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As oxygen producers are stretched to the limit, industries lend helping hand

TV JAYAN/KUWAR SINGH

New Delhi, April 19

With the number of active Covid-19 cases touching almost 20 lakh and with more than one lakh more patients being added daily, the demand for medical oxygen has shot up dramatically. The government has already diverted for medical use, oxygen used for industrial applications, barring that meant for a few critical industries.

The demand for medical oxygen has already touched nearly 60 per cent of total oxygen produced. Some critical industries such as nuclear power plants, pharmaceutical firms, petroleum refineries and steel plants have been exempted from this. Many States are facing severe oxygen shortage.

According to a statement by the Health Secretary

Rajesh Bhushan in September last year, India produces around 6,900 tonnes of oxygen per day and nearly a third of this is used for industrial applications.

Expanding capacities

With the situation becoming precarious, many industries have come forward to augment the supply of medical oxygen in the country.

In February, for instance, Inox Air Products, the biggest domestic manufacturer of medical gases, announced that it will add 1,500 tonnes to its daily medical oxygen generation capacity across six new plants. However, commissioning the projects is expected to take around 18-24 months, an Inox official told *BusinessLine*. The firm currently has a production capacity of 2,000 tonnes per



India produces around 6,900 tonnes of oxygen daily

day. Manufacturers of medical oxygen are also wary of any plant breakdown due to wear and tear. "We are concerned because all our plants have been running at 100 per cent capacity since the pandemic began," the Inox official said.

Breath of life

Similarly, public sector Indian Oil Corporation has begun the supply of 150 tonnes of oxygen free to hospitals in

Delhi, Haryana and Punjab. "Indian Oil has diverted the high-purity oxygen used in its Mono Ethylene Glycol unit to produce medical-grade liquid oxygen at its Panipat Refinery & Petrochemical Complex. The throughput of the unit has also been scaled down for a more critical cause," the firm said in a statement on Monday.

Jindal Steel and Power Ltd is another firm that rose to the occasion. Over the last

two weeks, the firm has been supplying around 50-100 tonnes of liquid oxygen daily to hospitals from its plants in Raigarh, Chhattisgarh, and Angul, Odisha, a spokesperson said.

Cooperative fertiliser major IFFCO, on the other hand, said on Monday that it would set up four medical oxygen units in its fertiliser plants in Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat and Odisha at a cost of ₹30 crore. IFFCO said it has already issued the order and the commissioning of the plants can happen in 15 days. It plans to supply oxygen free of cost to hospitals.

Looking at the increasing demand for medical oxygen, the Centre has also decided to import 50,000 tonnes of oxygen. The Health Ministry has been asked to invite the tenders at the earliest.

'Covid wave may delay privatisation, divestment'

Officials say LIC's IPO could also take a hit given the complex valuation process

SHISHIR SINHA

New Delhi, April 19

The surge in Covid-19 cases across the country is likely to impact the progress on strategic disinvestment and privatisation programme during this fiscal, which could further delay the sale of government's stake in companies such as Bharat Petroleum Corporation and Shipping Corporation of India.

Privatisation of two nationalised banks and a government-owned general insurance company could also be impeded. Officials also indicated that the initial public offering (IPO) of LIC may see some delay.

After the Budget, the Department of Public Asset and Investment Management (DIPAM) in the Finance Min-

istry, along with other departments and NITI Aayog, went into a huddle to finalise the next course of action on various proposals of strategic disinvestment and privatisation. In fact, NITI Aayog has recommended names of public sector banks and a public sector non-life insurance company.

Though these recommendations are yet to be made public, an official pointed out that the names do not include the six large public sector banks which have completed amalgamation during recent years. These include State Bank of India, Punjab National Bank, Bank of Baroda, Indian Bank, Canara Bank and Union Bank.

Therefore, the probable candidates have to be



Privatisation of insurance and banking companies requires some legislative action

picked-up from the remaining six: Indian Overseas Bank, UCO Bank, Bank of India, Central Bank of India and Punjab & Sindh Bank. He added that the same cannot be said about the public sector general insurance companies.

They include General Insurance Corporation of India, the New India Assurance Company, United India Insurance Company, the Oriental Insurance Company and National Insurance

Company besides the specialised Agriculture Insurance Company of India.

Another official said for the privatisation of the two banks and an insurance company, some legislative action is required along with road shows and other ground work. "All these cannot happen overnight and it will depend on how the government prioritises the work," he added.

IPO of LIC

On the initial public offering (IPO) of LIC, the official said though the legislative action has been completed, valuation will be a long-drawn exercise.

Also, LIC has several real estate properties spread over the country. Due to the pandemic, physical verification of assets will be difficult. Also, once the designated actuary gives its views, it needs to be peer-reviewed. The gov-

ernment has said a lot of work has to be done to meet the target for the third quarter of FY22. With the current situation, the target needs to be revised.

The strategic disinvestment of BPCL has moved one step forward with the completion of the sale of Numaligarh Refinery. Interested parties are soon expected to be invited for financial bids. Same is the case with Shipping Corporation of India. However, the official was not sure when this will happen, given the uncertain times. The only strategic disinvestment that is progressing well is that of Air India, data for which has been opened to bidders. So, there shouldn't be any problem in the completion of this disinvestment, the official said. The government has set a target of ₹1.75-lakh crore to be raised through disinvestment during FY22.



The move follows the Centre's decision to prohibit the supply of oxygen for industrial use due to shortage in hospitals. **REUTERS**

IOC, BPCL supply oxygen to hospitals

Staff Writer

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State-run Indian Oil Corp. (IOC) has started free supply of 150 metric tonnes of oxygen to hospitals in Delhi, Haryana and Punjab, it said in a statement on Monday.

The move follows the government's decision to prohibit the supply of oxygen for industrial use, barring nine select sectors, by manufacturers from 22 April in view of the shortage of medical oxygen across hospitals amid a spike in covid-related casualties.

"The first batch of the lifesaver medical grade oxygen was dispatched today to Maha Durga Charitable Trust Hospital, New Delhi. Delhi is already facing an oxygen emergency situation," IOC added.

Given the shortage of medical oxygen, Indian Railways is also planning to transport liquid medical oxygen (LMO) and oxygen cylinders across key corridors on Oxygen Express trains. "In the face of a massive surge in demand for medical oxygen during the second wave of the pandemic, Indian Oil has diverted the high-purity oxy-

gen used in its mono ethylene glycol unit to produce medical-grade liquid oxygen at its Panipat refinery and petrochemical complex," IOC added.

State-owned Bharat Petroleum Corp. Ltd on Monday said it will be diverting 100 metric tonnes of oxygen produced at its refineries. "BPCL, the second-largest oil marketing company, has started supply of 100 metric tonnes of oxygen at no cost, to various hospitals in view of the shortage of the same for critical patients of covid-19,"

it said.

With India facing a very severe covid-19 second wave, its creaking healthcare system has yet again been exposed, leading to shortages of oxygen, vaccines, testing kits, hospital bed and ICUs.

On 15 April, BPCL had said that it will supply medical oxygen from its Kochi refinery to government hospitals in Kerala. The company will supply 15 tonnes per day of oxygen to government hospitals from this facility. It had supplied 25 tonnes of medical oxygen in October-November, when the daily cases were on a rise.

Kalpana Pathak from Mumbai contributed to this story.

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IOC, BPCL to supply oxygen to hospitals in Delhi, Haryana, Punjab

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 19

AFTER RELIANCE INDUSTRIES, state-owned Indian Oil (IOC) and Bharat Petroleum (BPCL) have begun diverting oxygen produced at their refineries to supplement the availability of medical oxygen in states worst hit by Covid-19.

In a statement, IOC said it has “begun the supply of 150 tonnes of oxygen at no cost to various hospitals in Delhi, Haryana and Punjab”. “The first batch of the lifesaver medical grade oxygen was dispatched today to Maha Durga Charitable Trust Hospital, New Delhi,” it said.

In a separate statement, BPCL said it has started supply of 100 tonne of oxygen at no cost. “The company will be supplying around 100 tonne per month,” it said. BPCL is also supplying 1.5 tonnes per day of medical oxygen to Kerala from its Kochi Refinery.

IOC chairman S M Vaidya reiterated the firm’s support to the country. “All through the pandemic, our prime focus has been to ensure the supply of essential fuels 24X7. We have also stepped up the production of raw material for PPEs, and we are now providing lifesaving medical oxygen to hospitals.”

Oil drops after weekly surge as covid-19 sweeps through India

Oil is headed for back-to-back losses after posting the biggest weekly advance since March, with the pandemic sweeping key importer India and the global case count hitting a weekly record. West Texas Intermediate dropped 0.3, while Brent shed 0.3%. Last week, crude futures were boosted by a wave of positive economic data from the US and China, another drawdown in crude stockpiles, and optimistic assessments about prospects for consumption over 2021 from both the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and the International Energy Agency. Oil has risen almost 30% in 2021 in a stuttering advance as progress on vaccines to combat the coronavirus outbreak aids demand, but virus flare-ups in some countries act as a substantial drag. After Opec+ presided over supply cuts to drain stockpiles, the cartel now plans to start restoring barrels from May. **BLOOMBERG**

Oil steadies as dollar slumps

Oil prices were little changed on Monday, supported by a weaker US dollar but pressured by concerns about the impact on demand from rising coronavirus cases in India and other countries. Brent crude was down 4 cents, at \$66.73 a barrel by 8.36 pm IST, after rising 6 per cent last week. West Texas Intermediate US oil was up 3 cents at \$63.16 a barrel, having gained 6.4 per cent last week.

The US dollar traded at a six-week low versus major peers on Monday, with Treasury yields hovering near their weakest in five weeks. With oil priced in dollars, a softer greenback could spur demand from holders of other currencies.

REUTERS

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SM Vaidya, chairman, Indian Oil

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'Recovery in fuel demand may be hit'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

Rising coronavirus infections, prompting a slew of local lockdowns across the country, are threatening to slow recovery in fuel demand as stronger containment measures will hit economic activity, officials said on Monday.

After Maharashtra, Delhi and Rajasthan have imposed limited-period lockdowns, which will impact travel and business activity. Other States have implemented curfews at different times of the day and of varying durations.

"The first casualty of such measures is mobility and resultant fuel consumption," a senior official at a public sector oil marketing company said.

Covid surge may upend recovery of fuel demand

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: Rising Coronavirus infections, prompting a slew of local lockdowns across the country, are threatening to slow recovery in fuel demand as stronger containment measures will hit economic activity, officials said on Monday.

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"The first casualty of such measures is mobility and a resultant fuel consumption," a senior official at a public sector oil marketing company said.

A record 2,73,810 coronavirus infections on Monday pushed overall cases to more than 1.5 crore, making India the second-worst affected nation after the US, which has reported more than 3.1 crore infections. India's deaths from COVID-19 rose by a record 1,619 to nearly 1.8 lakh.

Diesel, petrol, jet fuel and LPG demand all declined in the first half of April from a month earlier and the trend is likely to worsen in the second half with more states imposing restrictions.

India's most used fuel, diesel consumption slipped 3 per cent over the previous month while petrol sales were down 5 per cent, the official said.

LPG demand, which had bucked the trend in the wider fuel market and increased during Covid, fell by 6.4 per cent



to 1.03 million tonnes in the first half of this month. Jet fuel demand was down by 8 per cent.

"We are seeing 20-25 per cent fall in CNG sales this month," another official said. "New vehicles are market creators and the lockdowns will virtually stop all new vehicle sales." These trends indicate fuel consumption, which had seen a fragile recovery in the latter part of 2020-21 fiscal, dropping again, officials said.

India's fuel demand contracted 9.1 per cent in the financial year ended March 31, the first in more than two decades, as a stringent lockdown imposed to curb the spread of the pandemic pummeled economic activity.

For 2021-22 fiscal (April 2021 to March 22), the Oil Ministry had projected a near 10 per cent price in fuel consumption. This of course before the resurgence of Covid inflections.

"If the current wave of infections continues for another month, we will have to revise the projections," an official said.

Maharashtra, the worst affected state, has announced a lockdown until May 1 with exceptions only for essential services, exporters and transportation. Delhi too has announced a six-day lockdown and partial lockdowns have been announced in states like Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan.

Industries in Haryana, an auto and services hub, are operating at a lower capacity because migrant workers have left for their hometowns.

India consumed 194.63 million tonnes of petroleum products in 2020-21 as compared with 214.12 million tonnes demand in the previous year, according to oil ministry's Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC).

This is the first time that the fuel consumption has contracted since 1998-99, the most historical year for which government data is available.

The demand contraction was led by diesel, the most consumed fuel in the country. Diesel consumption fell 12 per cent to 72.72 million tonnes while petrol demand shrank 6.7 per cent to 27.95 million tonnes.

Iffco to set up medical oxygen plants

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 19 APRIL

Cooperative fertiliser major Iffco today said it will set up four medical oxygen plants with an investment of about Rs 30 crore in the next 15 days in Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat and Odisha, in a bid to supply it for free to hospitals.

The plant will be put up at Kalol (Gujarat), Aonla and Phulpur (Uttar Pradesh) and at Paradeep (Odisha), it said.

"The order has been already issued. It will take at least 15 days from today to transport, install and commission an oxygen plant. A dedicated team is working on this project. Iffco will try to commission it as soon as possible for the service of the nation," Iffco spokesperson said.

Iffco is investing around Rs 30 crore on four oxygen plants, he added.

On Sunday late night, Iffco managing director and chief



executive officer U S Awasthi had announced that the cooperative is going to establish an oxygen plant with capacity of 200 cubic meter per hour in its Kalol unit in Gujarat.

"Iffco will give free oxygen to hospital, each cylinder of 46.7 litres," he had said.

The proposed oxygen plant in Kalol will generate medical grade oxygen and fill 700 big D-type cylinders daily and also 300 medium B-size cylinders on demand, which will be supplied to all hospitals for free," he had added.

Awasthi had also said that Iffco will fill up the oxygen cylinders free of cost for hospitals, but they need to bring their own cylinders for refill. A

security deposit will be taken if cylinders taken from Iffco to avoid hoarding of oxygen.

In view of the recent surge in Covid-19 cases, there is huge demand for oxygen for effective clinical treatment of Covid-19 patients.

IOC, BPCL to supply oxygen: After Reliance Industries Ltd, state-owned Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) have begun diverting oxygen produced at their refineries to supplement the availability of medical oxygen in states worst hit by Covid-19.

In a statement, IOC said it has "begun the supply of 150

tons of oxygen at no cost to various hospitals in Delhi, Haryana and Punjab."

"The first batch of the life-saver medical grade oxygen was dispatched today to Maha Durga Charitable Trust Hospital, New Delhi," it said. "Delhi is already facing an oxygen emergency situation."

In the face of a massive surge in demand for medical oxygen during the second wave of the pandemic, IOC has diverted the high-purity oxygen used in its Mono Ethylene Glycol (MEG) unit to produce medical-grade liquid oxygen at its Panipat refinery and petrochemical complex in Haryana.

The throughput of the unit has also been scaled down for a more critical cause.

In a separate statement, BPCL said it has started supply of 100 tons of oxygen at no cost. "The company will be supplying around 100 tons per month," it said.

IOC to supply oxygen to hosps in Delhi, Hry, Punjab

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In a separate statement, BPCL said it has started supply of 100 tonnes of oxygen at no cost. "The company will be supplying around 100 tonnes per month," it said.

With average daily cases of COVID-19 rising again since last one month, the demand for oxygen has significantly risen. In fact, in most parts of the country, the cases are hitting new peak, thereby disrupting the demand-supply scenario for medical oxygen.

Last week, Reliance's twin oil refineries in Jamnagar in Gujarat through minor process modification converted industrial oxygen into medical-use oxygen that can be administered to COVID-19 patients low on oxygen. In all, 100 tonnes of oxygen is being supplied from the Jamnagar refineries free of cost. BPCL is also supplying 1.5 tonnes per day of medical oxygen to Kerala from its Kochi Refinery.

Last year, BPCL had supplied around 25 tonnes of medical oxygen when the average daily cases had risen

in October-November.

The Kochi Refinery has a provision to produce and store liquid oxygen of 99.7 per cent purity.

Oil refineries can produce limited volumes of industrial oxygen in air-separation plants meant for nitrogen production. Scrubbing out other gases such as carbon dioxide can convert it into medical-use oxygen with 99.9 per cent purity.

Reliance operates the world's largest oil refining complex at Jamnagar in Gujarat.

IOC Chairman S M Vaidya reiterated the firm's unstinted support to the country at this critical hour in every possible way. "All through the pandemic, our prime focus has been to ensure the supply of essential fuels 24X7. We have also stepped up the production of raw material for PPEs, and we are now providing lifesaving medical oxygen to hospitals.

"Our expertise and assets, including refineries, pipelines, petrochemical units, bottling plants, terminals and aviation fuel stations, will continue to serve the people despite the stiff challenges, he added.

New Covid surge may upend fuel demand recovery

New Delhi: Rising coronavirus infections, prompting a slew of local lockdowns across the country, are threatening to slow recovery in fuel demand as stronger containment measures will hit economic activity, officials said on Monday.

After Maharashtra, Delhi and Rajasthan have imposed limited period lockdowns, which will impact travel and business activity. Other states have implemented curfews at different times of the day and of varying durations.

“The first casualty of such measures is mobility and a resultant fuel consumption,” a senior official at a public sector oil marketing company said.

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Diesel, petrol, jet fuel and LPG demand all declined in the first half of April from a month earlier and the trend is likely to worsen in the second half with more states imposing restrictions. India’s most used fuel, diesel consumption slipped 3 per cent over the previous month while petrol sales were down 5 per cent, the official said. **PTI**

कोविड संक्रमण फैलने से ईंधन मांग में आ रहे सुधार पर पड़ सकता है प्रतिकूल असर

ई दिल्ली, (भास)। देश में कोरोना संक्रमण के बढ़ते मामले और इसके रोकथाम के लिये स्थानीय स्तर पर लगायी जा रही पाबंदियों से ईंधन मांग में जो वृद्धि होने लगी थी वह एक बार फिर धीमी पड़ने का आँखिभ दिखा देने लगा है।

रोकथाम के लिये देश भर में स्थानीय स्तर पर लॉकडाउन जैसे कड़े उपायों से आर्थिक गतिविधियाँ प्रभावित होगी। अधिकारियों ने सोमवार को यह बात कही। महाराष्ट्र के बाद दिल्ली और राजस्थान ने सीमित आबादी के लिये लॉकडाउन लगाये हैं। इनसे खान और व्यापार गतिविधियाँ प्रभावित होंगी। अन्य राज्य अलग-अलग समय और

विधिन आबादी के लिये कई नए उपाय रहे हैं। सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र की एक तेज विपणन कंपनी को वरिष्ठ अधिकारी ने कहा, इस प्रकार की पाबंदियों से आभारगामी पर असर पड़ेगा। फलतः ईंधन खपत प्रभावित होगी। स्वास्थ्य मंत्रालय के आंकड़ों के अनुसार भारत में कोविड-19 के एक दिन में रिकॉर्ड 2,73,810 नए मामले सामने आने के साथ ही संक्रमण के कुल मामले 1.50 करोड़ के कर पहुंच गए हैं। अमेरिका के बाद भारत कोरोना से सर्वाधिक प्रभावित दूसरा देश बन गया है। अमेरिका में कोरोना संक्रमण के 3.1 करोड़ मामले हैं। देश में कोरोना संक्रमण के कारण पिछले 24 घंटे में रिकॉर्ड 1,619 लोगों की

मौत के साथ परने वाले को सखा बढ़कर करीब 1.8 लाख पहुंच गयी है। होजल, पेट्रोल, विमान ईंधन और एलसीडी गैस में अट्रैल के पहले पखवाड़े में पिछले माह की इसी अवधि के मुकामने कमी आयी है। अब ज्यादा राज्यों में पाबंदियों के साथ दुसरे पखवाड़े में मांग पर और असर पड़ने को अज्ञात है।

अधिकारियों के अनुसार देश में सर्वाधिक उपयोग होने वाला ईंधन डीजल को खपत पिछले माह के मुकामने 3 प्रतिशत घटी है जबकि पेट्रोल को बिक्री 5 प्रतिशत कम हुई है। पिछले साल कोविड संकट के दौरान भी एलसीडी की मांग बढ़ी थी। लेकिन इस बार मांग अट्रैल के पहले

पखवाड़े में 6.4 प्रतिशत कम होकर 10.3 लाख टन रही। विमान ईंधन की मांग भी इस दौरान 8 प्रतिशत कम हुई है। एक अन्य अधिकारी ने कहा, हम इस महीने मई-जून बिक्री में 20 से 25 प्रतिशत की गिरावट देख रहे हैं... नये वाहन वाइर सुचित करने हैं और लॉकडाउन के कारण सभी नये वाहनों की बिक्री सफल कक जाएगी। अधिकारियों के अनुसार इन सबका असर ईंधन खपत के रूप में दिखाया है। इनमें 2020-21 के बाद के महीनों में सुधार हुआ था लेकिन अब फिर मांग कम होने लगी है। देश में ईंधन की मांग वित्त वर्ष 2020-21 में 9.1 प्रतिशत घटी थी। दो दशक से भी अधिक समय से यह चटती बात

हुआ, जब ईंधन की मांग कम हुई। इसका कारण महामारी को रोकथाम के लिये लगाये गये लॉकडाउन से आर्थिक गतिविधियों का उप होना था। पेट्रोलियम मंत्रालय ने वित्त वर्ष 2021-22 अट्रैल-मार्च में ईंधन खपत में करीब 10 प्रतिशत वृद्धि का अनुमान जलाया है।

हालांकि यह अनुमान कोविड संक्रमण के फैलने से पहले लगाया गया था। अधिकारियों के अनुसार, जिस तरीके से संक्रमण फैल रहा है, वह स्थिति दक महीने और बनी रही, से हमें अनुमान को संशोधित करना होगा। कोरोना संक्रमण से सर्वाधिक प्रभावित महाराष्ट्र ने एक मई तक लॉकडाउन को घोषणा की है। इस

दौरान केवल जरूरी सेवाओं, निर्धारित और परिवहन को चूट दी गयी है। दिल्ली ने भी छह दिन के लिये लॉकडाउन की घोषणा की है। इसमें अलावा उत्तर प्रदेश और राजस्थान में भी आंशिक लॉकडाउन की घोषणा की लगी है। पेट्रोलियम मंत्रालय के पेट्रोलियम नियोजन और वितरण प्रकोष्ठ सीपीएसडी के अनुसार भारत में पेट्रोलियम उत्पादों की खपत 2020-21 में 19.463 करोड़ टन रही। जबकि एक साल पहले मांग 21.12 करोड़ टन थी। यह 1998-99 के बाद पहली बार ऐसा हुआ है जब किसी साल में ईंधन की खपत कम हुई है।

कोविड संक्रमण फैलने से ईंधन मांग में आ रहे सुधार पर पड़ सकता है प्रतिकूल असर

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देश में कोरोना संक्रमण के बढ़ते मामले और इसकी रोकथाम के लिए स्थानीय स्तर पर लगाई जा रही पाबंदियों से ईंधन मांग में जो वृद्धि होने लगी थी वह एक बार फिर धीमी पड़ने का जोखिम दिखने लगा है। रोकथाम के लिए देश भर में स्थानीय स्तर पर लॉकडाउन जैसे कड़े उपायों से आर्थिक गतिविधियां प्रभावित होंगी। अधिकारियों ने सोमवार को यह बात कही। महारष्ट्र के बाद दिल्ली और राजस्थान ने सीमित अर्थिक के लिए लॉकडाउन लगाए हैं। इससे यात्रा और व्यापार गतिविधियां प्रभावित होंगी। अन्य राज्य अलग-अलग समय और विभिन्न अवधि के लिए कार्फ्यू लगा रहे हैं। सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र की एक

तेल विपणन कंपनी के चरिष्ठ अधिकारी ने कहा, इस प्रकार की पाबंदियों से आवाजाही पर असर पड़ेगा। फलतः ईंधन खपत प्रभावित होगी। स्वास्थ्य मंत्रालय के आंकड़े के अनुसार भारत में कोविड-19 के एक दिन में रिकॉर्ड 2,73,810 नए मामले सामने आने के साथ ही संक्रमण के कुल मामले 1.50 करोड़ के पार पहुंच गए हैं। अमेरिका के बाद भारत कोरोना से सर्वाधिक प्रभावित दूसरा देश बन गया है। अमेरिका में कोरोना संक्रमण के 3.1 करोड़ मामले हैं। देश में कोरोना संक्रमण के कारण पिछले 24 घंटे में स्किाई, 619 लोगों की मौत के साथ मरने वालों की संख्या बढ़कर करीब 1.8 लाख पहुंच गई है। डीजल, पेट्रोल, विमान ईंधन और एलपीजी मांग में अप्रैल के पहले



पखवाड़े में पिछले माह की इसी अवधि के मुकाबले कमी आई है। अब ज्यादा राज्यों में पाबंदियों के साथ दूसरे पखवाड़े में मांग पर और असर पड़ने की आशंका है। अधिकारी के अनुसार देश में सर्वाधिक उपयोग होने वाला ईंधन डीजल की खपत पिछले माह के मुकाबले 3 प्रतिशत घटी है

जबकि पेट्रोल की बिक्री 5 प्रतिशत कम हुई है। पिछले साल कोविड संकट के दौरान भी एलपीजी की मांग बढ़ी थी। लेकिन इस बार मांग अप्रैल के पहले पखवाड़े में 6.4 प्रतिशत कम होकर 10.3 लाख टन रही। विमान ईंधन की मांग भी इस दौरान 8 प्रतिशत कम हुई है। एक अन्य

अधिकारी ने कहा, हम इस महीने सीएनजी बिक्री में 20 से 25 प्रतिशत की गिरावट देख रहे हैं... नए वाहन बाजार सृजित करते हैं और लॉकडाउन के कारण सभी नए वाहनों की बिक्री लगभग रुक जाएगी। अधिकारियों के अनुसार इन सबका असर ईंधन खपत के रूप में दिखता है। इसमें 2020-21 के बाद के महीनों में सुधार हुआ था लेकिन अब फिर मांग कम होने लगी है।

देश में ईंधन की मांग वित्त वर्ष 2020-21 में 9.1 प्रतिशत घटी थी। दो दशक से भी अधिक समय में यह पहली बार हुआ, जब ईंधन की मांग कम हुई। इसका कारण महामारी की रोकथाम के लिए लगाए गए लॉकडाउन से आर्थिक गतिविधियों का ठप होना था।

दिल्ली, हरियाणा, पंजाब के अस्पतालों को ऑक्सीजन की आपूर्ति करेगी आईओसी

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रिलायंस इंडस्ट्रीज के बाद सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र की कंपनियों इंडियन ऑयल कॉर्पोरेशन (आईओसी) तथा भारत पेट्रोलियम कॉर्पोरेशन (बीपीसीएल) ने कोविड-19 से बुरी तरह प्रभावित राज्यों को अपनी रिफाइनरी में उत्पादित ऑक्सीजन को चिकित्सा ऑक्सीजन के रूप में उपलब्ध कराना शुरू कर दिया है। आईओसी ने सोमवार को बयान में कहा कि उसने दिल्ली, हरियाणा और पंजाब के विभिन्न अस्पतालों को मुफ्त में 150 टन ऑक्सीजन की आपूर्ति शुरू कर दी है। कंपनी ने कहा कि जीवन रक्षक चिकित्सा ग्रेड ऑक्सीजन की पहली खेप नई दिल्ली के महा दुर्गा चैरिटेबल ट्रस्ट अस्पताल को भेजी गई है। आईओसी ने कहा कि कोविड की दूसरी लहर के बीच चिकित्सा ऑक्सीजन की मांग बड़ी तेजी से बढ़ी है। ऐसे में उसने अपनी मोनो एथिलीन ग्लाइकोल (एमईजी) इकाई में इस्तेमाल होने वाली उच्च शुद्धता की ऑक्सीजन को अपनी हरियाणा



की पानीपत रिफाइनरी और पेट्रोस्सायन परिसर में चिकित्सा ग्रेड की तरल ऑक्सीजन में बदला है। अलग से जारी बयान में बीपीसीएल ने कहा है कि उसने मुफ्त में 100 टन ऑक्सीजन की आपूर्ति शुरू की है। कंपनी ने कहा कि वह हर महीने करीब 100 टन ऑक्सीजन की आपूर्ति करेगी। पिछले सप्ताह रिलायंस इंडस्ट्रीज की गुजरात के जामनगर स्थित दो रिफाइनरियों ने औद्योगिक ऑक्सीजन को चिकित्सा इस्तेमाल के लिए ऑक्सीजन में बदला था। जामनगर रिफाइनरी से कंपनी निःशुल्क 100 टन ऑक्सीजन की आपूर्ति कर रही है।

ईंधन मांग में फिर आ सकती है कमी

नई दिल्ली (भाषा)। देश में कोरोना संक्रमण के बढ़ते मामले और इसकी रोकथाम के लिए स्थानीय स्तर पर लगाई जा रही पावंदियों से ईंधन मांग में जो वृद्धि होने लगी थी वह एक वार फिर धीमी पड़ने का जोखिम दिखने लगा है। रोकथाम के लिए देश भर में स्थानीय स्तर पर 'लॉकडाउन' जैसे कड़े उपायों से आर्थिक गतिविधियां प्रभावित होंगी। अधिकारियों ने सोमवार को यह बात कही।

महाराष्ट्र के बाद दिल्ली और राजस्थान ने सीमित अवधि के लिए 'लॉकडाउन' लगाए हैं। इससे यात्रा और व्यापार गतिविधियां प्रभावित होंगी। अन्य राज्य अलग-अलग समय और विभिन्न अवधि के लिए कर्फ्यू लगा रहे हैं। सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र की एक तेल विपणन कंपनी के वरिष्ठ अधिकारी ने कहा, 'इस प्रकार की पावंदियों से आवाजाही पर असर पड़ेगा। फलतः ईंधन खपत प्रभावित होगी।' स्वास्थ्य मंत्रालय के आंकड़े के अनुसार भारत में कोविड-19 के एक दिन में रिकॉर्ड 2,73,810 नए मामले सामने आने के साथ ही संक्रमण के कुल मामले 1.50 करोड़ के पार पहुंच गए हैं।

कमजोर पड़ रही मांग, घट सकती है ईंधन की खपत

कई राज्यों में आंशिक या पूर्ण लॉकडाउन की घोषणा दिखाएगी असर

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देश में एक बार फिर कोरोना वायरस के बढ़ते मामलों की वजह से कई तरह के प्रतिबंध लगाए जा रहे हैं। कई राज्यों में आंशिक या पूर्ण लॉकडाउन की घोषणा हो रही है। आर्थिक गतिविधियों और आवागमन पर प्रतिबंध लगने की वजह से तेल कंपनियों ने एक बार फिर ईंधन की खपत घटने की आशंका जताई है।

अप्रैल के पहले पखवाड़े में पेट्रोल, डीजल, जेट फ्यूल और एलपीजी की डिमांड घट गई है, दूसरे पखवाड़े में इसमें और भी ज्यादा गिरावट आने की संभावना जताई जा रही है। पिछले माह यानी मार्च से तुलना करने तो सबसे ज्यादा उपयोग होने वाले ईंधन, डीजल की खपत 3 फीसदी घटी है

वहीं पेट्रोल की खपत 5 फीसदी कम हुई है। एलपीजी की डिमांड में 6.4 फीसदी की कमी आई है। जेट फ्यूल की डिमांड 8 फीसदी तक घट गई है। तेल कंपनी के अधिकारियों का कहना है इस माह सीएनजी की बिक्री में 20 से 25 फीसदी की गिरावट देखने को मिल सकती है।

बाजार में नए वाहन आने से ईंधन की बिक्री भी बढ़ती है लेकिन लॉकडाउन की वजह से नए वाहनों की बिक्री नहीं होगी और ईंधन की मांग भी तुलनात्मक रूप से कम रहेगी। इस साल मार्च में समाप्त हुए वित्त वर्ष 20-21 के दौरान भारत में ईंधन की मांग दो दशक में पहली बार सालाना आधार पर 9.1 फीसदी घट गई थी। तेल मंत्रालय ने इस वित्त वर्ष 21-22 के दौरान तेल की खपत में 10% इजाफा का अनुमान लगाया था लेकिन अगर लॉकडाउन महीने भर से ज्यादा जारी रहता है तो उन्हें अपने अनुमान में बदलाव करना पड़ सकता है।