

# 'Achieving 15% gas in energy mix to require major policy changes'

Raising the share of natural gas in the country's energy mix will require targeted policy intervention, such as differentiated tariffs and an easy access to pipelines in select sectors, such as gas-to-power generation and liquefied natural gas (LNG) trucking, **MANSI TRIPATHY**, chairman, Shell group of companies in India, and vice-president, Shell Lubricants Asia Pacific, tells **Subhayan Chakraborty** and **Shreya Jai** in an interview on the sidelines of India Energy Week in Delhi. While Shell is planning a major initiative to re-refine waste oil in its core business of lubricants, it is also adapting cutting-edge artificial intelligence to enable efficiency and run complex energy simulations. Edited excerpts.

## How does Shell perceive the increasing its focus on natural gas in India?

The most critical fuel for India is gas. As the largest global player in LNG, Shell sees potential in expanding the role of gas in India. We have been discussing increasing gas penetration in India from 6 per cent to 15 per cent for years, yet in the past five years we have remained at 6 per cent. Achieving 15 per cent will require significant policy changes. One key area is optimising the end consumption of gas and removing bottlenecks. For instance, globally, gas-to-power is a major sector, but in India, its use remains minimal. One challenge is the standard tariff on LNG, which does not differentiate whether the gas is used for power generation or something else. Additionally, standard gas-to-power terminals have not been established due to a lack of demand. Infrastructure investment, such as pipeline access, is also lacking due to uncertainty about gas availability. Demand aggregation could help mitigate these issues by offsetting price fluctuations.

Another critical application is gas for heavy transport. Compared to China, India lags in this sector. Other countries have accelerated gas adoption by aggregating potential demand, enabling original equipment manufacturers to invest in infrastructure and securing financial support for manufacturers and consumers. A well-structured ecosystem is essential for scaling up gas usage, and policy intervention is the key to make this happen.

## There has been a push for LNG trucking from the industry and some policymakers. What do you think is holding it back?

Ultimately it's just a matter of right pricing. For consumers, LNG needs to be more competitive than what they are buying now: Diesel. LNG pricing keeps fluctuating globally. In turn, it reduces the surety of what we can price for the end consumer. The price is also linked to tariff rates. Right now, there's a flat Customs duty on LNG import. LNG for trucking could be distinguished through a mechanism and different import duties placed on it. Short-term demand-side incentives that can

support early adopters to shift to LNG can be the allocation of some domestic gas or incentives such as toll exemption — and a reduction in the GST (goods and services tax) rate on LNG kits from 28 per cent to 5 per cent.

## What are your plans for the lubricants business?

We are working on re-refined oil as an important part of the overall circular economy. We are partnering with Mahindra & Mahindra and its chain of workshops to collect all the waste oil, and then give them certification, which they can use for their sustainability targets. We are one of their preferred suppliers for lubricants, and are extending this service as part of that partnership. Meanwhile, we are working with our vendors' ecosystem to potentially re-refine waste oil. Globally, we now have the technology available.

## Has Shell begun to tap into artificial intelligence (AI)?

Shell is forefronting a lot of innovation and digitisation, and driving new technologies in India through our technology centre. We have three capability centres in the country, and 13,000 employees — one of our biggest footprints globally. We are talking a lot about how AI can enable more efficiency, safety, as well as the best usage of all the assets globally. For example, we are working with a startup by the name Detect Technologies, which has its own proprietary platform called T-Pulse and a combination of physical assets and digital assets. They have robotic eyes, drones, and sensors, which can be placed in any asset and are able to tell if there is any safety violation that can potentially happen. This includes people violation or any threat coming in, or any unsafe act that is happening in the building — in real-time. It can also be put within pipelines to detect the rate of corrosion.

We are now working with our partner NVIDIA in terms of running complex energy simulations up to a million times faster than traditional methods. We are trying to look at it from an end-to-end perspective.

## Do you have specialised products for electric vehicles (EVs)?

We provide a full suite of fluid management for EVs. We have a full range of lubricants or EV fluids, including transmission fluids, specialised grease, and cooling fluids. Some are for usage till end of life, while just have to be used once. They are best in class from an efficiency point of view. I think we are the leading player.

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“ULTIMATELY IT'S JUST A MATTER OF RIGHT PRICING. FOR CONSUMERS, LNG NEEDS TO BE MORE COMPETITIVE THAN WHAT THEY ARE BUYING NOW: DIESEL”

**MANSI TRIPATHY**  
Shell India chairman

# Biomass can be India's best bet for energy shift to hydrogen: Catalyst Technologies CEO

**Richa Mishra**  
Hyderabad

India's best bet for energy transition to hydrogen is using biomass, which is available in sizeable quantities, said Maurits Van Tol, CEO of Catalyst Technologies, a division of Johnson Matthey (JM), global leader in sustainable technologies.

Maurits, who was in India for the recently-concluded India Energy Week 2025, told *businessline*, "When you look at cleantech for India, there are a few things that I would like to highlight. There is an enormously sizeable agricultural sector in India, producing a lot of agricultural by-products and agricultural waste. We can gather all these agricultural residues and convert them (into biomass) using technology."

"Secondly, India gets a lot of sunshine and has land to build large solar parks. When you bring renewable electricity to scale, the prices will



One has to be clear about what energy transition process a country wants when working on the industrial policy

**MAURITS VAN TOL**

CEO of Catalyst Technologies

go down further. Again, we have the technology to convert electricity into green hydrogen," he said, adding that "you can produce renewable electricity at a low cost; that means, green hydrogen at an attractive price level."

"India can boost the yields of biomass conversion into useful components, because biomass is oxygen-rich. You can bring these industries to scale, not only for exports, but also to decarbonise," he added.

## **CLEAR GOAL**

When asked what can be done on the policy front, he



said, "One has to be clear about what energy transition process a country wants when working on the industrial policy. There is a component of subsidy which needs to be promoted."

"The focus should be in bringing together all resources — biomass, wind, solar and others. Everyone should promote decarbonisation and move away from the fossil fuel," he added.

"In fact, when you scale up the output, you will reduce the costs, improve your competitive position and even create an export economy," he said.

JM itself has been very active in India with a new engineering centre in Mumbai that designs plants for its customers not only in India, but also for those all around the world.

Maurits, at IEW, also participated in a panel discussion, titled "Heralding the Dawn of a Global Hydrogen Economy and Supply Chain".

"Right now, most hydrogen is made by reforming natural gas — a process that creates so-called 'grey hydrogen'. But this process also yields CO<sub>2</sub>, making it ripe for replacement."

"It's more appropriate to talk about the carbon intensity of hydrogen, rather than just declare one colour to be environmentally better than another. The ease of the colour-naming convention tends to invite overly simplistic comparisons of hydrogen production routes." Both 'blue' and 'green' hydrogen have their place in energy transition," Maurits said.

# India's Crude Oil Imports from US Double in February

India got 1.07 mbd of Russian oil in first 20 days of Feb, down from 1.4 mbd in Jan

Sanjeev Choudhary

**New Delhi:** Sanctions have slashed Russian oil exports to India by about a quarter in February while the US oil exports have nearly doubled amid the country's plan to increase the purchase of American energy by two-thirds to \$25 billion.

An average of 1.07 million barrels per day (mbd) of crude oil was loaded in India-bound tankers during the first 20 days of February at Russian ports, down from 1.4 mbd in January, according to data obtained from energy cargo tracker Vortexa. **The average crude loading for India-bound ships at US ports was 0.2 mbd, up from 0.11 mbd in January.**

Exports to India from Saudi Arabia and Iraq also increased. Saudi Arabia loaded 0.91 mbd during February 1-20, up from 0.77 mbd while Iraq's loadings increased to 1.08 mbd



from 0.8 mbd. UAE's average loading for India was 0.31 mbd during February 1-20 compared to 0.48 mbd in the previous month.

"We broadly see a decline in exports to India from Russia with other suppliers picking up exports to offset this," said Rohit Rathod, analyst at Vortexa. "Indian imports from the US are likely rising to compensate for Russian light sweet ESPO Blend cargoes, loadings of which have been impacted by the recent US sanctions."

The average Middle East exports to India for the full month of February may be slightly lower than the average seen in the first 20 days of the month. "Middle East loadings are generally lower in the second half of each

month compared to the first half," he said.

Most of the ships loaded at Middle East ports so far in February would reach India this month itself while most of those loaded at Russian and American ports will enter Indian waters in March. The average shipping time between the US and India is 45 days. It's about 25-30 days for ships from Russia and 6-12 days for tankers from the Middle East.

So, the February loading data from Russia and US ports would show up mostly in Indian imports in March. The loading data reflect the unsettling impact the January 10 sanctions are having on India-Russia oil trade. Buyers have until March 12 to settle all trade deals with sanction-

ed entities after which they will start attracting secondary sanctions.

Indian refiners are buying more supplies from the Middle East as well as the US to replace Russian cargoes. India is also under pressure from President Donald Trump to increase energy sourcing from the US to reduce trade imbalance between the two countries. Soon after Trump's meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi earlier this month, foreign secretary Vikram Misri said India's purchase of US energy would rise by two-thirds to \$25 billion in near future.

Indian refiners are, meanwhile, avoiding Russian cargoes whose delivery can get stuck due to sanctions.



# LNG may help, but US crude oil unlikely to bridge trade gap fast

S DINAKAR  
New Delhi, 23 February

US President Donald Trump urged his Indian counterpart, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, last week to increase purchases of energy to trim a \$36.7 billion trade surplus in India's favour — a demand Trump made during his first term as US president.

India made a big start in 2018, a year after Trump took office, with US crude oil imports jumping fivefold and peaking at 415,000 barrels per day (bpd) in 2021 when he left office.

The question is: Can we expect such big gains in India's purchases of oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG) in Trump's second term? The answer, industry experts said, maybe no.

Crude oil from the US is a tough buy in today's environment — supplies to India have already dropped by half from 2021 levels. LNG may gain some traction, but not fast enough to close a yawning trade gap.

Evolving geopolitics, new supply sources like Russia, and the complex configuration of Indian refineries may make it difficult for Indian state-run oil companies to embrace US oil at the expense of Russian export benchmark Urals or Gulf oil grades.

LNG could be a more viable trade, with around 14 per cent of India's annual LNG purchases coming from the US last financial year. However, the time required to close LNG purchase contracts and the long US voyages may reduce the fuel's effectiveness as a tool to rapidly slash a growing trade surplus, industry experts said.

Top officials at state refiners, including a company chairman as well as refining and trading heads, told *Business Standard* that there is no political pressure or mandate from the government to source US

## INDIA'S CRUDE IMPORTS

Volume terms (in '000 barrels per day)

	2021	% share of total imports	2024	% share of total imports
US	415	10	199	4
Russia	100	2	1,788	38

Value terms (in \$ bn) ■ US ■ Russia



Note: 2021 shows figures before Ukraine war

Sources: Kpler; Customs data

crude at present. New Delhi wants the trades to make commercial sense, the officials said.

US crude oil purchases will be "opportunity trades", the chairman of a state-run oil company said, in response to tenders. Traders will quote the price on a delivered basis on spot terms, and if attractive, Indian refiners will place orders.

"The thing is that American crude, per se, because of the distance unless there is a significant cost arbitrage, is not attractive enough to bring economic value to India regularly due to the big freight disadvantage compared to Gulf oil," said R Ramachandran, a Mumbai-based oil industry consultant.

The advent of discounted Russian oil, which was missing from India's crude palette during Trump's first term, has further complicated matters. Last year, Russian discounts averaged \$3-\$4 per barrel, led by Urals — a medium-gravity, lower-sulphur crude suited for Indian refineries, which produce more diesel.

Russian crude to India averaged less

than \$75 per barrel in November on a delivered basis, compared to US crude, which cost an average of \$83 per barrel, according to Indian Customs data.

### US energy potential

There's no denying the scope, though. Indian Customs data shows that exports of crude oil and natural gas to India last financial year totalled a combined \$6.4 billion, accounting for around 18 per cent of the US-India trade deficit.

Last year, the US supplied just 199,000 bpd, accounting for a 4 per cent share of India's 4.7 million bpd crude imports in 2024. Russia supplied 38 per cent, while Iraq accounted for nearly 20 per cent. In 2021, the US shared third place with the United Arab Emirates, holding a 10 per cent share of India's overall crude imports — Russia had a mere 2 per cent share that year.

If Indian refiners manage to take US oil purchases back to pre-Ukraine war levels, India could trim its surplus by another 19 per cent, or \$6.5 billion annually, based

on November prices. If LNG purchases are doubled — still only 60 per cent of Qatar's levels — that would add another \$1.5 billion, or 4 per cent of the surplus.

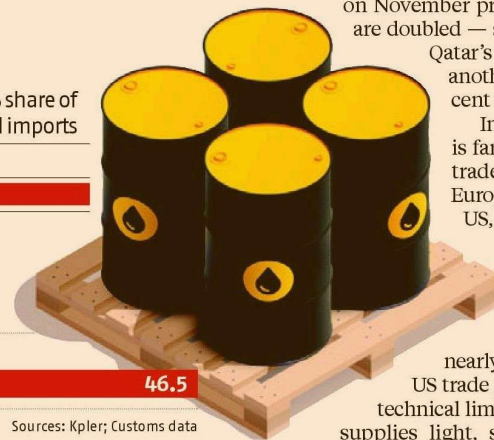
India's surplus, however, is far below the \$236 billion trade surplus that the European Union has with the US, and it faces similar pressure from Trump to buy more US energy.

So, doubling energy purchases from a low base could shave off nearly a quarter of the India-US trade gap. However, there are technical limitations. The US largely supplies light, sweet premium crude grades, which offer less value to increasingly complex Indian refineries, fed on a typical diet of Iraqi or Russian grades.

For US oil to be attractive, the US benchmark WTI crude must be priced significantly lower than the European benchmark Brent or the Dubai benchmark. Freight rates must also be low enough to make the landed cost attractive, Ramachandran said.

"India may buy more oil from the US, but it will all finally depend on the economics — price, shipping cost, and rupee-dollar exchange rate," said Narendra Taneja, a leading oil expert. "For India, it is all about economics when it comes to buying oil."

"As long as Henry Hub prices remain low, US LNG will remain competitive," said Anne-Sophie Corbeau, a global LNG expert at Columbia University's Center on Global Energy Policy. "But it also depends on what India deems affordable. I remember an Indian minister saying in 2015 that he wanted LNG at \$5 per million British thermal units — and there is no US LNG delivered at that price."



STATSGURU

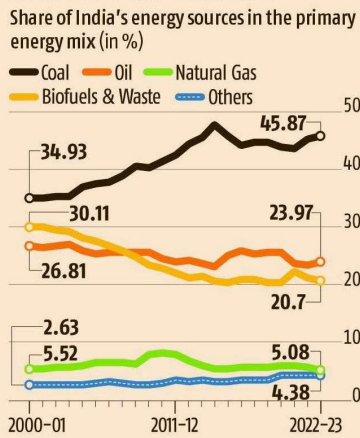


# Natural gas targets remain blurry

**YASH KUMAR SINGHAL**  
 India's ambition of increasing the share of natural gas in its energy mix to 15 per cent by 2030 appears unlikely to be realised. A recent report by the International Energy Agency (IEA) highlights that the share of natural gas supply in India's primary energy mix declined to 5.08 per cent in 2022-23 from 8.23 per cent in 2010-11 (Chart 1). The report, titled 'India Gas Market Report', shows that the share of industrial use of natural gas more than doubled

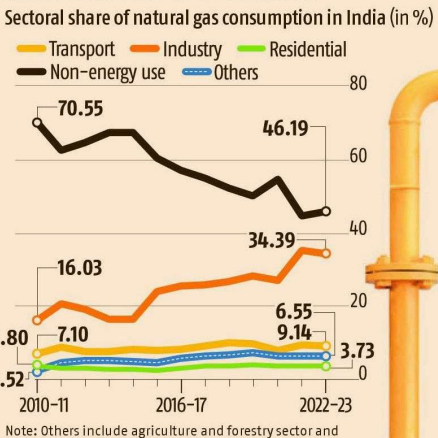
between 2010-11 and 2022-23 (Chart 2). The share of natural gas imports in gross energy imports fell from 7.51 per cent in 2020-21 to 5.43 per cent in 2022-23 (Chart 3). Total number of piped natural gas (PNG) connections increased at a 21.23 per cent compound annual growth rate (CAGR) between March 2018 and March 2023 (Chart 4). The report also posits Gujarat as a model for India's gas-based economy, with natural gas accounting for 25 per cent of its energy mix. Gujarat also tops the list in share of India's natural gas consumption at 23.85 per cent (Charts 5 and 6).

## 1 SHARE OF NATURAL GAS LOWEST THIS CENTURY



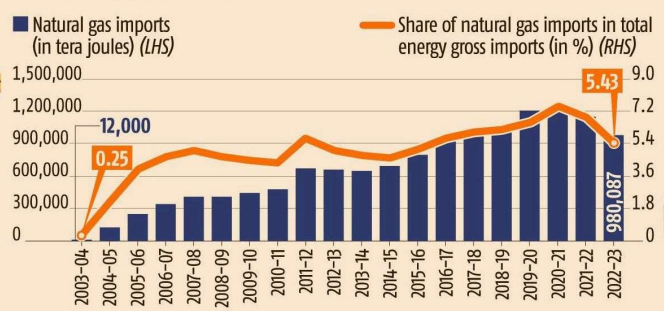
Note: Others include nuclear, geothermal, and hydro energy. India excludes biofuels and waste from the primary energy mix in its calculations, due to which the share of natural gas in the primary energy consumption is 6.4% in 2022-23  
 Source: International Energy Agency, BS calculations

## 2 INDUSTRIAL USE OF NATURAL GAS ON THE RISE



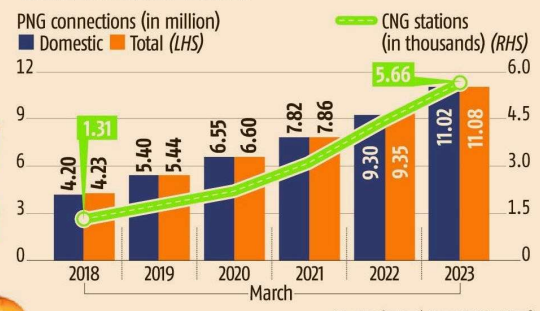
Note: Others include agriculture and forestry sector and commercial and public services sector  
 Source: International Energy Agency, BS calculations

## 3 DECLINE IN SHARE OF NATURAL GAS IMPORTS IN RECENT YEARS



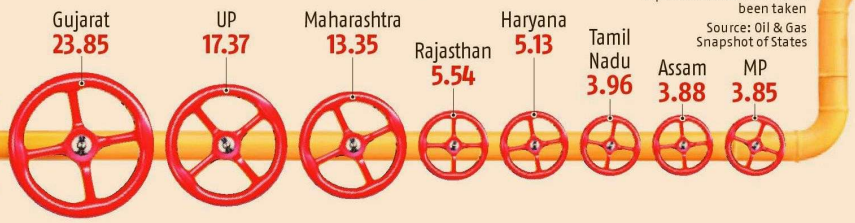
Source: International Energy Agency, BS calculations

## 4 NATURAL GAS INFRASTRUCTURE GROWING STEADILY



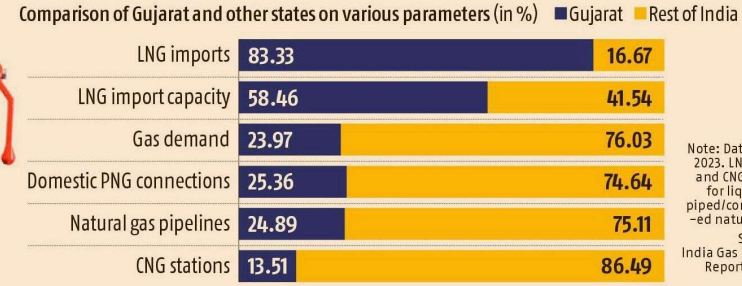
Source: Annual Report 2022-23 of Petroleum & Natural Gas Regulatory Board

## 6 GUJARAT CONSUMES ALMOST A FOURTH OF INDIA'S NATURAL GAS



Note: Monthly averages (from Apr-Dec 2024) of total gas consumption have been taken for calculations. Only top 8 consumer states have been taken  
 Source: Oil & Gas Snapshot of States

## 5 GUJARAT CHAMPION OF GAS-BASED ECOSYSTEM



Note: Data is for 2023. LNG, PNG and CNG stand for liquefied/piped/compressed natural gas  
 Source: India Gas Market Report by IEA

Graphics: MANOJ DATTA

# OIL AND THE WAR, 3 YEARS ON

S DINAKAR  
New Delhi, 23 February

When Vladimir Putin marched into Ukraine on February 24, 2022, backed by the full force of the Russian military, he likely did not anticipate that a war he expected to end in a few months would go through two American presidents, drive liquefied natural gas (LNG) prices to record highs and create a supply source of cheap oil for the world's fastest-growing major economy. Never before in history has a country been able to capture 45 per cent of a major crude oil market in just over two years, the way Russia has India's.

February 24, 2025, marks the third anniversary of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The war has devastated many, and become a proxy battle between the US-led Western world and Russia. Neutral countries like India, China, and Turkey, though, have gained from Western geopolitical rivalries, and the unravelling of relations between Europe and the US following Donald Trump's return to the presidency.

However, with signs of peace now on the horizon — after US officials met their Russian counterparts in Riyadh last week — it is unclear how a possible ceasefire and an end to sanctions will pan out for India.

The war provided Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government with an opportunity to reinforce India's strategic autonomy by resisting Washington's pressure to sanction Russia. New Delhi has continued to maintain trade relations with both the US and Russia.

"India's oil import structure has undergone a tectonic shift since the war, with Russia emerging as a cheaper, high-quality, and dependable supplier of crude oil," said Narendra Taneja, a Delhi-based leading energy expert.

After China, India has been the biggest global beneficiary of cheap Russian oil. This has enabled Indian refiners to save tens of billions of dollars in sourcing costs and enjoy some profitability while keeping pump prices stable for consumers. Cheaper crude has also made fuel exports competitive for companies like Reliance Industries.

The war led to an initial surge in gross refining margins, which enabled Indian Oil, Bharat Petroleum, and Hindustan Petroleum to reduce their dependence on New Delhi for financial support since these state-run refiners lack the authority to adjust petrol, diesel, and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) prices in line with international rates. This has helped ease the fiscal burden on the government by doing away with the necessity to provide for humongous energy subsidies in the annual Budget to bail out oil companies.

"India imported Russian crude after the crisis because of the benefits we got — almost one-third of our crude basket came from Russia," said Swarnendu Bhushan, co-head of research, institutional research, PL Capital.

Discounts are why India sources Russian oil, said R Ramachandran, oil industry consultant and former director, refineries, Bharat Petroleum. "Without, say, a \$3-\$4 per barrel discount, when I process, it is at a disadvantage to the Arab mix or something in terms of yield and margin creation," he added.

## The numbers

The Urals is a medium, low-sulphur grade. Its high transport costs and additional maintenance expenses, amounting to 70c-\$1 per barrel in some cases, made it unattractive to Indian refiners prior to the war.

In February 2020, Indian Oil signed its first term contract to import Russian crude after New Delhi's push for a deeper energy relationship with Russia in response to Putin's overtures and the need to diversify from Gulf supplies.



## CRUDE IMPORT STORY

India's crude oil purchase (\$ billion)

	FY22	Share (%)	FY23	Share (%)	FY24	Share (%)	Apr-Nov FY25	Annualised FY25	Share (%)
Russia	2.5	2	31	19	46.5	33	35.8	54	38
Iraq	30.3	25	33.6	21	28.9	21	18.3	27.5	19
Saudi Arabia	22.8	19	29	18	21.7	16	12.6	19	13
UAE	12.3	10	16.8	10	8.9	6	8.6	13	9
US	11.3	9.3	10.2	6	5	3.6	4.1	6.1	4
Total imports	122	NA	162	NA	139	NA	95	143	NA
Indian crude basket*	79	NA	93	NA	82.6	NA	80	NA	NA

\* in \$/barrel

Source: Commerce ministry & oil ministry data

The refiner agreed to import up to 2 million tonnes (40,000 barrels per day (bpd)) of Urals, then oil minister Dharmendra Pradhan said after meeting Rosneft CEO Igor Sechin.

However, ship tracking data reveals that in 2020, Indian Oil imported only 3,000 bpd in 2020 and none in 2021 — despite the agreement. In 2021, a year before the invasion, Russian oil shipments averaged only 100,000 bpd for a 2.4 per cent share of India's total imports.

"Unlike fixed-term agreements with West Asia, term contracts with Russia or with suppliers in the Americas are optional," a trader from a state refiner explained. "We only take crude if the delivered price offers value."

This changed dramatically when the war began and Russia offered steep discounts.

In 2022, India's Russian oil imports surged sevenfold to 740,000 bpd from a year earlier, capturing a 16.4 per cent market share, according to data from market intelligence agency Kpler. In 2023, imports more than doubled to 1.8 million bpd, reaching 39 per cent of total crude imports. These levels sustained into 2024.

The import of Russian crude jumped in 2023 when discounts averaged \$15 per barrel in the first quarter — seven times current levels — after Western powers imposed a \$60 per barrel price cap on Russian oil. India capitalised on these discounts, buying Russian oil worth \$132 billion over the past three financial years, averaging \$44 billion annually, according to calculations based on Customs data. In contrast, Russian crude imports had stood at a mere \$2.5 billion in the year before the war.

In 2023-24 (FY24), India imported \$46.5 billion worth of Russian oil, followed by \$35.8 billion from April-November of 2024-25 (FY25), according to Customs data values on a delivered basis. The influx of Russian crude has displaced supplies from the US, West Africa, UAE, and Saudi Arabia, ship tracking data shows. The share of US oil has halved since 2021-22, while that of Saudi Arabia and Iraq has dropped by 6 percentage points each. Iraq's oil exports to India totalled \$28.9 billion in FY24, Saudi Arabia's \$21.7 billion, and US crude purchases stood at just \$5 billion.

## Impact of US sanctions

The latest round of US sanctions, imposed by

the outgoing Biden administration on January 10, 2025, has disrupted India's Russian oil purchases. The measures targeted 183 tankers, Russia's state-owned shipping giant Sovcomflot, two major Russian oil producers, two insurers covering Russian crude shipments to India, and some major Dubai-based Russian traders. These restrictions are expected to reduce Russia's share of India's crude market to 20-25 per cent in March, industry officials said.

India's top refining officials, it is learnt, struggled to make headway in crude supply negotiations with the Russian delegation at the recent India Energy Week in Delhi.

Russian suppliers are yet to find a solution to resume regular supplies given India's insistence on "clean cargoes". Indian refiners have already rejected all US-sanctioned cargoes heading their way in February. But that has not stopped Russia from shipping an estimated 1.7 million bpd of oil that month — 15 per cent higher than pre-sanction December 2024 levels.

## Prices and outlook

"Much now depends on how the US-Russia talks on the Ukraine war proceed," said Tilak Doshi, an international energy expert.

"Once Russian supply normalises, the discounts will disappear," Bhushan said. He expects Russia's share to whittle down to just 10 per cent once the discounts go.

Peace in Ukraine may lead to additional flows of Russian oil over time, but Trump's threat to choke Iranian oil exports might offset this surplus, Bhushan said. He was unsure whether Opec would boost production because "they have tried to maintain balance, and they don't want to let prices slide below \$70/barrel".

Brent, has remained volatile this year — rising from \$76.7 per barrel in early January to \$83 per barrel on January 13 after new US sanctions were announced, before falling back to \$76 per barrel. India's crude oil basket, which comprises mostly medium, sour grades preferred by its refiners, and some light, sweet oils, has averaged \$79 per barrel in FY25 — down \$13 per barrel from 2022-23 when the war pushed prices to an average of \$93.1 per barrel.

Many experts expect prices to remain stable in the range of \$70-80 per barrel this year, irrespective of the outcome of the peace talks.

# अमेरिका से तेल खरीद बढ़ानी होगी मुश्किल

एस दिनकर  
नई दिल्ली, 23 फरवरी

अमेरिका के राष्ट्रपति डॉनल्ड ट्रंप ने पिछले सप्ताह प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी से अमेरिका के साथ भारत के 35 अरब डॉलर के व्यापार अधिशेष को कम करने के लिए ऊर्जा की खरीद बढ़ाने का आग्रह किया था। ट्रंप ने यह मांग अपने पहले कार्यकाल में भी की थी।

पहले कार्यकाल में ट्रंप के सत्ता संभालने के एक साल बाद 2018 में भारत ने बड़ी पहल की थी जिससे अमेरिका से कच्चे तेल का आयात पांच गुना बढ़ गया था और 2021 में जब उन्होंने सत्ता छोड़ी तो यह 4,15,000 बैरल प्रति दिन के उच्चतम स्तर पर पहुंच गया था। सवाल उठता है कि क्या हम ट्रंप के दूसरे कार्यकाल में भी अमेरिका से तेल और तरलीकृत प्राकृतिक गैस (एलएनजी) की खरीद में बड़ी वृद्धि की उम्मीद कर सकते हैं? उद्योग विशेषज्ञों का कहना है कि इसका जवाब शायद नहीं है। आज के हालात में भारत के लिए अमेरिका से कच्चा तेल खरीदना मुश्किल है, क्योंकि 2021 में अमेरिका से जितना तेल खरीदा जाता था अब उससे करीब आधा तेल ही लिया जा रहा है। एलएनजी की खरीद थोड़ी बढ़ सकती है मगर उतना भी नहीं जिससे व्यापार अधिशेष की भरपाई हो जाए।

उद्योग के विशेषज्ञों ने कहा कि बदलती भू-राजनीति, रूस जैसे नए आपूर्तिकर्ता और

## बढ़ सकती है चुनौती

■ बदलती भू-राजनीति, रूस जैसे नए आपूर्तिकर्ता और रिफाइनरियों के जटिल ढांचे के कारण अमेरिका से तेल खरीदना नहीं होगा आसान



भारतीय रिफाइनरियों के जटिल ढांचे के कारण सरकारी तेल कंपनियों के लिए रूसी निर्यात बेंचमार्क यूरोल या खाड़ी तेल ग्रेड की जगह अमेरिकी तेल को खरीदना चुनौतीपूर्ण हो सकता है। एलएनजी इस व्यवहार्य हो सकता है। पिछले वित्त वर्ष में भारत ने करीब 14 फीसदी एलएनजी अमेरिका से आयात की थी मगर एलएनजी

■ अमेरिका के साथ व्यापार अधिशेष कम करने के लिए ट्रंप ने भारत को अमेरिका से ईंधन खरीद बढ़ाने का किया है आग्रह

■ ट्रंप के पहले कार्यकाल के दौरान भारत ने अमेरिका से तेल खरीद बढ़ाई थी मगर इस बार स्थितियां अलग हैं

■ अमेरिका से कच्चे तेल के बजाय एलएनजी का आयात बढ़ाना हो सकता है व्यवहार्य

खरीद अनुबंधों को पूरा करने में लगने वाला समय और लंबी दूरी से अमेरिका का मकसद पूरा नहीं होगा।

सरकारी रिफाइनरियों के शीर्ष अधिकारियों ने बिजनेस स्टैंडर्ड को बताया कि अभी तक सरकार की ओर से अमेरिका से कच्चा तेल मंगाने के लिए कोई राजनीतिक दबाव या आदेश नहीं है। सरकार चाहती है कि व्यापार

वाणिज्यिक समझदारी से किया जाना चाहिए। एक सरकारी तेल कंपनी के चेयरमैन ने कहा कि अमेरिका में कच्चे तेल की खरीद 'अवसर व्यापार' होगी। व्यापारी हाजिर शर्तों पर आपूर्ति के आधार पर भाव तय करते हैं और यदि कीमत आकर्षक होगी तो भारतीय रिफाइनर ऑर्डर देंगे।

मुंबई में तेल उद्योग के कंसल्टेंट आर रामचंद्रन ने कहा, 'लंबी दूरी के कारण अमेरिकी कच्चा तेल भारत के लिए नियमित आधार पर आर्थिक रूप से आकर्षक नहीं है क्योंकि खाड़ी देशों की तुलना में अमेरिका से तेल की दुलाई में ज्यादा खर्च आता है।'

ट्रंप के पहले कार्यकाल के दौरान रूस से सस्ता तेल नहीं मिल रहा था मगर अभी भारत वहां से सस्ता तेल खरीद रहा है। ऐसे में अमेरिका से तेल आयात करना और भी मुश्किल होगा। पिछले साल रूस के तेल पर शूट आउटन 3 से 4 डॉलर प्रति बैरल थी। भारतीय आयात के आंकड़ों के अनुसार नवंबर में रूस के कच्चे तेल की औसत कीमत 75 डॉलर प्रति बैरल से कम थी, जबकि अमेरिकी कच्चे तेल की औसत कीमत 83 डॉलर प्रति बैरल थी।

भारत के आयात आंकड़ों से पता चलता है कि पिछले वित्त वर्ष में अमेरिका ने भारत को 6.4 अरब डॉलर का कच्चा तेल और प्राकृतिक गैस निर्यात किए थे जो अमेरिका-भारत व्यापार घाटे का लगभग 18 फीसदी था। (शेष पृष्ठ 4 पर)

## अमेरिका से तेल खरीद बढ़ाना होगा मुश्किल

पृष्ठ 1 का शेष...

पिछले साल भारत के कुल कच्चे तेल के आयात में अमेरिका की हिस्सेदारी महज 4 फीसदी रही। रूस से 38 फीसदी और इराक से 20 फीसदी तेल का आयात किया गया। 2021 में भारत के कुल तेल आयात में अमेरिका और संयुक्त अरब अमीरात की हिस्सेदारी 10 फीसदी थी और रूस का हिस्सा महज 2 फीसदी था।

यदि भारतीय रिफाइनरियां अमेरिका से तेल खरीद को यूक्रेन युद्ध से पूर्व के स्तर पर ले जाने में सफल होती हैं तो नवंबर की कीमतों के अनुसार भारत वार्षिक आधार पर अमेरिका के साथ अपने व्यापार

अधिशेष को 19 फीसदी या 6.5 अरब डॉलर तक कम कर सकता है। इसी तरह अगर एलएनजी की खरीद को दोगुना कर दिया जाए तो अधिशेष में 4 फीसदी की और कमी आएगी।

अमेरिका संग व्यापार में यूरोपीय संघ का अधिशेष 236 अरब डॉलर है, जो भारत से काफी अधिक है। यूरोपीय संघ को भी तेल खरीद बढ़ाने के मामले में ट्रंप के दबाव का सामना करना पड़ रहा है।

अग्रणी तेल विशेषज्ञ नरेंद्र तनेजा ने कहा, 'भारत अमेरिका से अधिक तेल खरीद सकता है मगर यह सब कीमत, मालवहन लागत, रुपया-डॉलर विनिमय दर आदि पर निर्भर करेगा।'

# पेट्रोल पंप पर लूट करने वाला एक और गिरफ्तार

गाजियाबाद, वरिष्ठ संवाददाता। दिल्ली-मेरठ एक्सप्रेसवे पर पेट्रोल पंप पर गुरुवार देर रात हुई लूट के मामले में पुलिस ने रविवार को एक और आरोपी गिरफ्तार कर लिया। तीसरे लुटेरे की तलाश में पुलिस जुटी है।

डीसीपी देहात सुरेंद्र नाथ तिवारी ने बताया कि पकड़ा गया बदमाश बुलंदशहर के दौलतपुरा निवासी विकास चौहान है। उसे रेलवे लाइन नहर अंडरपास के पास से गिरफ्तार किया गया है। पूछताछ में विकास ने बताया कि वह नौवीं कक्षा तक पढ़ा है। करीब छह माह पूर्व वह अजय बंसल के पेट्रोल पंप पर काम किया था। वहां

- अब तक पुलिस ने दो आरोपियों को पकड़ा
- तीसरे की तलाश में जुटी हैं पुलिस टीमें

पर पहले से हापुड़ के पलवाड़ा गांव निवासी रजत भी काम करता था। कुछ समय बाद हापुड़ निवासी सुमित कुमार भी वहां काम करने लगा। छह महीने काम के दौरान वेतन नहीं दिया गया। फिर तीनों ने नौकरी छोड़ दी, लेकिन वेतन के बचे हुए पैसे कई बार मांगने पर भी नहीं दिए। इससे नाराज होकर तीनों ने वारदात को अंजाम दिया था।