

Ahead of summer, 1,744 MW of gas-based power goes onstream

Rishi Ranjan Kala

New Delhi

In preparation for the upcoming summer electricity demand season, during April-June and August-October, over 1,744 MW of gas-based power capacity, largely with the state-run NTPC, have been operationalised.

The monitored natural gas-based power plant capacity as on January 31, 2025, is at 23,636 MW, Minister of State for Power Shripad Naik said in a written response to a query in the Rajya Sabha.

“Ministry of Power from time to time has brought out schemes for competitive procurement of power from gas-based power plants during high-demand periods of power supply. A total of two such schemes have already been implemented and under the latest scheme, operationalisation of gas-based capacity will commence from March 16 till October 15,”

All India demand and supply of electricity (million units)

April-June	Energy requirement (MU)	Energy supplied (MU)	Energy not supplied	
			MU	%
2022	4,04,605	4,00,448	4,158	1.0
2023	4,07,780	4,06,862	919	0.2
2024	4,52,399	4,51,811	588	0.1

Source: Power Ministry, Central Electricity Authority

the Minister added.

During April-May 2023, the Ministry operationalised 1,010 MW of gas-based power capacity. Similarly, around 860 MW capacity was operationalised during March-June 2024.

The Ministry expects peak power demand (day) to hit 270 GW in the current season, compared to 250 GW recorded during May last year.

COAL STOCKS

Presently, coal stock position of thermal power plants (TPPs) is at a five-year high. As on March 9, 2025, pan-India stocks at TPPs was at 55.9 million tonnes (mt), sufficient to run these plants at

85 per cent PLF for about 19 days. All captive coal blocks have been advised to maximise production to supplement the supply from domestic companies.

Moreover, imported coal-based (ICB) plants have been issued a statutory direction to stock coal and generate power during high-demand periods.

PREP FOR SUMMER

The Ministry has issued directions to ICB plants under Section 11 of the Electricity Act, 2003, to operate and generate power to their full capacity till April 2025, which will be extended till June 2025.



Delhi speeds up shift from CNG to e-buses

NEW DELHI: The Delhi government will soon start phasing out overage CNG buses as part of its plan to replace them with electric buses in the next few months, officials said on Monday.

Transport Minister Pankaj Singh held a high-level meeting with top department officials and asked them to expedite procurement of 1,000 electric buses by March end, they said.

“As of now, the Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) fleet has 2,400 CNG buses and 1,700 electric buses. The transport minister held a meeting regarding the old buses, which are about to reach the end of life,” a senior department official said.

The department is working on the induction of 1,000 electric buses by March end, he added.

After taking charge as transport minister last month, Singh had said 50 per cent of the DTC’s fleet of CNG buses

had been phased out and the remainder would be out of service in the next few months.

Environment Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa earlier said that nearly 90 per cent of CNG buses in Delhi would be phased out by December and replaced by electric buses as part of the government’s push towards a cleaner and more sustainable public transport.

The old fleet of DTC’s low-floor buses were purchased during the 2010 Commonwealth Games. These buses had a life span of 12 years or 7.5 lakh kilometres, whichever was achieved earlier.

Due to slow procurement, Delhi extended bus service life to 15 years in 2021, ending on March 31. Officials estimate the city needs 11,000 buses.

Minister Singh previously stated that Delhi would reach this target within the next one-and-a-half years.

AGENCIES



E-verification of ration cards of 1.9 lakh beneficiaries completed

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MARCH 17

RATION CARDS of around 1.9 lakh beneficiaries have been verified through e-KYC in Delhi, said officials from the Food and Supplies department on Monday. Officials added that through this verification process, duplicate and ineligible cardholders will be blocked and removed from availing subsidised food articles provided to economically weaker sections having an annual family income of Rs 1 lakh.

The verification of ration cards is closely linked to the BJP government's ambitious welfare

schemes -- Mahila Samridhi Scheme (Rs 2,500 per month for women), Ujjwala Yojana (free LPG connections) and Ayushman Bharat (health insurance coverage of up to Rs 5 lakh per family).

There are 72,77,995 beneficiaries, of which around 17 lakh have applied for e-KYC verification. There are a total of 17,41,266 card holders in Delhi and 1,971 ration shops.

On Monday, Food and Supplies Department Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa reviewed the ongoing initiatives to improve the efficiency and transparency of the Public Distribution System (PDS) in the national capital. "During the

Covid pandemic, the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government provided double ration supplies under the PMGKY (Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana) to support those facing hardships. This was a crucial step to ensure no one went hungry during those difficult times. The Delhi government has always been committed to ensuring no eligible ration beneficiary in the Capital is deprived of their rightful benefits. We continue to work tirelessly to improve the system and make it more accessible for everyone," he said.

According to officials, the minister also reviewed the e-KYC implementation for ration cardholders.

More firms must participate in PM internship scheme: FM

NATIONAL CAUSE. Nobody is expecting industry to cut profits or suffer losses, she said

KR Srivats
New Delhi

Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday urged industry to step up participation in the Prime Minister Internship Scheme (PMIS), emphasising that bringing more companies under its fold would serve a “national cause”.

While acknowledging the enthusiasm shown so far, Sitharaman said there is a long way to go before achieving the goal of onboarding the top 500 companies in the scheme. She was speaking at the launch of a dedicated mobile app for PMIS in New Delhi, in the presence of Harsh Malhotra, Minister of State for Corporate Affairs and Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.

WIN-WIN FOR ALL
“I appreciate industry’s will-



Open a little window for young professionals, allowing them a glimpse into how firms operate

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN
Finance & Corporate Affairs Minister

ingness to come forward and offer internship positions but for a country of our size, with the objective that the top 500 companies participate in PMIS, we still have some way to go,” Sitharaman said. She invited companies beyond the 327 that have already joined the initiative, and highlighted the government’s financial support to make it easier for firms to accommodate interns.

“This is a national cause. Nobody is expecting industry to cut profits or suffer losses. We need to give our



youth the confidence to enter these top 500 companies, provided they prepare themselves for the opportunity. If they don’t equip themselves with the right skills, industry will not find them employable,” she said.

She encouraged businesses to “open a little window” for young professionals, allowing them a glimpse into how companies operate. “This exposure is essential for them to understand industry expectations and prepare themselves accordingly,” she added.

The PMIS pilot project, which entered its second round in January, has seen 327 companies posting more than 1.18 lakh internship opportunities (both fresh openings and unfilled positions carried over from the first round). So far in this round, 1.27 lakh candidates have applied for 2.4 lakh internships.

The application window is open till March 31, MCA Secretary Deepti Gaur Mukherjee told *businessline*. She said 49 companies (beyond top 500) have approached MCA for participating in the PMIS.

MOBILE APP

With the aim of making the scheme more accessible, Sitharaman launched a mobile app for PMIS.

The app will allow candidates to browse opportunities, submit applications and receive real-time updates on their applications.



Natural gas demand may grow at 4.5% annually till 2050, driven by industry and transport sectors: GECF

Rishi Ranjan Kala
New Delhi

India's demand for natural gas — considered the best transition fuel — is expected to grow at an annual rate of 4.5 per cent till 2050, with usage from the industry and transport sectors growing at 3.3 per cent and 6.4 per cent, respectively.

The growth, which is anticipated to be driven primarily by industry, road transport and power generation, will get a boost with the development of the national gas grid, said the Global Gas Outlook report, the annual flagship publication of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF).

India's natural gas demand is forecast to grow significantly, rising from 66 billion cubic meters (bcm) in

2023 to 223 bcm by 2050, reflecting an average annual growth rate of 4.5 per cent," the report anticipated.

The development of India's National Gas Grid is a critical enabler for expanding natural gas accessibility. Under the One Nation, One Gas Grid initiative, India is undertaking a massive investment programme to expand its pipeline network, aiming to add over 10,000 km to the existing 24,500 km of transmission pipelines.

This expansion aims to connect LNG terminals and domestic gas fields to demand centres while eliminating infrastructure bottlenecks, it added.

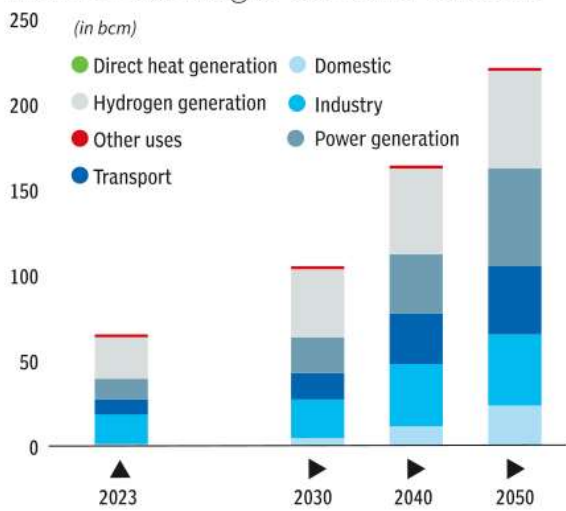
CONSUMPTION GROWS

In India, the industrial sector is projected to drive the largest share of natural gas demand growth, adding 57 bcm and accounting for 36 per cent of the total increase between 2023 and 2050.

This represents an annual growth rate of 3.3 per cent, driven by the expansion of industries such as fertilizers, petrochemicals, ceramics, glass, textiles and other light manufacturing.

Gas demand in India's transport sector is forecast

India's natural gas demand outlook



Source: GECF Secretariat based on data from the GECF GGM

to expand significantly, reaching 40 bcm by 2050, with an average annual growth rate of 6.4 per cent.

"In the power generation sector, natural gas demand is expected to grow modestly in the near term, as no explicit policy measures incentivise gas-based electricity generation," the GECF report said.

In South Asia, liquefied natural gas (LNG) demand growth is expected to stall temporarily due to high

sensitivity to spot LNG prices. However, strong demand recovery is forecast post-2026 as LNG prices soften.

"Although India's target of 15 per cent gas in the energy mix by 2030 may be challenging, LNG imports are projected to rise significantly from 22 million tonnes (mt) in 2023 to 130 mt by 2050," the report forecast.

This growth will require substantial investments in LNG infrastructure, includ-

ing regasification capacity, which is expected to increase from 51 mt per annum (mtpa) in the beginning of 2024 to 135 mtpa by 2050, it added.

POLICY PUSH

In 2024, the government reinforced its commitment to natural gas infrastructure by announcing a \$67 billion investment plan over the next five to six years.

This funding aims to increase domestic gas availability, enhance LNG import, expand pipeline connectivity and strengthen the city gas distribution network.

By early 2024, the city gas network covered 98 per cent of the population, and additional bids were announced to extend gas access to remote and underdeveloped regions.

The government has also committed to providing 7.5 million free LPG connections to women-led households over the next three years, reinforcing its focus on energy equity.

The government is accelerating the adoption of LNG in freight transport by developing more than 1,000 LNG fuelling stations along the national highways.

businessline.

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Oil Gains on US Strikes on Houthis, China Hopes

Reuters

Oil prices edged higher on Monday after the United States vowed to keep attacking Yemen's Houthis until the Iran-aligned group ends its assaults on shipping while Chinese economic data fuelled hopes for higher demand. US President Donald Trump launched military strikes against the Houthis on Saturday over the group's attacks against Red Sea shipping. One U.S. official told Reuters the campaign might

continue for weeks.

Brent futures rose 28 cents, or 0.4%, to \$70.85 a barrel while US West Texas Intermediate crude futures gained 22 cents, or 0.3%, to \$67.39.



The Red Sea port city of Hodeidah and the Al Jawf governorate north of the capital Sanaa were targeted on Monday, the Al Masirah TV said.

Chinese economic data also supported prices. Retail sales growth quickened over January-February in a welcome sign for

policymakers seeking to boost domestic consumption, though unemployment rose and factory output eased.

China's crude oil throughput in January and February rose 2.1% versus a year earlier, official data showed on Monday, supported by a new refinery and holiday travel, but weak refining margins persisted.

Oil rose slightly last week, though Brent is still down almost 5% this year on concern over a global economic slowdown driven by escalating trade tensions between the U.S. and other nations.

PSU Oilcos See Fall in Diesel, ATF Sales; Petrol Up in March

Our Bureau

New Delhi: State-run oil companies have registered a decline in diesel and jet fuel or aviation turbine fuel (ATF) sales this month even as petrol sales have increased.

Sales of diesel and jet fuel fell 3.7% and 2.1%, respectively, year on year in the first fortnight of March, according to industry data. Petrol sales rose 3.6% while LPG increased 1.5%.

Compared to the first half of February, sales of all four fuels declined in March – diesel by 5%, petrol by 3.3%, jet fuel by 2.7%, and LPG by 4.5%.

These data represent sales only by state companies, which have about 90% share of the fuel market.

Sales growth in petrol in March is similar to the growth of 3.8% witnessed in the first half of March 2024 while LPG's muted growth of 1.5% is partly due to high base in the previous year. The cooking fuel sales had grown 15% on year in the first half of March 2024.

The decline in diesel and jet fuel seems more dramatic as the two fuels

had registered growth in the same month of the previous year. Diesel sales had grown 1.1% and jet fuel by 8% in the first half of March 2024.

State oil companies have been slowly losing their market share to private players for more than two years, partly explaining their slowing or declining fuel sales in March, an industry executive said.

Data for the full month, including the sales figure from the private sector, would give the full picture

of the domestic fuel consumption, he added.

Diesel is the most-used fuel in the country, accounting for nearly 40% of the total domestic sales volume of petroleum products, with petrol and LPG making up for another 35% or so.

Diesel sales have been on a slow path for years due to a growing preference for petrol, CNG or electric-powered vehicles. Petrol has been the dominant fuel for four-wheelers with CNG gaining ground in recent years on the back of new car models and expanding CNG pumps.





Vikas Kaushal assumes charge as HPCL Chairman & Managing Director

MUMBAI: Vikas Kaushal has assumed charge as the Chairman & MD of Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd, effective March 17, 2025. Kaushal is a seasoned global leader with over three decades of experience in the energy domain. A Chemical Engineering graduate from DCET, Panjab University, he holds an MBA from the IIM, Ahmedabad. He started his career with ICICI Ltd in Project Finance and Advisory Services. Since 2000, he has been associated with A T Kearney, where he played a pivotal role in expanding the firm's business in India. As a Partner for over 17 years, he led several high-impact initiatives, including serving as the Global Leader for Energy and Process Industries, where he managed a portfolio of major global energy clients.



MPOST

के मामले में सबसे आगे देख रही है। टेक्निप एनर्जीज के मुख्य कार्यकारी अधिकारी अरनॉड पीटन ने कहा, "भारत वह देश है, जहां हम ग्रीन हाइड्रोजन और ग्रीन अमोनिया के बारे में सबसे बड़ी परियोजनाओं पर हस्ताक्षर कर रहे हैं। यह भूगोल और देश है, जहां हमारे लिए ग्रीन अमोनिया और ग्रीन हाइड्रोजन आगे बढ़ रहे हैं। इसलिए, हम भारत को ग्रीन हाइड्रोजन अर्थव्यवस्था के मामले में सबसे आगे देखते हैं। भारत में करीब पांच दशकों से परिचालन कर रही टेक्निप एनर्जीज ने कहा कि उसने पिछले चार वर्षों में देश में निवेश में तेजी लाई है। हालांकि, उन्होंने विस्तार से बताने से इनकार कर दिया। इस अवधि के दौरान, कंपनी ने अपने कार्यबल को दोगुना कर दिया। अब यह अगले वर्ष भारत में मौजूदा 4,600 कर्मचारियों वाले मजबूत आधार में 500-1,000 कर्मचारियों को



जोड़ने पर विचार कर रही है। हम भारतीय प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान मद्रास, रिसर्च पार्क में एक शोध और नवाचार केंद्र स्थापित करने में भी निवेश कर रहे हैं। यह यूरोप और अमेरिका में टेक्निप एनर्जीज की तीन प्रयोगशालाओं को जोड़ता है," पीटन ने कहा, उन्होंने कहा कि कंपनी ऊर्जा संक्रमण और डीकार्बोनाइजेशन पर केंद्रित है। टेक्निप एनर्जीज इंडिया \$500 मिलियन से \$1 बिलियन के अनुबंधों का प्रबंधन और संचालन करती है। भारत समूह के वैश्विक वार्षिक प्रवेश में 15% का योगदान देता है और भारत में टीमें सभी प्रमुख अंतरराष्ट्रीय परियोजनाओं में शामिल हैं।

भारत हरित हाइड्रोजन अर्थव्यवस्था में सबसे आगे

ऊर्जा उद्योग को इंजीनियरिंग और प्रौद्योगिकी सेवाएं प्रदान करने वाली फ्रांसीसी कंपनी टेक्निप एनर्जीज भारत में अनुसंधान और विकास केंद्र खोल रही है, साथ ही भारत में अपने कार्यबल का विस्तार भी कर रही है, जिसे वह वैश्विक स्तर पर ग्रीन हाइड्रोजन की ओर बदलाव