

1.5 cr free LPG cylinders given to poor: Pradhan

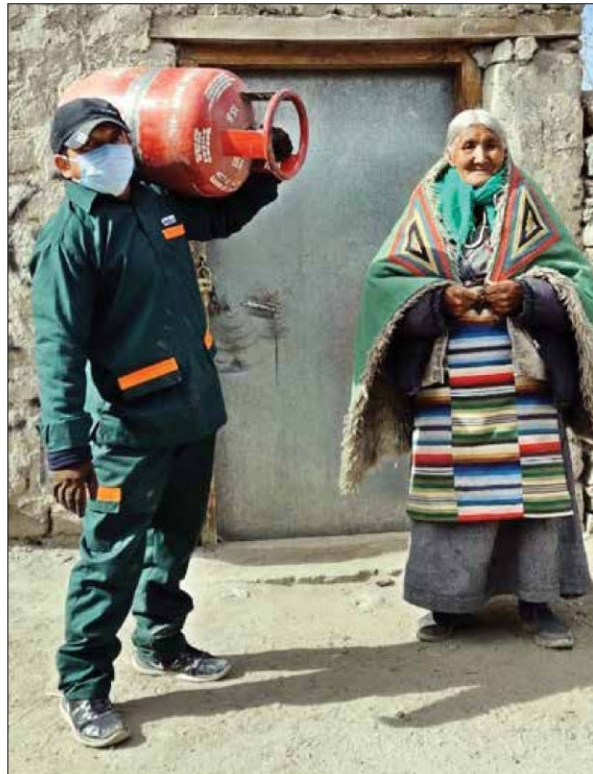
Oil Marketing Companies are distributing 50 to 60 lakh cylinders per day, including about 18 lakh free cylinders to PMUY beneficiaries

NEW DELHI: Over 1.5 crore free cooking gas (LPG) cylinders have been distributed in the last two weeks as part of the government's stimulus aimed at helping poor tide over hardships of lockdown, Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said on Thursday.

Under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana (PMGKY), several relief measures have been announced by the central government for the welfare of poor, one of them being providing three LPG cylinders (14.2 kg) free to over 8 crore beneficiaries of Pradhan Mantri Ujjawala Yojana (PMUY) between April and June.

An official statement said that for the seamless implementation of the scheme, the Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have been transferring an advance equal to the retail selling price of cylinder to the accounts of beneficiaries. The beneficiaries use this money to buy LPG refill.

"More than 1.51 crore free LPG cylinders have been dis-



tributed so far to the PMUY beneficiaries," it quoted Pradhan as saying at a review

meeting called to discuss the implementation of the scheme here.

The OMCs are distributing 50 to 60 lakh cylinders per day, which includes about 18 lakh free cylinders to PMUY beneficiaries.

Pradhan took part in a webinar with over 800 LPG cylinder delivery boys.

Describing the LPG delivery boys as the frontline soldiers and corona fighters in the time of unprecedented crisis due to the pandemic, he said the whole nation acknowledges their contributions.

Appreciating their sincerity, hard work and dedication to the duty, he called upon them to take due precautions while discharging their duties.

"Many LPG delivery boys shared their experiences during these difficult times. They said that the companies have provided them with the protection kit which includes soap, sanitizer, mask and gloves," the statement said.

"They also sanitize their cylinders before delivery, and also maintain social distancing while delivering the cylinder," it added.

MPOST

Oil market undergoing 'historic shock', says OPEC



PARIS: The OPEC oil cartel said Thursday that the world market for crude is undergoing an unprecedented jolt due to Coronavirus mitigation measures that have decimated demand.

“The oil market is currently undergoing a historic shock that is abrupt, extreme and at global scale,” said the group of producer nations in its latest monthly report. The cartel now forecasts a “historical drop” of around 6.8 million barrels per day (mbd) in average daily demand for 2020.

It sees worse contraction of about 20 mbd in April.

Those forecasts are less severe than those released on Wednesday by the International Energy Agency, a Paris-based organisation that advises major energy consuming nations. It forecast the drop in demand in April to be around 29 mbd, and 9.3 mbd overall in 2020.

OPEC and its allies struck a deal at the weekend to scale back output by around 10 mbd, but oil prices have not rallied as traders see it as insufficient given the magnitude of the drop in demand.

PTI

PNG Projects' Deadline to be Extended

Pipe Dream

PNGRB to decide quantum of extension after consultation with Industry

136 New city gas licenses Issued In last 2 years

Winners decided on basis of pledged work programme

This Included number of piped connections, natgas stations & length of proposed pipeline

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D K SARRAF, PNGRB chairman



THE AIM Avoid penalising companies for delays caused by lockdown

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New Delhi: Deadlines for city gas projects will be extended to avoid penalising companies for delays caused by the nationwide lockdown, the regulator said. This would help more than a dozen companies implementing 136 city gas distribution projects across the country. "We can on our own extend the timeline. Companies would want that," DK Sarraf, chairman of the Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board, told ET. "We have to be helpful to the industry." The board will decide quantum of extension after consultations with the industry. The regulator had issued about 136 new city gas distribution licences

over the past two years, picking winners primarily on the basis of the work pledged, including number of piped gas connections, natural gas stations and length of the proposed pipeline. The companies are penalised for missing annual work programme targets they proposed during bidding.

Move likely to help more than a dozen companies implementing 136 city gas distribution projects

The lockdown has disrupted pipe-laying and other efforts at setting up infrastructure by city gas companies.

"Once the lockdown is lifted, city gas projects should not take too long to revive. But bringing back labour would be a very big challenge," Sarraf said. "A big

share of migrant workers has gone back home. Families will not permit workers to return to the cities until they have the confidence that the health risk due to coronavirus has receded."

Projects that have been completed or are nearing completion will face the challenge of lower energy demand.

"Until industrial activity picks up, energy demand will be low," Sarraf said. "Lower gas prices will, however, have a soothing impact on the economy."

Gas prices have crashed globally. Imported liquefied natural gas has fallen below \$3 per million metric British thermal unit (mmBtu) while the domestic gas price is down to \$2.39 per mmBtu.

The regulator is also considering offering city gas licenses in a new auction.

In losses, fuel dealers pin hopes on industry revival

Demand package from oil firms, govt to stay afloat

VIJAY C ROY

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, APRIL 16

Amid mounting losses, over 3,500 fuel station owners in Punjab are pinning hopes on resumption of industrial activity from April 20, when some restrictions will be relaxed in some of the non-hotspot areas. They apprehend that though the demand for petrol and diesel is unlikely to recover in April, it would certainly help in covering losses to some extent. They have also sought financial package from oil marketing companies to stay afloat.

As the economy came to a standstill after the announcement of lockdown in March, Punjab's petrol sales shrank by 23.5% and diesel demand tanked by 26%. According to data, petrol sales dropped to 78,402 kilolitres in March as compared to 1,02,500 kilolitres during the corresponding month previous year. Diesel demand also contracted to 1,87,397 kilolitres as compared to 2,53,468 kilolitres in March 2019.

Punjab Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh had clamped the state-wide curfew on March 23 to control the outbreak of Covid-19.

As only vehicles meant for maintaining essential services are allowed to move during the lock-



ILLUSTRATION: SANDEEP JOSHI

down, it led to decline in sales volume.

The drastic fall in sales has broken the backbone of petroleum dealers, with a majority of them having run out of capital. Moreover, the payments of sales made on credit have stopped altogether leading to stressed out working capital and liquidity crunch.

"Dealers are in a financial mess and the liquidity crunch that our dealers find themselves in on account of these unprecedented circumstances cannot be sustained further," said Gurmeet Monty Sehgal, spokesperson, Petrol Pump Dealers Association Punjab (PPDAP).

"We have borrowed capi-

tal from banks and stock from the OMCs for which we have to make interest payments. The borrowed capital is trapped in credit recoverable from customers who have already shown their helplessness to pay back citing shutdown and losses in businesses on account of extension of the lockdown," said Paramjit Singh Doaba, president, PPDAP.

Perturbed over the situation, the dealers have written to the oil marketing companies (OMCs) for a financial package. They have requested that wages and associated benefits of employees should be paid by the OMCs besides complete waiver of interest on bank loans for the lock-

down period.

They have also demanded waiver of licence fee recovery (LFR) for the lockdown period. LFR is charged from the dealers on per-litre basis.

"Amid liquidity crunch on account of these unprecedented circumstances, we are pinning hopes on early resumption of manufacturing activity, transportation and financial package," Sehgal said.

He said the fuel sales would be drastically lower in April as compared to March and the government should come out with a special package for the fuel station owners otherwise many of them would have to shut their operations.

Ministry reviews CGD networks

OUR BUREAU

New Delhi, April 16

The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas reviewed the status of City Gas Distribution (CGD) networks across the country as the supply of piped and compressed natural gas to households and services is key in the ongoing fight against Covid-19 pandemic.

“Took stock of the on-ground situation, especially for CGD businesses falling under the Covid-19 hotspots. Reviewed preventive measures being undertaken at workplace includ-

ing, following lockdown guidelines and our preparedness to operate in a restricted business environment,” Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas, Dharmendra Pradhan said in a tweet.

“Interacted with the captains of both public and private CGD entities in India. Congratulated them on the uninterrupted functioning of CGD networks, which has ensured seamless supply of compressed natural gas and piped natural gas to consumers amid these difficult times,” he said.

Opec says oil market undergoing 'historic shock'

BLOOMBERG



Paris: The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (Opec) said on Thursday that the world market for crude is undergoing an unprecedented jolt due to coronavirus mitigation measures that have decimated demand. "The oil market is currently undergoing a historic shock that is abrupt, extreme and at global scale," said the group of producer nations in its latest monthly report. The cartel now forecasts a "historical drop" of around 6.8 million barrels per day (mbd) in average daily demand for 2020. It sees the worst contraction of about 20 mbd in April. Those forecasts are less severe than those released on Wednesday by the International Energy Agency, a Paris-based organization that advises major energy-consuming nations. It forecast the drop in demand in April to be around 29 mbd, and 9.3 mbd overall in 2020.

AFP

लॉकडाउन में पेट्रोलियम प्रॉडक्ट्स की खपत 18% घटी SKO की खपत में 48%, ATF में 32% तो कोयले से बनने वाली बिजली में 19% की कमी

[पूनम गौड़ | नई दिल्ली]

लॉकडाउन के दौरान प्रदूषण स्तर में आई कमी अस्थायी है। लॉकडाउन की वजह से इस समय पेट्रोलियम प्रॉडक्ट्स की खपत कम होने की वजह से ही प्रदूषण कम हुआ है। एक्सपर्ट्स के अनुसार, ऐसे में अब यह साबित हो चुका है कि अगर प्रदूषण को कम करना है तो ग्रीन एनर्जी की तरफ तेजी से काम करने की जरूरत है।

सेंटर फॉर एनर्जी एंड क्लीन एयर ने एक रिपोर्ट में दावा किया है कि लॉकडाउन के दौरान देश में पेट्रोलियम प्रॉडक्ट्स की



खपत में 18% की कमी आई। यह कमी मार्च 2019 की तुलना में मार्च 2020 के दौरान दर्ज की गई। इसी तरह HSD (हाई स्पीड डीजल) की खपत में भी 24% की कमी दर्ज की गई है। सबसे बड़ी कमी SKO (सुपीरियर केरोसिन ऑइल) की

खपत में 48%, ATF (एविेशन टरबाइन फ्यूल) में 32% की कमी आई है। इस कमी की वजह से ही प्रदूषण के स्तर में यह कमी आ गई है। इस स्टडी में यह भी दावा किया गया है कि लॉकडाउन की वजह से बिजली की डिमांड कम हुई है। जिसकी वजह से इस दौरान दिल्ली और आसपास के 300 किलोमीटर के एरिया में लगभग सभी कोयले से चलने वाले पावर प्लांट बंद हैं। इस दूरी में दादरी पावर प्लांट की सिर्फ दो यूनिट चल रही हैं। 24 मार्च के बाद के दो सप्ताह में बिजली की डिमांड में करीब

19% की कमी आई है। जिसकी वजह से कोयले से बनने वाली बिजली में भी 26% की कमी आई है। सेंटर फॉर रिसर्च ऑन एनर्जी एंड क्लीन एयर के एनालिस्ट सुनील दहिया के अनुसार, इस समय प्रदूषण स्तर में जो सुधार देश और दुनिया में आया है वह लॉकडाउन की वजह से ही है। इसकी वजह से इकॉनमी को काफी नुकसान हुआ है। यह कदम लंबे समय के लिए नहीं उठाए जा सकते। ऐसे में अब हमें ग्रीन एनर्जी में इनवेस्ट करने के बारे में ध्यान देने की जरूरत है।