners, we aim to facilitate the secure, affordable, and lower carbon growth of India's energy resources to meet the increasing demand."

"I am sure the robust partnership between the global energy major (bp) and India, which spans across the entire energy value chain including exploration & production, biofuels, fuel retail and other emerging areas, will continue to grow further," Puri said.

bp is one of the largest international energy firms in India, having invested over \$12 billion across the energy value chain in the country.

"There is huge potential for bp to work even more closely with India. We see growing business opportunities, including via our partnership with Reliance, producing the country's gas and growing our joint retail presence.

**HELGE LUND**, bp chairman

BP IS COMMITTED TO WORKING CLOSELY WITH THE INDIAN GOVT TO SUPPORT ITS CHANGING ENERGY NEEDS



**HARDEEP SINGH PURI**, petroleum minister

I'M SURE THE ROBUST PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN BP AND INDIA WILL CONTINUE TO GROW FURTHER



In turn, India's highly-skilled engineering and scientific talent can help us deliver our targets more effectively, efficiently and rapidly," said bp CEO Murray Auchincloss.

The company, in partnership with RIL, has in recent years brought onstream three new deep-water natural gas projects that account for a third of India's gas production. The two firms have also joined hands to create a major retail, aviation fuels and mobility alliance, Jio-bp, now with close to 1,900 retail sites across and over 4,900 charging points.

Kartikeya Dube, bp's head of country, said: "Building on the century-old legacy with India through our Castrol brand, our presence across the gas value chain, mobility retail businesses and our global business and technology centre, we expect to grow a material business here, and help support India's aspiration for energy independence by 2047."

# CNG car sales growth zooms past other PVs

## PETROL CARS: LOSING TRACTION?

PV sales report card for the Jan-Aug 2024 period

	Sales (units)	Y-o-Y growth (%)	Active models
CNG	475,100	46	25
Diesel hybrid	78,383	21	5
Petrol hybrid	244,757	18	17
EV	67,240	7	11
Diesel	431,101	5	27
Petrol	1,576,967	-4.5	57

Source: Jato Dynamics

**SOHINI DAS**  
Mumbai, 25 September

Compressed natural gas (CNG) is fast becoming the fuel of choice for Indian car buyers, with sales growth of such passenger vehicles (PVs) in the first eight months of this year outpacing all other variants.

Sales of CNG vehicles between January and August surged by 46 per cent year-on-year, whereas that of petrol cars declined by 4.5 per cent; diesel model pickups grew by just 5 per cent.

The rise in CNG sales even outstripped that of petrol hybrid, diesel hybrid, and electric cars.

In volume terms, CNG vehicle sales are now roughly

30 per cent of petrol vehicle sales. One in every three cars produced by the country's largest automaker, Maruti Suzuki India (MSIL), is now a CNG model, with CNG penetration in the company's overall portfolio having reached 34 per cent as of August.

Several factors are driving this growth, from new car launches to an increase in CNG refuelling stations, as well as innovations like

Tata Motors' twin-cylinder system. Original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) are also focusing on less polluting fuels to meet corporate average fuel efficiency (CAFE) norms, which aim to limit carbon dioxide emissions from car manufacturers in a financial year. **Turn to Page 6 ▶**





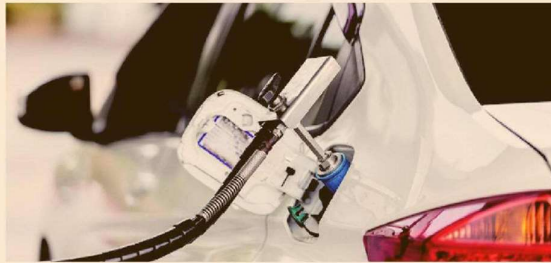
## Launches, more fuelling stations push CNG car demand

"The highest oil consumption and the highest CO2 emissions come from pure petrol and diesel vehicles. All other powertrain technologies — including electric, hybrid, CNG, and biofuel — help reduce oil consumption and CO2 emissions," explained Rahul Bharti, executive director of corporate affairs, MSIL. "It is both natural and desirable to minimise the use of pure petrol and diesel engines in favour of these technologies."

He further noted: "CNG is over 90 per cent methane (CH4), meaning it has four hydrogen atoms for every carbon atom, making it inherently clean (fuel)."

Ravi Bhatia, president and director of Jato Dynamics, noted a broader shift toward alternative fuels in India's auto market, as global electric vehicle (EV) growth shows signs of slowing. "Data from Jato Dynamics India highlights this trend, showing significant growth in (sales of) CNG (46 per cent) and hybrid vehicles (19 per cent) compared to EVs (7 per cent)," Bhatia said.

He attributed this shift to evolving consumer preferences and market realities. "CNG's affordability and practicality make it especially popular in the taxi



and small business segments, while hybrids are gaining ground among those seeking a balance between performance and efficiency."

For the first time, sales of CNG PVs in India surpassed diesel vehicles in the first quarter of this financial year. "This quarter, several new regions, including Rajasthan, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala, and Bihar, are showing healthy growth in CNG adoption. Customer acceptance of CNG vehicles is on the rise," Bharti told Business Standard last month.

In a sign of the growing momentum,

its popular hatchback, the Grand i10 NIOS, last month, with prices starting at ₹7.75 lakh.

CNG options are now more frequently available in mid-range variants, rather than just entry-level models as was the case in the past, reflecting growing demand for personal use. As of now, there are 25 car models across various original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) offering CNG engines, up from 20 in June 2023 and just 13 a year earlier. The primary buyers remain commercial taxi and fleet operators, often due to regulations in many cities, as well as small business owners who use cars for trade. Industry insiders point out that CNG prices have remained relatively stable compared to petrol.

The increase in CNG vehicle sales is partly attributed to better fuelling infrastructure, with the number of stations growing from 3,180 in June 2021 to 6,959 in June 2024.

One major reason for petrol's decline against CNG, according to sector experts, is the price difference between the two fuels. Petrol currently costs ₹94.72 per litre in Delhi, while CNG is priced at ₹75.09 per kilogram.

Tata Motors launched the Nexon iCNG, priced from ₹8.99 lakh, on Tuesday. Describing it as part of Tata's multi-powertrain strategy, Vivek Srivatsa, chief commercial officer of Tata Passenger Electric Mobility, said: "The launch of the Nexon iCNG as India's first turbocharged CNG vehicle will attract customers who are value-driven and eco-conscious, but do not want to compromise on driving quality and experience."

The country's second-biggest carmaker Hyundai Motor India also introduced a dual-cylinder CNG variant of

## पीएम मोदी आज महाराष्ट्र को देंगे 22,600 करोड़ की सौगात पुणे मेट्रो रेल के फेज-1 को दिखाएंगे हरी झंडी, तीन सुपरकंप्यूटर राष्ट्र को समर्पित करेंगे

नई दिल्ली। प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी वृहस्पतिवार को महाराष्ट्र का दौरा करेंगे। इस दौरान पीएम पुणे मेट्रो रेल के शुभारंभ के साथ ही 22,600 करोड़ रुपये की विभिन्न परियोजनाओं का शिलान्यास व उद्घाटन करेंगे।

प्रधानमंत्री कार्यालय की ओर से जारी बयान में कहा गया है कि पीएम शाम करीब 6 बजे जिला न्यायालय से स्वर्गट तक चलने वाली पुणे मेट्रो ट्रेन (फेज-1) को हरी झंडी दिखाएंगे। इस भूमिगत खंड पर करीब 1,810 करोड़ रुपये खर्च हुए हैं। वह पुणे मेट्रो फेज-1 के स्वर्गट-कात्रज विस्तार की आधारशिला भी रखेंगे, जिसे करीब 2,950 करोड़ रुपये की लागत से विकसित किया जाएगा। अन्य परियोजनाओं के अलावा, वह प्रसिद्ध समाज सुधारक क्रांतिज्योति सावित्रीबाई फुले की स्मृति में



### 130 करोड़ रुपये की लागत से तैयार किए गए सुपरकंप्यूटर

पीएम राष्ट्रीय सुपरकंप्यूटिंग मिशन (एनएसएम) के तहत स्वदेशी रूप से विकसित लगभग 130 करोड़ की लागत के तीन परम रुद्र सुपरकंप्यूटर भी राष्ट्र को समर्पित करेंगे। इन सुपरकंप्यूटरों को पुणे, दिल्ली व कोलकाता में वैज्ञानिक अनुसंधान की सुविधा के लिए तैनात किया गया है।

भिड़ेवाड़ा में प्रथम बालिका विद्यालय के स्मारक की भी आधारशिला रखेंगे। व्यूरो

### 10,400 करोड़ की विभिन्न पहलों का करेंगे शुभारंभ

मोदी पेट्रोलियम और प्राकृतिक गैस क्षेत्र की 10,400 करोड़ रुपये की विभिन्न पहलों का शुभारंभ करेंगे। ये पहल ऊर्जा, बुनियादी ढांचे, ट्रक और कैब चालकों की सुरक्षा और सुविधा, स्वच्छ गतिशीलता और एक टिकाऊ भविष्य पर केंद्रित होंगी।

- ट्रक चालकों के लिए सड़क किनारे सुविधा केंद्र की करेंगे शुरुआत : पीएम मोदी छत्रपति संभाजीनगर, पंजाब के फतेहगढ़ साहिब, गुजरात के सोनगढ़ तथा कर्नाटक के बेलगावी में ट्रक चालकों के लिए सड़क किनारे विभिन्न सुविधा केंद्र का शुभारंभ करेंगे। इस पर करीब 2,170 करोड़ रुपये की लागत आएगी।
- विडकिन औद्योगिक क्षेत्र का उद्घाटन करेंगे : पीएम मोदी विडकिन औद्योगिक क्षेत्र का उद्घाटन करेंगे। यह भारत सरकार के राष्ट्रीय औद्योगिक गलियारा विकास के तहत 7,855 एकड़ क्षेत्र में फैला है। इस परियोजना में मराठवाड़ा क्षेत्र में आर्थिक केंद्र के रूप में अपार संभावनाएं हैं।