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Headline: India Energy Week 2026



INDIA ENERGY WEEK 2026



MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS
Government of India

इंडिया एनर्जी वीक 2026

भारत से विश्व तक, भविष्य का नवनिर्माण।

27 - 30 जनवरी 2026
ओएनजीसी एटीआई, गोवा, भारत

ऊर्जावान विकास,
सुरक्षित अर्थव्यवस्था, समृद्ध जीवन.

75,000+	700+	120+	6,500+	550+	120+
ऊर्जा प्रोफेशनल्स	प्रदर्शनी कंपनियाँ	देशों का प्रतिनिधित्व	सम्मेलन प्रतिनिधि	सम्मेलन स्पीकर्स	सम्मेलन सब



नरेंद्र मोदी, प्रधानमंत्री

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अधिक जानकारी के लिए QR कोड स्कैन करें 

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Date :17 December 2025	Page : 8

Headline: Revenue meter





Publication : The Hindu Business Line	Editions : New Delhi
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thehindubusinessline.

TWENTY YEARS AGO TODAY.

December 17, 2005

CCEA strikes down ONGC plan to invest in Nigeria

The Government has shot down a proposal of ONGC Videsh Ltd (OVL) to pick up stake in a Nigerian oil and gas field, while at the same time permitting downstream public sector oil companies to partner Oil India Ltd (OIL) in scouting for oil and gas assets abroad. The CCEA decided against giving permission to OVL to buy South Atlantic Petroleum's 45 per cent stake in the Akpo oil and gas field in Nigeria on the grounds of "risk element".

HLL plans more unified functioning

HLL is to have a CEO supported by an extended management committee and a more unified functioning of the separate businesses. Effective March 1, 2006, Mr Douglas Baillie, will be CEO of HLL and Group Vice-President overseeing the Unilever business in South Asia. This is the first time in several years that HLL is getting an expatriate CEO.

CST phase-out: States seek full Central compensation

The States have now made it known to the Union Finance Minister, Mr P. Chidambaram, that full Central compensation of central sales tax (CST) losses was an essential pre-condition for phasing-out this tax from April 1 next year.

CAG raps BPCL for gaps in supply, logistics planning leading to unnecessary expenditure of ₹470.56 crore

Rishi Ranjan Kala
New Delhi

The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) has rapped the Bharat Petroleum Corporation (BPCL) for deficient planning in assessing creation of storage and infrastructure facilities, coupled with deficient supply and logistics planning.

This gap has led to under-utilisation of time chartered vessels hired by the State-run oil marketing company (OMC) as well as an unnecessary expenditure of ₹470.56 crore from FY20 to FY23.

BPCL hired time chartered vessels more than (the) company's actual requirement for the coastal movement of LPG and petroleum products without assessing the available storage and other infrastructure fa-

cilities, the CAG said. Time charter vessels are hired for a particular period — from a few months to a few years. Under such contracts, payment is made at a uniform rate on a per day basis.

IDLE COST

Idle cost of time charter vessels occurs due to various factors, which are broadly segregated by BPCL into two categories. The controllable factor is augmentation of storage and infrastructure facilities, while the non-controllable factors are port congestion, limited priority berthing, draft restrictions in ports, etc., said the government auditor.

Besides, the percentage utilisation of LPG vessels varied between 53 per cent and 75 per cent and of product vessels between 47 per cent and 75 per cent.

"Thus, many vessels hired



by BPCL during the period from FY20 to FY23, at a total hiring cost of ₹3,641.47 crore on time charter basis, were kept idle for long duration out of the total period covered in the contract, resulting in substantial cost being incurred without any service or productivity to the company," CAG said.

The idle cost incurred by BPCL towards underutilisation of these vessels hired for LPG and for products during the same period amounted

to ₹1,092.26 crore, it added.

The CAG also pointed out that the audit also observed that of the total idle cost of ₹1,092.26 crore incurred from FY20 to FY23, ₹470.56 crore (43.12 per cent) was on account of controllable factors.

The idle cost of LPG vessels in FY23 (post Covid) was ₹219.77 crore, or 46.70 per cent of the total controllable idle cost, it added.

FACTORS IN CONTROL

The Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas (MoPNG)/BPCL, in its response, said that augmentation of storage and related infrastructure is in progress at JNPT/ Dahej, and is likely to be completed in FY24, while work related to Aegis Mumbai is completed. "However, these augmentations will not eliminate the idling of vessels," the reply said.

Cinematic energy

NIDHI SRIVASTAVA

India's energy story has had its own trajectory, impacting the economy, environment, and society. The phrase, 'energy transition', may be a rather recent entry into the policy discourse but it has been part of the plots of Hindi cinema for long. Bollywood has always presented energy as more than just fuel — as a symbol of livelihood, struggle, corruption and even aesthetics.

Bullock carts, horse-drawn *tongas*, and hand-pulled rickshaws — examples of muscular energy — were representatives of human life in early and post-Independence cinema. Remember Raj Kapoor as the cart driver in *Teesri Kasam* or Hema Malini as the zesty *tonga*-puller in *Sholay*?

Perhaps no film has captured the upheaval of energy transition as vividly as B.R. Chopra's *Naya Daur*. The transition was depicted dramatically and poignantly in the film through the struggle of *tonga*-pullers led by Shankar (Dilip Kumar) when a motor bus is introduced in the village. Through the symbolism of a race between a cart and a bus, *Naya Daur* underscored, first, the importance of the transport sector and, second, the centrality of an inclusive and just transition.

As India industrialised with new machinery, industries and sources of energy, the next lot of films shifted the spotlight to exploitation and work conditions in coal and other minerals. Coal, the most dominant element of India's energy system, found its way to the silver screen in Yash Chopra's *Kaala Patthar*, capturing the exploitation, unsafe mining practices and inhuman conditions in mines.

Bollywood's depiction of energy's darker side has not been restricted to coal. Petrol pumps have long been part of cinematic backdrops — often as settings for action sequences, but a few films placed them at the centre of their plots. *Dhoop*, starring Om Puri and Revathi, portrayed the ordeal of the parents of a Kargil martyr as they grapple with corruption and bureaucracy in getting the petrol

pump franchisee allotted to them by the government to honour their deceased son. *Manjunath* is based on the true story of the murder of an Indian Oil Corporation officer for exposing fuel adulteration. Both films depicted the bureaucracy, corruption, and illegal activities associated with the energy sector. *Irada* viewed the same theme through the lens of pollution from power plants and its impact on public health.

Even electricity distribution has made inroads into cinematic plots. *Batti Gul Meter Chalu* explored the struggles of consumers against power outages, inflated bills and the fight with power companies. No discussion of corruption in the energy sector can be complete without a mention of *Katiyabaaz*: the documenta-



ry offered an unfiltered peek into Kanpur's power crisis as it followed an electricity thief and an official of a distribution company.

Ashutosh Gowariker's *Swades* stepped into the realm of renewables. Here, Shah Rukh Khan plays the role of an NRI who uses his engineering prowess and mobilises villagers to build a micro-hydel plant in his native village. This use of off-grid energy as a means of self-sufficiency and empowerment was a departure from the traditional treatment of the energy sector in Hindi films. Besides, *Swades*, renewables have largely remained aesthetic props, with wind farms functioning as picturesque backdrops for romantic duets (*Chalte Chalte*, *Gori Tere Pyaar Mein*).

India's energy sector is undergoing a massive shift characterised by renewable energy, coal phase down, the emergence of solar and wind parks and rooftop solar panels. It would not be far-fetched to argue that this transition and its socio-economic and political implications would make their way into the cinematic form.

Nidhi Srivastava is an independent law and policy consultant working in the field of energy, environment and minerals

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Oil slips below \$60 a barrel as hope of Ukraine peace deal improves

Oil prices fell on Tuesday to below \$60 a barrel — the lowest since May this year — as prospects for a Russia-Ukraine peace deal appeared to strengthen, raising expectations of a potential easing of sanctions.

Brent crude futures fell 81 cents, or around 1.3 per cent, to \$59.75 a barrel at 1214 GMT. "Brent has dropped this morning to below \$60 per barrel for the first time in months, as the market assesses a potential peace deal resulting in additional Russian volumes becoming available and oversupplying the market further," said Rystad analyst Janiv Shah.



REUTERS

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Centre proposes removing 50% cap on sales of coal from captive mines

The Centre has proposed removing the 50 per cent ceiling on sales of coal and lignite produced from captive mines, a move aimed at clearing accumulated stockpiles and increasing mineral availability in the market. This is part of a series of reforms proposed in a notice of public consultation by the coal ministry through amendments to the MMDR Act.

Govt may remove 50% cap on sales of coal from captive mines

SAKET KUMAR

New Delhi, 16 December

The central government has proposed removing the 50 per cent ceiling on the sale of coal and lignite produced from captive mines, a move aimed at clearing accumulated stockpiles and increasing mineral availability in the market.

This is part of a series of reforms proposed in a notice of public consultation by the coal ministry through amendments to the Mines and Minerals Development and Regulation (MMDR) Act.

Under the current provisions, captive-mine operators are allowed to sell up to 50 per cent of their annual coal or lignite output after meeting the requirements of their linked end-use plants.

The domestic industry and representatives of state governments have pointed out that more than half the extracted mineral remains unutilised, leading to large legacy dumps accumulating at sites of mines. These stockpiles pose environmental and safety risks and occupy space, particularly in smaller mines.

The ministry has proposed removing the ceiling to allow the sale of such legacy stocks in the open market, which will be in line with the amendments made for non-coal minerals under the MMDR Amendment Act, 2025.

By allowing relaxation in end-use conditions, the proposed amendments also seek to provide flexibility to state-run companies and corporations where coal or lignite produced from captive mines cannot be supplied to linked end-use plants due to logistical or infrastructure constraints.

"Sales of such minerals may generate proportional increases in royalties, District Mineral Foundation (DMF) and National Mineral Exploration Trust (NMET) contributions which may strengthen the fiscal position of mineral-bearing States," the ministry said.

The proposed amendment may enhance market supply, reduce shortages, stabilise prices, and help meet growing industrial and infrastructure needs, which would contribute to national self-reliance and reduced import dependence, it added.

Beyond captive sales, the ministry has proposed recognising coal gasification as part of "mining operations" under the MMDR Act. The amendment will explicitly include the conversion of coal or lignite into gas within the definition of mining operations, providing regulatory clarity for coal gasification projects.

Coal gasification converts coal into synthetic gas, which can be used for power generation, fertilisers, and chemicals, and is seen as a cleaner alternative to direct coal combustion.

Another key proposal involves reviewing the maximum area for prospecting licences and mining leases

Aim of proposed tweaks

- Inclusion of coal gasification under mining operations
- Review of area limits for prospecting licences and mining leases
- Extension of coal mining lease tenure to 50 years
- Strengthening action against illegal coal mining



under Section 6 of the Act. The current provision in the Act gives a limit of 25 square kilometres for prospecting licences and 10 square kilometres for mining leases.

The ministry said these ceilings no longer reflected the scale and technological requirements of modern, mechanised mining operations. It has invited suggestions on revised limits suitable for contemporary mining needs.

The Centre has also proposed extending the maximum tenure of coal and lignite mining leases from 30 years to 50 years. The move will eliminate the requirement for lease renewals, which creates an administrative burden and uncertainty in long-term mine planning.

The existing leases will be governed by current provisions, while new leases can be for 50 years at the outside, based on the life of the mine.

Additionally, the ministry has proposed strengthening measures to curb illegal coal mining. It said enforcement mechanisms under the MMDR Act and other laws had gaps despite the deployment of security forces and technology-driven monitoring systems.

The proposed review will examine the legal, administrative, and technological framework, including the powers of executives of coal companies and the security personnel, to better address the illegal mining, transportation, and storage of coal.

The proposed amendments follow stakeholder consultations in August and September with coal block allottees, state governments, public-sector undertakings, and participants from private companies.

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Headline: Fuel will not be available without PUC from tomorrow

पीयूसी के बिना कल से नहीं मिलेगा ईंधन

राज्य ब्यूरो, जागरण • नई दिल्ली : राजधानी में गहराते प्रदूषण के बीच दिल्ली सरकार और सख्त हो गई है। पर्यावरण मंत्री मनजिंदर सिंह सिरसा ने कहा कि गुरुवार से दिल्ली में उन्हीं वाहनों को ईंधन मिलेगा, जिनके पास वैध प्रदूषण नियंत्रण (पीयूसी) प्रमाणपत्र होगा। वाहन मालिकों को मानदंडों को पूरा करने के लिए एक दिन का समय दिया जा रहा है। इसके बाद सख्ती होगी।

दिल्ली सचिवालय में सिरसा ने कहा कि पेट्रोल पंपों पर लगे आटोमैटिक नंबर प्लेट रिकग्निशन (एएनपीआर) कैमरे उन वाहनों को स्वतः पहचान लेंगे, जिनके पीयूसी प्रमाणपत्र नहीं होंगे और पेट्रोल पंप



मनजिंदर सिंह सिरसा

● पर्यावरण मंत्री मनजिंदर सिंह सिरसा बोले, पंपों पर कैमरे करेंगे ऐसे वाहनों की पहचान

पर तैनात कर्मचारी उन्हें ईंधन देने से इन्कार कर देंगे। वैध पीयूसी प्रमाणपत्र नहीं रखने वाले आठ लाख से अधिक वाहन मालिकों पर पहले ही जुर्माना लगाया जा चुका है। दिल्ली के बाहर पंजीकृत और बीएस छह से कम श्रेणी के सभी वाहनों को ग्रेप तीन और चार लागू होने की वजह से प्रवेश की अनुमति नहीं है। ऐसे में गुरुवार से दिल्ली के

बाहर के सिर्फ बीएस छह वाहनों को ही शहर में प्रवेश की अनुमति होगी।

मंत्री ने गांगी माफ़ी, कहा- आप दे गई यह बीमासी: सिरसा ने दिल्ली में प्रदूषण पूरी तरह खत्म नहीं कर पाने के लिए माफ़ी मांगते हुए कहा कि आठ-नौ महीने में किसी भी सरकार के लिए ऐसा करना संभव नहीं है। दिल्ली में प्रदूषण की बीमारी '10-11 साल की आप सरकार और 15 साल की कांग्रेस की बीमारी है। राहुल गांधी और प्रियंका वाड्रा जो मास्क लगाकर बातें कर रहे हैं, मैं उनसे पूछता हूँ कि पिछले साल इससे ज्यादा प्रदूषण था। तब ये मास्क कहाँ थे।

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Headline: In Punjab, solar energy has become the key to economic strength and self-reliance

पंजाब में सौर ऊर्जा बनी आर्थिक मजबूती और आत्मनिर्भरता की कुंजी

बिजली सब्सिडी से खजाने पर पड़ रहे भार को कम करने पर भी दिया जोर, गांवों में चल रहे ट्यूबवेल को भी सौर ऊर्जा नेटवर्क से जोड़ा

जागरण विशेष
केलाश नय • जागरण

पंजाब सरकार ने सौर ऊर्जा को केवल पर्यावरण संरक्षण तक सीमित न रखते हुए उसे आर्थिक मजबूती और ऊर्जा आत्मनिर्भरता की कुंजी बना ली। दीर्घकालीन योजना, स्पष्ट नीति और जमीनी स्तर पर प्रभावी क्रियान्वयन के चलते राज्य ने ऊर्जा संरक्षण के क्षेत्र में बड़ी छलांग लगाई है। इन प्रयासों का सुफल है कि पंजाब को इस बार राष्ट्रीय ऊर्जा संरक्षण पुरस्कार में स्टेट परफार्मेंस श्रेणी में द्वितीय पुरस्कार मिला है।

गत 14 दिसंबर को नई दिल्ली में राष्ट्रपति द्रौपदी मुर्मू के हाथों पुरस्कार ग्रहण करने वाले पंजाब के

औद्योगिक क्षेत्रों में भी हो रहा प्रयास

पंजाब सरकार के प्रयास केवल सौर पंप या रूफटॉप तक सीमित नहीं है। औद्योगिक व वाणिज्यिक क्षेत्रों में भी ऊर्जा दक्षता बढ़ाने के लिए लगातार कोशिश हो रही है। एमएसएमई सेक्टर और वेरक प्लांट सहित कई संस्थानों में 185 ऊर्जा दक्ष मोटरों लगाने से बिजली की खपत में उल्लेखनीय कमी आई है। वाणिज्यिक भवनों में ऊर्जा संरक्षण भवन कोड को लागू किया जा रहा है। इसके तहत ऊर्जा दक्ष डिजाइन, आधुनिक निर्माण सामग्री और ऊर्जा वचत तकनीकों को अपनाया जा रहा है।

कैबिनेट मंत्री अमन अरोड़ा इसका श्रेय सामूहिक प्रयास को देते हैं। उन्होंने कहा कि भवन क्षेत्र में ऊर्जा दक्षता को बढ़ावा देना सरकार की प्रमुख प्राथमिकताओं में शामिल है। पंजाब एनर्जी डेवलपमेंट अथॉरिटी (पेडा) के अधिकारियों ने इस दिशा

35 मेगावाट क्षमता वाले सौर ऊर्जा से सस्कारी भवनों को जोड़ा जा चुका



अमृतसर में नगर निगम की इमारत पर लगे सोलर पैनल • जागरण

25 मेगावाट के नए सौर प्रोजेक्ट पर चत रहा है काम

18,000 सौर पंप से किसानों को दिया जा रहा पानी

1,200 करोड़ यूनिट बिजली की हो चुकी है ववव



राष्ट्रपति द्रौपदी मुर्मू से पुरस्कार ग्रहण करते पंजाब के मंत्री अमन अरोड़ा • जागरण

में सराहनीय कार्य किया है, जिसके अच्छे नतीजे आए। सौर ऊर्जा को बढ़ावा देने के लिए सरकार ने योजनाबद्ध तरीके से काम किया। सबसे पहले अपने सरकारी ढांचे से शुरुआत की। इसके तहत सरकारी भवनों पर 35 मेगावाट क्षमता वाले

सोलर पैनल लगाए गए। इससे बिजली बिलों में बड़ी बचत हो रही है। ऐसे भवनों की संख्या ज्यादा है, जहां बिजली की कम खपत होती है। इनके लिए 25 मेगावाट के नए सौर प्रोजेक्ट पर काम चल रहा है। बिजली का बहुत अधिक

इस्तेमाल कृषि कार्य में होता है। कृषि बिजली पर सब्सिडी देने के कारण सरकारी खजाने पर बड़ा भार पड़ रहा था। एक अनुमान है कि किसानों को दी जाने वाली मुफ्त बिजली से सरकार पर वर्तमान में 20,200 करोड़ रुपये का

आर्थिक बोझ आता है। इसके लिए भी सरकार ने चरणबद्ध तरीके से व्यावहारिक रास्ता अपनाया। सीधे कटौती के बजाय सौर ऊर्जा के जरिये वैकल्पिक समाधान चुना। गांव-गांव में लगे ट्यूबवेल को सौर ऊर्जा से जोड़ा। राज्य में सौर ऊर्जा से चलने वाले 18,000 पंप लगाए जा चुके हैं। इससे किसानों को सिंचाई के लिए टिकाऊ और भरोसेमंद ऊर्जा मिल रही है। किसानों को दिन के समय निर्बाध बिजली उपलब्ध हो रही है, वहीं राज्य की बिजली खपत और सब्सिडी बोझ में भी कमी आ रही है। इन सभी पहलुओं से अभी तक 1,200 करोड़ यूनिट बिजली की बचत की जा चुकी है।



अतिरिक्त सामग्री पढ़ने के लिए स्कैन करें।

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N-energy Bill may bring in foreign funding

BUILDING ON THE clear directional push to open up the restricted nuclear power sector to private sector participation, the rules that will follow the passage of the proposed Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India Bill are likely to make a provision for potential foreign funding in the sector, report **Liz Mathew & Anil Sasi. PAGE 2**

NEED FOR BASELOAD ALTERNATIVES, HUNT FOR CAPITAL

N-energy Bill likely to open space for foreign funding

LIZ MATHEW & ANIL SASI
New Delhi, December 16

BUILDING ON THE clear directional push to open up the restricted nuclear power sector to private sector participation, the rules that will follow the passage of the proposed Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India Bill, 2025 (SHANTI) are likely to make a provision for potential foreign funding in the nuclear sector.

The new Bill, which was tabled in Parliament on Monday and aims to repeal both the Atomic Energy Act, 1962 and the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010, comes amid India's move to look outward for collaborations on nuclear that is driven by two clear policy imperatives: the desperate need for base load alternatives to coal-fired capacity to tide over the limitations of renewables; and more importantly, the need for capital to scale up nuclear capacity addition.

Foreign funds, including sovereign funds from West Asia, have expressed early interest to put in capital to part-finance the country's stated objectives to scale up nuclear power, including getting into the manufacturing value chain of SMRs, or small modular reactors.

SMRs are increasingly being seen as important for nuclear energy to remain a commercially competitive option into the future. The legal amendments are also being seen as a part of India's

POWER PLAY

■ Foreign sovereign funds have shown interest in financing reactors and SMR manufacturing

■ The Bill aligns foreign equity rules with standard DPIIT guidelines norms

■ Key amendments address investor concerns under global nuclear liability norms

■ Supplier definition clarified, protecting small vendors from disproportionate liability exposure



Graded liability caps introduced based on contract size exposure levels

efforts to strengthen its negotiating stance with the US, amid efforts underway to revive the stalled trade talks.

Sources in the government indicated that the equity infusion rules in the nuclear sector would be aligned to the government's foreign equity participation guidelines that are in line with other sectors and in accordance with Ministry of Commerce and Industry (DPIIT) norms.

The multiple amendments proposed to the two overarching atomic power laws – the Atomic Energy Act 1962 and the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010 (CLNDA) – aim to align the new legislation with legal provisions globally in a bid to address festering investor concerns.

There are two key proposed amendments that are particularly significant. One is an amendment aimed at diluting a specific provision – Section

17 (b) of the CLNDA, which was seen to be at odds with similar nuclear liability legislations enacted worldwide.

According to Section 17 of the CLNDA, the operator of the nuclear installation, after paying the compensation for nuclear damage, shall have the right to recourse where – (a) such right is expressly provided for in a contract in writing; (b) the nuclear incident has resulted as a consequence of an act of supplier or his employee, which includes supply of equipment or material with patent or latent defects or sub-standard services; and (c) the nuclear incident has resulted from the act of commission or omission of an individual done with the intent to cause nuclear damage.

Provision (b) is the one that is a specific insertion in the Indian context and has been cited as an impediment by foreign vendors, none of whom have invested in a

single project in India since the legislation came into force. This is a cause for worry for Indian sub-vendors too, since the term "supplier" is seen to be too broad in scope.

"The most important aspect was to bring Section 17 on par with international benchmarks. The other was to clarify the definition of suppliers and address the concerns raised by domestic nuclear equipment manufacturers that sub-suppliers are also deemed to be included in the current definition, given that there is no distinction of the terms supplier in the current legislation," a senior government official involved in the deliberations said before the amendments were moved.

Smaller Indian vendors are learnt to have raised this as an issue. SHANTI makes a provision for graded liability caps for nuclear power operators based on their order size.

Opening nuclear power to private capital



KAVYA WADHWA

Nuclear energy advocate and policy analyst

India's nuclear opening coincides with a global renaissance in atomic energy driven by decarbonisation imperatives

THE INTRODUCTION OF the Atomic Energy Bill, 2025, in the Lok Sabha represents a fundamental restructuring of India's nuclear sector, creating investment opportunities worth an estimated \$400 billion as the country targets 100 gigawatts of nuclear capacity by 2047. The Sustainable Harnessing of Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) law ends six decades of state monopoly in nuclear power generation, opening one of the largest untapped energy markets to private investment.

India's electricity demand is projected to treble by mid-century. Nuclear power contributes 3% to the national grid despite proven technical capabilities. The constraint has been capital. The state-owned Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited cannot mobilise the \$150-200 billion required for capacity targets. Private capital now has a pathway into this sector.

For global energy majors, reactor manufacturers, and infrastructure investors, the SHANTI Bill transforms India from a restricted market into a viable investment destination. Private entities can now own and operate nuclear plants, engage in fuel processing, and import equipment and technology. More significantly, the legislation addresses the two critical barriers that have deterred private investment—liability risk and regulatory uncertainty.

The Bill's liability provisions represent its most commercially significant innovation. Section 16 introduces a contractual right of recourse mechanism that fundamentally alters risk allocation in nuclear projects. Operators can now negotiate bespoke liability-sharing arrangements with suppliers and equipment manufacturers, explicitly incorporating recourse provisions into commercial contracts.

The Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010, created a unique liability regime that effectively deterred international reactor vendors. Major manufacturers from France, the US, and Japan refused to participate under a framework where supplier liability could be invoked even for accidents unrelated to equipment failure. The SHANTI Bill resolves this by making recourse explicitly contractual rather than statutory, allowing parties to negotiate risk allocation.

The insurance architecture provides the financial certainty institutional investors require. The 300 million special drawing rights threshold (roughly ₹3,000 crore) creates a commercially insurable risk layer. This cap aligns with international norms under the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage. Private operators can secure insurance from commercial markets, making project debt serviceable and equity returns calculable. The government backstop beyond this threshold addresses tail risks without burdening operators with uninsurable liabilities.

This bifurcated approach is critical for project finance. Nuclear plants require 70-80% debt financing given their capital intensity. The SHANTI Bill's insurance structure enables commercial banks and institutional lenders to underwrite nuclear projects using conventional project finance frameworks. The wilful misconduct provision further refines risk allocation. By distinguishing accidents from technical failures and negligence or sabotage, the Bill ensures operators maintain robust

safety protocols while limiting liability for unforeseen events.

For international technology providers, these provisions represent a fundamental shift. Reactor vendors now have contractual mechanisms to manage India exposure. Equipment manufacturers can negotiate liability caps proportionate to component value. This clarity will catalyse the technology partnerships essential for India's nuclear expansion.

Infrastructure investors rank regulatory predictability as critical as returns.

Nuclear projects, with 7-10 year construction timelines and 60-year operating lives, require stable, transparent regulatory frameworks. The SHANTI Bill delivers this through a four-tier dispute resolution mechanism ensuring swift, expert adjudication. The Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) continues as the independent safety regulator, making

initial determinations on licensing and compliance. The second tier, the Atomic Energy Redressal Advisory Council (AERAC), headed by a chairperson appointed by the Centre, provides expert review of AERB decisions. Aggrieved parties must apply to AERAC within 60 days of the AERB's order. The third tier, the Appellate Tribunal for Electricity established under the Electricity Act, 2003, includes technical members with specialised knowledge in nuclear energy and mandates 60-day resolution windows from AERAC's order. The Supreme Court serves as the final tier for constitutional questions.

This structure addresses the regulatory paralysis that has plagued Indian inf-

rastructure. For private investors committing \$3-5 billion per reactor project, this time-bound resolution is as important as returns. By requiring expert review at AERAC and the tribunal before Supreme Court access, the architecture prevents routine technical disputes from becoming protracted legal battles.

The Bill maintains government monopoly over proliferation-sensitive activities—enrichment or isotopic separation beyond notified limits, spent fuel reprocessing, heavy water production, and strategic by-products. This addresses non-proliferation concerns while opening commercially viable segments, reassuring international partners about India's commitment to responsible nuclear stewardship. Licensing authorities retain power to deny or withdraw licences if firms are owned, controlled, or influenced by entities inimical to national security. This provides strategic protection without impeding legitimate commercial participation.

The SHANTI Bill creates immediate opportunities in reactor construction, equipment manufacturing, and nuclear services. Small modular reactors, typically 100-300-megawatt units suitable for industrial clusters and remote regions, represent attractive entry points given lower capital requirements and faster deployment timelines. India's nuclear opening coincides with a global renaissance in atomic energy driven by decarbonisation imperatives. With enabling legislation, robust liability frameworks, and time-bound dispute resolution, India transitions from a restricted market to a compelling investment destination. For energy investors seeking exposure to Asia's fastest-growing major economy, nuclear power has moved from impossible to inevitable.

For global energy majors, reactor makers & investors, the SHANTI Bill transforms India into a viable investment destination

Russia's war chest badly hit as oil flows, prices plunge

Bloomberg

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LONDON: Russia's war chest is being hammered by the double-whammy of a slump in oil shipments and a continuing decline in prices, sending the value of crude exports to the lowest since January 2023. Four-week average crude flows fell in the period to December 14, driven by the biggest week-on-week slump in flows since the 2022 invasion of Ukraine. Offloading cargoes is proving even more of a challenge, with crude at sea jumping 40% since the end of August and at least 20 cargoes loaded at the country's western ports in September and October still undelivered.

Numerous tankers have disappeared from tracking systems in the Riau archipelago, northeast of Singapore, a favoured location for transferring sanctioned Iranian barrels between vessels that's growing in popularity among carriers of Moscow's crude. Tracks suggest that at least six Russian cargo switches have taken place there since November, with another six fully-laden tankers disappearing in the area so far this month.

The slide in Moscow's revenues coincides with the US piling the diplomatic pressure on Ukraine and its European allies to strike a peace deal, even as the Kremlin keeps up its bombardment of its neighbour's gas and power infrastructure. Kyiv in turn continues to strike Russia's oil assets, extending its attacks to production platforms in the Caspian Sea, and hitting more tankers hauling the country's oil.

Moscow shipped 3.61 million barrels a day in the four weeks to December 14, according to vessel-tracking data compiled by Bloomberg. That's down by about 70,000 from the period to December 7, driven by a 1.24 million barrel a day decline in weekly shipments.

An 11th straight drop in crude



The oil tanker named Boracay (also called Pushpa), a vessel suspected of belonging to the so-called "shadow fleet" involved in the Russian oil trade, off the coast of the western France port of Saint-Nazaire, France, on October 2.

REUTERS

prices has added to Moscow's difficulties. Urals is down by about \$20 a barrel, or more than one-third, since its recent peak in mid-July, dropping to the lowest since the war began. Pacific-loading ESPO has fared a little better, losing about 22% of its value over the same period. But even here, sanctions are weighing on demand, allowing at least one Chinese buyer to snap up a cargo at what traders say was the steepest discount this year.

Crude shipments

A total of 27 tankers loaded 20.98 million barrels of Russian crude in the week to December 14, vessel-tracking data and port-agent reports show. The volume was down sharply from 29.65 million barrels on 38 ships the previous week.

On a daily average basis, shipments in the week to December 14 slumped to 3 million barrels a day, down by about 1.24 million barrels a day from the previous week, the biggest week-on-week

drop since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Separately, one cargo of Kazakhstan's Kebco grade was shipped from Novorossiysk during the week.

The slump in flows was driven by a sharp drop in shipments from the Baltic port of Primorsk.

Export value

On a four-week average basis, the gross value of Moscow's exports fell to \$1.09 billion a week in the 28 days to December 14, with the impact of the lower export quantities magnified by the 11th straight drop in average prices.

On a weekly basis, the value of exports averaged about \$883 million in the 7 days to December 14, down by 30% from the period to December 7, with prices and quantities both down week-on-week. The weekly export value was the lowest in three years.

Flows by destination

Observed shipments to Russia's Asian customers, including those showing no final destination,

slipped to 3.36 million barrels a day in the 28 days to December 14, down from a revised 3.41 million in the period to December 7.

While the amount of Russian crude heading to both China and India appears to be falling sharply, that's mostly being offset by growing quantities on vessels yet to show a final destination, allowing for much of that pattern to be reversed. Tankers are increasingly showing no final destination until they are well across the Arabian Sea, while some never show a final calling point, even after mooring to discharge.

Vessels are also spending longer at sea, with several tankers diverting from initial destinations on the west coast of India or in Turkey. They are also getting held up waiting to discharge at Chinese ports.

There is now more crude on tankers yet to show a final destination than the combined amount on ships signalling that they are heading to China, India or Turkey.

THEIR VIEW

The world made a pledge in Paris 10 years ago: We must redeem it

All countries must work to meet the historic commitments made collectively at CoP-21 a decade ago. France is doing its bit



EMMANUEL MACRON
is president of France.

It has been 10 years since the UN Climate Change Conference in Paris (CoP-21), where 195 states made a historic commitment to work together to keep the long-term rise in global temperatures well below 2°Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the rise to no more than 1.5°Celsius. France played its part in making this great moment of universal solidarity a success. A decade later, we can be proud of how far we have come.

In France, we have reduced our greenhouse-gas emissions by 30% compared with 1990, including 20% between 2017 and 2024. We went from a reduction of less than 1% per year before 2017 to annual reductions of more than 2% on average from 2017 to 2021—and more than 4% on average between 2022 and 2024. Our goal is a 50% reduction by 2030, which means 270 million fewer tonnes of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere every year. It shows the success of our unique approach to ecology, which combines progress and protection, and enables us to reduce both emissions and unemployment at the same time. We never impose a rule without providing an accessible alternative and refuse to sacrifice our competitiveness. Our aim is to combine sovereignty, employment and decarbonization. How? Through clear choices.

Ecology is at the heart of all our economic, planning, energy, agricultural and industrial policies. The National Low-Carbon Strategy is a case in point: it sets our course toward carbon neutrality, shaping all our policies. We rely on six principles: **Respecting and protecting science:** We are guided by the consensus of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which has begun preparing its seventh report and held its first meeting with all its authors in Paris. This is why we invest so heavily in climate research and innovation—to find new decarbonization solutions. Through our Research Programming Law and France 2030 programme, we have funded practical research and hundreds of projects related to climate change in various fields, from small modular nuclear reactors and low-carbon hydrogen to sustainable fuels and water management. At a time when scientific voices are being challenged, we will continue to accelerate in this area and attract the best researchers.

Ending dependence on imported fossil fuels: We are choosing a decarbonized and sovereign energy system—essential for both national independence and climate protection. As early as 2022 in Belfort, I outlined the main pillars of our energy policy: reducing fossil-fuel consumption, developing renewable energy and relaunching nuclear power. This has succeeded: In 2021, our electricity was more than 83% decarbonized. We have identified zones where offshore wind farms will be developed by 2050. The nuclear sector has been revived, with initial construction and financing already under-



way on six new EPR2 reactors. Small reactors for heat production are also being developed. We are building a sovereign energy industry and I intend to go even further: by 2027, we will close or convert the last coal-fired power plants.

Helping industry decarbonize: Reindustrializing France means helping decarbonize the world. Green investment in France has increased by nearly 30% in three years. Green industry accounted for one in three new factories in 2024. We have already launched decarbonization efforts for the 50 largest industrial sites—representing about 10% of France's total emissions. By 2030, these sites will have halved their emissions. Our green industries are creating jobs. We plan to produce electric vehicles, batteries, heat pumps and solar panels. [As for the rest of Europe, I hope that the European Commission's upcoming announcements will show that momentum is building, so that Europe truly becomes the site of the world's most ambitious decarbonization projects.

Progress for people: Ecology must improve people's daily lives. Renovating our homes allows everyone to lower their energy bills, helps France reduce dependence on fossil fuels and increases everyone's quality of life. This requires constant attention to equality and purchasing power. Through our social leasing programme, 50,000 low-income households were able to acquire a new vehicle in 2024 for less than €100 per month and another 50,000 will benefit this year.

Adapting to climate change: We must prepare for the consequences of climate change. We have adopted our third National Adaptation Plan and defined a reference pathway to align all our policies—from the local to the national level.

Carrying the fight to Europe and the world: Europe is the most climate-ambitious continent with a goal of carbon neutrality by 2050. The EU is also the world's leading provider of climate finance. France embraces its role as a guarantor of the Paris agreement and of climate action. To this end, in 2017, I launched the One Planet Summit to build cross-sector coalitions capable of acting simultaneously on emissions reduction and adaptation projects. Since then, we have launched 50 initiatives to fight climate change. Our programmes led to the UN's adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the High Seas Treaty, as well as to the mobilization of €4 billion to combat plastic pollution and over €19 billion for biodiversity protection and food security.

Ten years after CoP-21, France also hosted the UN Ocean Conference, aimed at protecting unique ecosystems that are vital to the climate. We support Just Energy Transition Partnerships and seek innovative financing solutions that align private investment flows with global decarbonization goals. This was our message at CoP-30 in Belém.

The decade since CoP-21 has been a period of success and ambition. But it has also been marked by international tensions, the questioning of science, international division and efforts to erase the universal ideal of liberty and fraternity among peoples. As always, France will play its full part in the struggle for our climate and our planet, guided by respect for science, industrial ambition, progress, solidarity and the exemplary leadership of Europe. Let's aim for collective success over the coming decade. This can be achieved—if we remain faithful to the commitments we made in Paris 10 years ago.

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THEIR VIEW

Oil, gas and gallium can explain America's new security strategy

Washington's world view is being reshaped by material conditions that enlarge the space for peace



JAMES K. GALBRAITH

is co-author of 'Entropy Economics: The Living Basis of Value and Production'.

The new National Security Strategy of the US seeks "strategic stability" with Russia. It declares that China is merely a competitor, that the Middle East is not central to American security, that Latin America is "our hemisphere" and that Europe faces "civilizational erasure." India barely rates a mention; one might say, as Neville Chamberlain did of Czechoslovakia in 1938, that it's "a faraway country... of which we know nothing." Well, so much the better for India, which can take care of itself.

The realpolitik of this document is breathtaking, yet the underlying logic is not stated. It is a logic of resources. With oil flowing thick and fast from Texas and reserves in Canada and Venezuela, the US can exit the Gulf in West Asia and even (in principle, not in practice) leave Israel to its own devices. Russian gas, more precisely the lack of it, has sealed the fate of Europe: Germany is de-industrializing while Britain and France, their empires long gone, sink toward irrelevance. Sanctions having failed, Russia's eventual victory in Ukraine is now assured.

With China, the resource issue is rare earths, especially gallium, a byproduct of refining bauxite into alumina. China controls rare earths through a near-monopoly on refining, which could erode with determined efforts over time.

Gallium is different; US aluminium capacity peaked in 1980 and China's

advantage in the underlying process of refining is now estimated at 90 to 1. The US cannot own-source gallium on any timescale. As there is no substitute for gallium in advanced microchips, the US military cannot now confront China and prevail. A *détente* is therefore necessary for America, as desired by and acceptable to Beijing.

As strategy, the new order is not iron-clad and should not be taken too seriously until military bases are closed, aircraft carriers decommissioned and nuclear weapons mothballed. It is also hedged in several unrealistic ways, such as the notion, quickly quashed by China, that perhaps Japan (and Korea) might defend the "first island chain," a euphemism for Taiwan.

As economics, it is a mass of contradictions, in particular its quest for US re-industrialization while simultaneously protecting the financial system and the dollar's global role. The syndrome is of the child who wants every shiny package under the tree. One may expect a tantrum once the reality dawns that one can't have it all.

Then there is the undisguised notion that the nations of Latin America are not really countries, but dependencies and satrapies—colonies in all but name—run by *caciques* (local leaders). That there have been (and still are) such countries in the region cannot be denied. But Mexico and Brazil, not to mention Colombia and Venezuela, not to mention Nicaragua and Cuba, have other ideas. The brazen, Miami-mobster tone of this document is its most retrograde feature, scarcely removed from the years before the American Civil War, when Cuba and Mexico were seen as new frontiers for southern slaveholders.

Still, for all its defects, as an assault on the previously sacrosanct, unipolar and Eurocentric world order, the new US strategy is an ice-breaker. It opens up policy space not seen in 40, 50 or perhaps 60 years—not since Reagan and Gorbachev, Nixon and Mao, or Kennedy

and Khrushchev, who each in their own way tried to forestall a final nuclear confrontation. The panicky reaction of European political leaders and US foreign policy, media and Democratic Party elites portends a colossal struggle to keep the old order going. *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman's pastiche of cringe and cope is a telling example of what to expect.

Previous efforts at peacemaking all came eventually to naught. Kennedy's overtures of 1963, notably the test-ban treaty and his decision to exit Vietnam, ended with his assassination. Nixon's opening to China led to deep a relationship that only lapsed into hostility as China emerged as a leading economic power while the 1990s-era illusion of an 'end of history' convergence to 'liberal democracy' fell apart. The end of the Cold War engineered by Gorbachev and Reagan gave way, under George H. W. Bush, to claims of 'victory' with an inevitable repercussion—revanche.

Yet, in each of those episodes, the material conditions of the US were stronger and its need to dominate the world greater than is true today. The US is now self-sufficient in energy; it can get along without Europe or the Gulf, and it can prosper without antagonizing Russia or China. At the same time, US military capacity has eroded; an era of missiles and drones has superseded that of aircraft carriers and bases. The material conditions, in short, favour peace.

One cannot be optimistic. No doubt, those committed to unilateral American hegemony will make every effort, in the months ahead, to reverse any move towards balanced peace. But they would be defending a global order that no longer exists, whereas the new conditions really do call for regional consolidation and multi-polarity in a world where peace and stability are paramount.

India, nicely balanced among great powers, will benefit if a peaceful system prevails. And its diplomacy can help, if it chooses, to make it happen.

MNRE denies bribery allegations in SECI contracts

Our Bureau
New Delhi

The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) informed Parliament on Tuesday that it has not received any allegations of bribery by Indian renewable energy developers to secure contracts from the state-run Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI).

Minister of State for New & Renewable Energy Shripad Naik said in response to a written query in the Rajya Sabha. The Minister was asked whether the Ministry has initiated any vigilance inquiry or forensic audit, following US Department of Justice (DoJ) and Securities & Exchange Commission (SEC) indictments alleging bribery by Indian renewable energy developers to secure SECI contracts.

The issue relates to charges levelled against Gautam Adani and his executives by the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and a New York district court for bribing Indian government officials in lieu



Shripad Naik, MoS for New and Renewable Energy

of lucrative solar power contracts that can adversely impact foreign fund-raising plans. US prosecutors claimed that Adani Green Energy (AGEL), the RE arm of Adani Group, had bribed SECI officials for the contracts.

In this regard, the order by the New York district court stated that between 2020 and 2024, senior executives of AGEL and an issuer company that operated in the RE sector whose securities were traded in the US exchange and the issuer's largest shareholder, the Canadian institutional investor Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec (CDPQ), bribed Indian government officials to ensure execution of lucrative solar energy supply contracts with government entities.

‘No RE project connected under Green Energy Corridor II so far’

Our Bureau
New Delhi

The Ministry of New & Renewable Energy (MNRE) informed Parliament on Tuesday that so far no renewable energy (RE) project has been connected under the Green Energy Corridor Phase-II scheme (GEC Ph-II) so far.

The MNRE is implementing the GEC Ph-II scheme in Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh to integrate around 20 GW of renewable energy. Under the GEC Ph-II, 91 packages have been approved, of which 73 have been tendered and 67 awarded.

“As per the information provided by the States no RE project has been connected under GEC Ph-II so far,” Minister of State for New & Renewable Energy Shripad Naik said in response to a written query in Rajya Sabha.

KEY INITIATIVES

JMK Research & Analytics, in a September 2025 report, noted that the government has launched key initiatives to integrate RE into the grid. While the GEC builds dedicated transmission infra-



structure across renewable-rich States, the introduction of the General Network Access (GNA) framework streamlines connectivity for renewable generators.

The Green Energy Corridor (GEC) was conceptualised in 2015 to address the widening mismatch between India's rapidly growing renewable energy capacity and the limited availability of corresponding transmission infrastructure. It targets inter- and intra-State transmission development as a phased programme. PGCIL is implementing the Inter-State Transmission System (ISTS), while State Transmission Utilities (STUs) are developing Intra-State Transmission System (InSTS) networks in key renewable-rich States.

According to JMK Re-

search, the ISTS component of GEC Ph-I was completed in March 2020, enabling the evacuation of around 7.45 GW of RE. In contrast, progress on InSTS infrastructure has lagged. Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Himachal Pradesh had to seek extensions beyond the expected commissioning timeline (FY24) due to persistent execution challenges.

Naik, in a written response in the Lok Sabha, said that Maharashtra, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh have sought extension up to December 2025 to complete projects under the InSTS GEC-I.

Out of the 8 States, 4 have completed all the projects — Rajasthan, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. Maharashtra, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh have been granted extensions up to June 2025; however, these States have requested further extension up to December 2025,” he has said.

While Phase I is nearing completion, the timely execution of Phase II, especially the 19 GW InSTS component, is crucial for the evacuation and utilisation of renewable energy, JMK Research said.

Natural gas demand to decline by 4-5% in 2025 on mild summer, high LNG spot prices

Rishi Ranjan Kala
New Delhi

A milder-than-usual summer coupled with elevated spot prices of liquefied natural gas in the first half of 2025 is expected to pull down India's natural gas demand in the current calendar year.

According to Balance Point Research, gas demand in India's nearly 200 million standard cubic meters per day (MSCMD), or roughly 7 billion cubic feet per day, market is set to decline by 4-5 per cent in 2025.

"In spite of the outturn of LNG flat prices steadily falling since August 2025, and becoming materially cheaper relative to 2024 levels since September, a bid for incremental volumes of internationally-priced, natural gas supply has yet to emerge in size. In November 2025, the volume of LNG imports was on par with one year prior," it added.

LOW TEMPERATURES

India consumed around 71 bcm of natural gas in 2024 calendar year. Analysts said that low summer temperatures led to a decline in the electricity generation from



India consumed 71 bcm of natural gas in 2024 calendar year REUTERS

gas-based power plants. Also, high spot LNG prices led to fuel switching in the industrial and oil refining sectors, where price sensitivity remains high.

For a year that has not delivered many transitory surges in India's natural gas demand, said Balance Point Research adding, the market nonetheless offers bright spots of secular natural gas demand growth.

One such example is from local distribution company/city gas distribution (CGD) networks, which are currently the recipient of signi-

ficant capex spend. "The further convergence of global gas prices currently communicated by forward markets will undoubtedly provide a valuable commercial tailwind for natural gas penetration in India. However, the pace at which midstream infrastructure growth is enabling the adoption of natural gas in the world's largest country by population remains slow," it pointed out.

The International Energy Agency's (IEA) gas report 2025 projects India's natural gas demand growth to slow temporarily, with a projected

decline of 3 per cent. Between 2019 and 2024, demand rebounded after a prolonged period of stagnation, with growth exceeding 10 per cent annually in both 2023 and 2024.

CONSUMPTION GROWTH

In 2026, however, it expects gas consumption growth is forecast to reach 7 per cent, driven by the ongoing expansion of city gas distribution (CGD) and CNG filling station networks, expanding industrial gas use and rising electricity needs.

India's natural gas consumption is projected to grow by nearly 40 per cent from 2024 levels in the base case, reaching 99 billion cubic meters (bcm) by 2030, said IEA.

With additional demand triggered by low spot LNG prices in the high case, total gas consumption could rise to around 107 bcm by the end of the decade, a nearly 50 per cent increase compared with 2024.

Growth under this higher trajectory is led by the industrial sector, which is projected to expand by more than 35 per cent (15 bcm/year) between 2024 and 2030, it added.

Online

Headline	Ashoknagar Oil Field Production to Start Soon		
Publication	Bharat Horizon	Edition	Online Coverage
Published Date	16 Dec 2025		

Ashoknagar Oil Field Production to Start Soon

<https://bharathorizon.com/business/industry/ashoknagar-oil-field-production-to-start-soon.html>

Commercial production from the significant Ashoknagar oil field discovery in West Bengal is poised to begin in the near future.

This development follows concerted efforts by the Union government and the state administration to resolve pending formalities.

Minister Announces Imminent Start

Union Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Hardeep Singh Puri , provided a positive update on the project's status. He confirmed that both the central government's Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) and the West Bengal government are actively working to finalize the agreement, paving the way for operations to commence.

Puri expressed optimism that recent regulatory changes would expedite the process. He specifically referenced the newly notified Petroleum & Natural Gas Rules, 2025 , stating he hopes issues concerning stamp duty on the land lease and royalty payments will be swiftly resolved under this framework.

A Decade-Long Journey with Major Investment

The minister shared these details while responding to questions during the Question Hour in Parliament. He revealed that the initial oil and gas discovery at the Ashoknagar site was made back in

Since that discovery, the national oil major has invested a substantial sum in the project. ONGC has already spent approximately Rs 1,000 crore on exploration and development activities at the field, underscoring the scale and importance of the venture.

State Government's Crucial Role

The West Bengal government, led by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee , has played a key facilitative role. The state administration has taken necessary steps to allow ONGC to initiate its activities on the new oil and gas discoveries in the Ashoknagar region.

In a significant move to boost the state's industrial landscape, CM Banerjee had announced at the concluding session of the recent Bengal Global Business Summit that the government had allocated land to the oil and gas major. Notably, the land was provided on lease for a token amount of just Rs 1 , signaling strong support for the project's advancement.

Path Forward for Bengal's Energy Sector

The commencement of production at the Ashoknagar field marks a pivotal moment for West Bengal's hydrocarbon sector. It represents the fruition of a major exploration effort and a successful collaboration between central and state authorities.

With the regulatory pathway now clearer and the land lease secured, the project is expected to move swiftly into the production phase. This will not only contribute to India's domestic energy production but also potentially boost the local economy and create employment opportunities in the region.

Headline	ONGC shares fall nearly 2% as crude oil slips below \$60 per barrel		
Publication	Business Upturn	Edition	Online Coverage
Published Date	16 Dec 2025		

ONGC shares fall nearly 2% as crude oil slips below \$60 per barrel

<https://www.businessupturn.com/finance/stock-market/ongc-shares-fall-nearly-2-as-crude-oil-slips-below-60-per-barrel/>

Shares of Oil and Natural Gas Corporation declined sharply in Tuesday's session, falling nearly 2% , as weakness in global crude oil prices weighed on upstream oil stocks.

ONGC shares were trading around Rs 231.96 on the NSE , down , after touching intraday lows near Rs 232 . The stock had closed at Rs 235.35 in the previous session.

The decline comes as Brent crude slipped below the \$60-per-barrel mark for the first time since May, intensifying concerns over realizations for upstream oil producers. West Texas Intermediate was also trading lower near \$56 a barrel , adding pressure across the energy sector.

ONGC's stock movement mirrored broader sentiment in oil and gas counters, as lower crude prices tend to impact revenue visibility for exploration and production companies.

As of the latest trade, ONGC's market capitalisation stood at about Rs 2.93 lakh crore , with the stock trading within its intraday range of Rs 232.20 to Rs 235.30

Headline	Seamec Wins ONGC Vessel Charter Contract		
Publication	Construction World	Edition	Online Coverage
Published Date	16 Dec 2025		

Seamec Wins ONGC Vessel Charter Contract

<https://www.constructionworld.in/energy-infrastructure/oil-and-gas/seamec-wins-ongc-vessel-charter-contract/83138>

Seamec shares rose 2.90 per cent to Rs 1,042.85 after the company, through its subcontractor G R Infraprojects, secured a contract from Oil and

Natural Gas Corporation for the charter hire of its vessel Seamec III. The vessel will be deployed for second-season subsea installation and diving works under the part replacement pipeline project (PRP-VIII A) and the DSF II project. The lump-sum subcontract has a tenure of 150 days and is valued at about \$16.72 million, excluding GST. The order was awarded by a domestic entity in the normal course of business, with no promoter interest involved, and does not qualify as a related-party transaction.

Seamec operates across two verticals within the shipping sector offshore support vessels and services, and bulk carrier chartering. The company owns six vessels and one barge in its offshore support business, with deployments across domestic and international markets.

G R Infraprojects, which is executing the subcontract, is engaged in infrastructure development on engineering, procurement and construction as well as build, operate and transfer models. Shares of G R Infraprojects rose 0.75 per cent to Rs 1,011.20 on the BSE.

Maharatna PSU Oil and Natural Gas Corporation is India's largest crude oil and natural gas producer, contributing about 71 per cent of domestic output. The Government of India held a 58.89 per cent stake in ONGC as of September 30, 2025. ONGC shares closed 0.38 per cent higher at Rs 239.38 on the BSE.

Headline	Why India's new Petroleum and Natural Gas Rules matter		
Publication	Finshots	Edition	Online Coverage
Published Date	17 Dec 2025		

Why India's new Petroleum and Natural Gas Rules matter

<https://finshots.in/archive/india-new-petroleum-and-natural-gas-rules/>

In today's Finshots, we dive into India's new Petroleum and Natural Gas Rules, and why they matter not just for the oil and gas sector, but for the broader economy too.

But here's a quick sidenote before we begin. This weekend, we're hosting a free 2-day Insurance Masterclass where we'll walk you through simple rules to pick the right insurance plan and the common mistakes you should avoid.

? Saturday, 20th Dec at 11:00 AM: Term Insurance

How to protect your family, choose the right cover amount, and understand what truly matters during a term claim.

? Sunday, 21st Dec at 11:00 AM: Health Insurance

How hospitals process claims, common deductions, the mistakes buyers usually make, and how to choose a policy that won't disappoint you when you need it most.

Now, on to today's story.

The Story

For a while, I've lived in a place called Ashoknagar in West Bengal, about 50 km from Kolkata. You've probably never heard of it. And that's fair because it's a small town, not particularly known for anything out of the ordinary.

But in 2018, something unexpected happened. ONGC struck its first commercial crude oil discovery just ten minutes from my home. Test production followed between 2020 and 2022, and since then, ONGC has gone on to make a few more discoveries nearby.

And yet, years later, commercial oil extraction still hasn't begun.

The reason?

ONGC and the West Bengal government got stuck arguing over a deceptively simple question: what exactly is the value of the lease on which stamp duty should be paid?

To see why this stalled everything, you need a bit of context. When a company wants to do upstream oil business basically find oil and gas and extract it, it needs something called a petroleum mining lease. If the oilfield lies within a state, the state government grants the lease. If it's offshore, the Central government does.

This lease gives the company exclusive rights to explore, develop, produce, and sell oil and gas. Think of it like renting land. One party owns the land, the other pays to use it. Here, the state is the owner, and the oil company pays an annual lease rent. On top of that, it also pays royalty, which depends on how much oil is actually produced and sold. All of this is governed by the Oilfields (Regulation and Development) Act, 1948.

But before the lease becomes operational, there's one more step. The company has to pay stamp duty or a one-time tax when the lease deed is executed. For the state, this is upfront revenue. And it's calculated as a percentage of the lease's value.

And that's where Ashoknagar's project hit a wall.

ONGC and the West Bengal government disagreed on what should count as the value of the lease for stamp-duty purposes. Should it be the lease rent paid over the full period? Should it include future royalty from oil that hadn't even been produced yet? Or should stamp duty be charged on whichever number turned out to be higher?

The problem was that the Petroleum and Natural Gas Rules (we'll just call it the PNG Rules), written back in 1959, never clearly defined this. That single ambiguity was enough to slow down the lease approval by quite a few years.

And the cost of that delay has been massive. ONGC has already spent over 1,000 crore on exploration and appraisal, yet production hasn't started. The state hasn't earned any royalty or revenue. To put this in perspective, the Ashoknagar field, being the first identified oilfield in West Bengal, is estimated to produce oil worth around 45,000 crore, with West Bengal's potential revenue at roughly 4,500 crore over the field's life. None of that has come in yet. There's also been no jobs boost and no local services boom the kind that usually follows drilling and accompanying operations.

The cost doesn't stop at the state level. For the country as a whole, this delay matters because India still imports about of the crude oil it consumes. Sure, Ashoknagar, wouldn't have transformed that equation overnight. But it definitely could have helped chip away at that dependence a little. Instead, its barrels are still stuck underground.

But this isn't an isolated case. For years, the old PNG rules quietly held back India's entire oil and gas sector.

The most visible damage showed up in domestic production. Under an uncertain and cumbersome regulatory regime, India's crude oil output steadily slipped. Production stood at about 34 million metric tonnes (MMT) in 2019. But by 2024, it had fallen to around 29 MMT. In simple terms, we were extracting less oil from our own ground, which automatically pushed us to rely more on expensive imports.

ONGC tells an even sharper story. In FY25, it saw crude production fall by about 3%, despite capital expenditure more than doubling to 62,000 crore. Yes, the government has rolled out several policy reforms over the years. But the fact that ONGC spent twice as much and still got less output suggests something deeper was broken. The regulatory framework was choking productivity, even as investment kept rising.

This decline fed straight into India's import bill. If you look at the numbers you'll see that India spent roughly \$161 billion importing crude oil and petroleum products in FY25, which is about 3% more than the year before. And since oil imports are paid for in dollars, even small movements in the rupee make a big difference. A 1% depreciation for instance, can add 8,000 crore to the annual import bill, putting pressure on foreign exchange reserves and the currency. It's a vicious cycle, and the old rules did little to break it.

Perhaps the most damaging consequence, though, was how India scared away global oil majors. On paper, the country allowed 100% foreign direct investment (FDI) in oil and gas. But in practice, a dense regulatory maze kept international players at bay. Projects required multiple approvals across different stages of exploration, development, and production, often from different government ministries, taking years to secure. So it wasn't unusual for companies to spend years chasing just one permit.

Pricing policy made things worse. Under the Administered Price Mechanism, fuel prices were capped by the government. That meant even if a company's costs went up, it couldn't sell fuel above government-set prices. State-owned firms like ONGC were compensated for losses, but private and foreign players weren't. This created a lopsided risk equation where investors bore the downside if costs rose but had limited upside even when things went well.

Add to that, lease terms that were temporary and could be changed or withdrawn at the government's discretion, and it became hard to justify pouring billions of dollars into long-term oil and gas infrastructure.

The result was predictable. Despite its scale and energy needs, India attracted very little upstream oil and gas FDI.

At this point, you might be wondering: if these rules caused so much damage, why did we have them in the first place?

The answer is pretty straightforward. These rules were written for a very different India, shaped by memories of colonial extraction. After decades of foreign exploitation, the instinct was to keep strategic sectors like oil firmly under state control, with private capital viewed with suspicion.

That made sense back then. But as India changed and the country opened the sector to 100% foreign investment, even in public sector firms, the old rules began to work against it. So, what was meant to keep private capital out became a roadblock just when India needed investment most. This in turn slowed development, cut output, and chased away foreign money.

But just last week, the government amended the Oilfields (Regulation and Development) Act and notified the new PNG Rules, 2025. These rules replace the decades-old 1959 framework and, more importantly, fix the core issues that kept upstream oil projects stuck for years.

First, the new rules remove all ambiguity around what counts as the value of the lease. They clearly state that the value of the lease is the total lease rent payable over the entire lease term. Royalty is treated as a completely separate stream. In simple terms, rent is what the company pays to hold the lease, while royalty is what the state earns later, as oil is actually produced.

That gives everyone a single, objective way to calculate stamp duty. Take the annual lease rent, multiply it by the number of years in the lease, say, 30 years, and that number becomes the value of the lease for stamp-duty purposes. So the old debate over lease rent or royalty, whichever is higher simply disappears, because royalty isn't part of the lease valuation at all.

Second, the rules finally put a time limit on approvals. Any application for a petroleum lease now has to be decided within 180 days. This means disputes and paperwork can't drag on endlessly the way they did in Ashoknagar. If the lease falls under the Centre and no decision is taken within this period, the application is deemed approved. If it falls under a state and there's still no decision after 180 days, it's deemed rejected

Third, instead of forcing companies to juggle multiple licences at different stages, a single petroleum lease now covers exploration, development, production, and even related activities like renewable energy projects.

Lease periods have also been extended. Companies can now hold leases for up to 30 years, with extensions tied to the economic life of the field. That kind of long-term certainty is crucial if you're going to sink billions into drilling rigs, pipelines, and processing facilities.

There's also a quiet but important fix around infrastructure. Companies are now required to report unused pipeline and facility capacity every year and make it available to others on fair terms. Earlier, large players could sit on spare capacity and block smaller operators. This change improves utilisation, lowers costs, and makes the sector more competitive.

And perhaps the biggest signal to global investors is that the new rules let foreign investors settle disputes through international arbitration, even outside India if they want. Since Indian courts can be slow, this gives investors more confidence and makes India an equally attractive destination as other oil-producing countries.

Which brings us back to Ashoknagar. As Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Hardeep Singh Puri told the Rajya Sabha just a couple of days ago, oil production in the town could start within the next few weeks. And an issue that's been stuck for years now has a clear path forward.

Sure, the new PNG Rules won't work miracles overnight. And better rules can't conjure up new reserves, and even the oil we do have will still take years to explore and extract.

But they do remove some of the biggest self-inflicted roadblocks. And that makes this a clear step in the right direction.

Until next time

If this story helped you make sense of the new Petroleum and Natural Gas Rules in the simplest way possible, do us a favour and share it with a friend, family member, or even strangers on WhatsApp LinkedIn , and X . And tell them to subscribe to Finshots too.

Headline	Today's News » Production at Ashoknagar oil field to start soon: Petroleum minister		
Publication	Indian Oil and Gas	Edition	Online Coverage
Published Date	17 Dec 2025		

Today's News » Production at Ashoknagar oil field to start soon: Petroleum minister

<http://www.indianoilandgas.com/viewnews.php?id=63205>

December 17, 2025: Production at the Ashoknagar oil field project in Bengal will start soon with both ONGC and the state govts making efforts to

finalize the deal, said Union minister of petroleum and natural gas Hardeep Singh Puri.

The minister said that with the Petroleum & Natural Gas Rules, 2025 being notified recently, he hopes issues related to stamp duty on lease and royalty would be "resolved".

Replying to supplementaries during the Question Hour, Puri said the oil and gas discovery was made in 2018 and ONGC has spent Rs 10 billion on the project.

The state govt has paved the way for ONGC to start activities in the new oil and discoveries in Ashoknagar. CM Mamata Banerjee announced at the valedictory session of the last Bengal Global Business Summit that it had given land to the oil and gas major on lease for Rs 1.

Headline	Today's News » Seamec Wins ONGC Vessel Charter Contract		
Publication	Indian Oil and Gas	Edition	Online Coverage
Published Date	17 Dec 2025		

Today's News » Seamec Wins ONGC Vessel Charter Contract

<http://www.indianoilandgas.com/viewnews.php?id=63202>

December 17, 2025: Seamec through its subcontractor G R Infraprojects, secured a contract from Oil and Natural Gas Corporation for the charter hire of its vessel Seamec III.

The vessel will be deployed for second-season subsea installation and diving works under the part replacement pipeline project (PRP-VIII A) and the DSF II project. The lump-sum subcontract has a tenure of 150 days and is valued at about \$16.72 million, excluding GST.

Headline	Production at Ashoknagar oil field project in West Bengal to begin soon, says petroleum minister		
Publication	Infra Live	Edition	Online Coverage
Published Date	16 Dec 2025		

Production at Ashoknagar oil field project in West Bengal to begin soon, says petroleum minister

<https://infralive.com/web/production-at-ashoknagar-oil-field-project-in-west-bengal-to-begin-soon-says-petroleum-minister/>

Union Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas Hardeep Singh Puri on Monday said that the production at the Ashoknagar Oil Field project in

West Bengal would start soon, with both ONGC and the state government making efforts to finalise the lease deed.

With the Petroleum & Natural Gas Rules, 2025 being notified recently, the minister hoped that the issues related to stamp duty on lease as well as royalty would be resolved.

Headline	West Bengal Oil Field Project on Brink of Liftoff: Petroleum Minister Sees Smooth Sailing Ahead		
Publication	Kokthum	Edition	Online Coverage
Published Date	16 Dec 2025		

West Bengal Oil Field Project on Brink of Liftoff: Petroleum Minister Sees Smooth Sailing Ahead

<https://kokthum.com/national/west-bengal-oil-field-project-on-brink-of-liftoff-petroleum-minister-sees-smooth-sailing-ahead>

New Delhi: Union Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas Hardeep Singh Puri expressed optimism that the Ashoknagar Oil Field project in West Bengal would soon become operational.

The minister stated that both Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) and the state government are working to finalize the lease deed, with the recent notification of the Petroleum & Natural Gas Rules, 2025 expected to resolve issues related to stamp duty on lease and royalty.

The Ashoknagar project, located in the North 24 Pargana district, has seen significant progress since the discovery of oil in 2018. ONGC has already invested 1,000 crore in the project, which is estimated to contain 240 million barrels of oil equivalents in place proven reserve. If production is maintained at 30% recovery, the cumulative production value could reach 45,000 crore, with the state of Bengal set to receive 4,500 crore.

The minister emphasized that the state government's cooperation in exploration and production activities is crucial, as it generates revenue for the state. He pointed out that other states have seen substantial revenue from similar projects. Puri expressed confidence that the issues related to stamp duty on lease rent and royalty would be resolved, citing the recent exchange of letters between ONGC and the West Bengal government.

The deal is expected to be finalized based on the exchange of letters on December 10 and 12. The minister stated that only upon signing of the lease deed can production from the block commence, paving the way for eventual ramp-up.

The West Bengal government has issued a letter to ONGC regarding the computation of stamp duty, while ONGC has submitted a reply seeking the levy of stamp duty in accordance with the provisions of the recently notified PNG Rules. The rules state that the value of the lease shall be the total lease rent payable for its term, and royalty shall accrue to the state in on-land blocks based on production from the block.

Headline	Parliamentary panel urges diversification of crude oil sources to cut geopolitical risks		
Publication	MSN India	Edition	Online Coverage
Published Date	16 Dec 2025		

Parliamentary panel urges diversification of crude oil sources to cut geopolitical risks

<https://www.msn.com/en-in/news/world/parliamentary-panel-urges-diversification-of-crude-oil-sources-to-cut-geopolitical-risks/ar-AA1Sicje>

A parliamentary committee has flagged India's heavy dependence on crude oil imports and rising geopolitical risks as major challenges for the

country, and urged the government to step up diversification of supply sources and strengthen risk management mechanisms. In its report tabled in Parliament last week, the Public Undertaking Committee noted that India imports nearly 89 per cent of its crude oil requirements, making the country vulnerable to global disruptions arising from conflicts, sanctions, civil unrest in oil-producing nations and disruptions in key shipping routes such as the Suez Canal and the Red Sea. Recent events, including the Russia-Ukraine war and tensions in West Asia, have highlighted the fragility of India's energy supply chain. The committee recommended that Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG) and state-run oil companies intensify efforts to diversify crude oil sourcing both geographically and contractually, bolster strategic petroleum reserves and develop alternative import routes. It also called for institutionalising risk management tools such as hedging and flexible term contracts to safeguard energy security against future geopolitical shocks. "India meets about 89 per cent of crude oil requirements through imports and given the current geopolitical events such as Russia-Ukraine conflict, Israel-Hamas conflict, sanctions on some of the oil producing countries (like Iran, Venezuela, Russia), political/civil unrest/strikes in any oil producing country anytime, India could face risk of crude oil import uncertainty, which in turn could have an adverse impact on smooth supply of crude oil and its prices," the panel said. Also, the oil and gas sector faces several environmental concerns due to the nature of their operations, which include greenhouse gas emissions, air and water pollution, and waste management. "Recent global events, including the Russia-Ukraine conflict and tensions in the Middle East, have underscored the vulnerability of India's energy supply chain and its dependence on international trade flows," its report said. "In view of this, the Committee recommends that MoPNG and CPSUs (central public sector undertakings) should intensify efforts to diversify crude oil sourcing both geographically and contractually, strengthen strategic petroleum reserves, and enhance alternative import routes." Further, "risk management practices, including hedging and flexible term contracts, must be institutionalized to safeguard India's energy security against future geopolitical shocks," the report added. The report also drew attention to internal challenges faced by the sector, including ageing oil fields, delays and cost overruns in projects, rising land acquisition costs, and crude production not keeping pace with capital expenditure. Environmental concerns such as greenhouse gas emissions, pollution and waste management were also highlighted. While acknowledging steps taken by companies such as Indian Oil Corporation and ONGC Videsh to diversify supplies, the committee said sanctions, financial volatility and regulatory hurdles in host countries continue to constrain overseas investments. "These issues not only affect India's energy import bill but also impede the ability of CPSUs to secure overseas exploration and production assets, thereby limiting long-term energy security," it said. It recommended closer coordination between MoPNG and the Ministry of External Affairs to strengthen diplomatic engagement with oil-producing nations, secure favourable investment terms and address taxation and regulatory issues faced by Indian companies abroad. "The Committee recommends that MoPNG should work closely with the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and other relevant government agencies to strengthen diplomatic engagement with oil-producing nations, secure favourable investment terms, and address taxation and regulatory hurdles faced by CPSUs abroad," the report said. "At the same time, CPSUs should adopt digital and enterprise risk management frameworks to continuously assess geopolitical vulnerabilities, ensuring a more resilient and sustainable energy strategy for the country."

Headline	Ashoknagar oil field: Hardeep Singh urges WB cooperation as India scales up revenue & production		
Publication	MSN India	Edition	Online Coverage
Published Date	16 Dec 2025		

Ashoknagar oil field: Hardeep Singh urges WB cooperation as India scales up revenue & production

<https://www.msn.com/en-in/money/markets/ashoknagar-oil-field-hardeep-singh-urges-wb-cooperation-as-india-scales-up-revenue-production/vi-AA1Sn4x6>

[Where Government of India has already invested more than 1000 crore. So through you, I want to know from the honor our Honourable

Minister, can our Minister confirm whether the recent issue raised by the Governor W Bengal on stamp duty composition despite a clear provision under the Petroleum and Natural Gas Rules, 2025 is further delaying production and compro and composition compromisation Indias energy security. Sir, I would like to thank the honourable Member not only for this specific question, which I'm happy to answer, but also for his persistence in this issue. Sir project related to exploration and production or ENP are by very definition complex. They have a long station. And Sir, they involve heavy capital expenditure insofar as the Ashok Nagar project is concerned. Sir, as this House, some of us at least have been very familiar with this. The production and sharing contract was signed for Exploration Block W Bonn 2005 four between ONGC and OIL during the NELP Round 7. This was done Sir in 2008 and ONGC was the contractor for this block. This block is located in the N 24th Parganas District and the discovery was made Sir, in 2018. As the honourable member has said, Sir, it is true that ONGC has spent 1000 crores already on it. It is our estimate Sir, that the Bengal basin contains a total of 240 million barrels of oil equivalent in place proven reserves. If you go by this figure at 30% recovery, the cumulative production value can be around 45,000 crores out of which the state of Bengal would get 4500 crores. So the limited point I'm seeking to make here is that initially a lot of time is taken, long gestation, heavy capital expenditure, but once you begin to see the oil and gas being extracted, its pure joy after that because that expenditure is recovered now. The operator applied for a petroleum mining lease to the Government of West Bengal in 2020. The provisional PML petroleum mining lease was received from the West Bengal government in February this year. February 2025. Sir, I've had the opportunity in June this year of convening an Urja mantra, a meeting of all the states along with all the other stakeholders and I'm very happy to say that there is a new enthusiasm, new spirit of cooperation and everything is moving ahead. I can understand the honourable members anxiety. Are we going to get delayed further? Sir, the express, the exchange of letters between ONGC and the West Bengal government has only taken place on December 10 and 12. I have copies of the letter with me. My reading based on where we've reached so far that in the light of the latest legislation which we have have the oilfield development thing which has come out after that date, I think it was notified only about 5-6 days ago. I don't see any problem. The situation is quite clear that stamp duty has to be paid on the in duration of the entire lease. So if the lease in this case is 30 years, the stamp duty will be paid on the entire lease. The issue is the on royalty stamp duty will be paid on royalty as and when the royalty is received. I mean the whole idea is to facilitate this both for the concerned state government and the operator. And I think the honourable member who's been pursuing this will also realize that there has been all around movement on this. Personally, I'm not a soothsayer and I don't like to anticipate but I think considering when we started 50 years, it will take going on. 2008 we had the production sharing agreement, 2018 we move forward on the PML. Now we have everything in place, may be another few weeks and hopefully we can say that this is something that we have achieved and that production will go on. Sir, I am very happy to tell you that states when they cooperate with the exploration and production activity, they get revenue Sir. So they get revenues from petroleum and diesel. I can just share with you the state of Andhra Pradesh is getting 16,000 crores, Gujarat 24,500 crores, Maharashtra 37,000 crores, Rajasthan 18,900 crores, Tamil Nadu 24,861 crores, Uttar Pradesh 31,200 crores, W Bengal 13,000. I'm sure once this is tractified and we have other discoveries, 1000 crores has been invested and area of 99 square kilometers there. This is only one small area when this guy. I'm sure W Bengals revenues will also grow up as a result of this. So I'm reasonably confident as I said that based on the latest law, this business about stamp duty on lease rent and stamp duty on the royalty which will be payable as and when the extraction takes place and the royalty as a fixed amount accrues to the state government. This will be resolved. Thank you, Sir. 2nd Supplementary. Sriman Samik Bhattacharya Ji. Certain view of the repeated delays by the state government. What remedial security measures is the Union government considering to ensure that the states do not hold national strategic energy projects takes hostage to procedural or revival related disputes? Honourable Minister. I, I think, I think, I think in a. By the minister is giving you the reply. Sir, Sir, I think, Sir, in a normal, normal seminar kind of discussion, this is a very valid question, but the thrust of my reply is that I think we've already reached the point where this deal is going to be

finalized based on the exchange of letters on 10th and 12th December. However, however, I think the honourable member deserves to be commended for asking a question which is overall, if states do not cooperate, do they or do they not undermine the countries national economic and energy security? That is a general point. Let me just say that I am particularly worried because I see a situation where we are producing, let's say, a total of 250,000 barrels a day from the KG basin, another 100,000 from Rajasthan. These are rough figures. In my mind, 100,000 barrels from Assam may be 1 1/2 two lakh barrels from Gujarat. These are approximate figures. It is precisely for that reason that I convened an Urja Mantan with partnerships of the states where these discussions have taken place and as a result of which a large number of states have given clearances. I've already got 50 clearances after the Urja Mantan in June of 2025. So I think if states withhold clearances, my submission through you to the state service, they are undermining their own economic well-being. I just read out how much states are earning from the revenue on petrol and diesel and will be very clear that the states which have been slow will now have to recover. Some states are doing well, but Sir, overall we have an economy growing at 8.2% in the last quarter. Our energy consumption according to the the Indian International Energy Association is that in the next 20 years, we will be consuming more than 30% of the incremental demand. So the energy consumption is rising. So our imports are also rising. Even though domestic production is going up, but today we are consuming Sir 5.6 million barrels of crude a day. Our refining capacity is going up. I would like to have our state governments in partnership with the central government to get more and more of this revenue and I think what the honourable member has asked is valid, but that the message go through through this House that the states actually serve their own economic well-being and the welfare of their citizens when they grant these licenses expeditiously. I am also confident, Sir, that with ENP going up, we have the next tenth round of bids going to come up very shortly. Overall, with the new law in place, all the stakeholders will benefit from the far reaching changes that the government under the honourable Prime Minister has made in the last few years.

Headline	ONGC Issues GeM Tender for Supply of Ethylene Glycol Mono Butyl Ether		
Publication	PSU Connect	Edition	Online Coverage
Published Date	16 Dec 2025		

ONGC Issues GeM Tender for Supply of Ethylene Glycol Mono Butyl Ether

<https://www.psuconnect.in/psu-news/ongc-issues-gem-tender-for-supply-of-ethylene-glycol-mono-butyl-ether>

ONGC has issued a GeM tender for procurement of 11.15 lakh kg of Ethylene Glycol Mono Butyl Ether with bids closing on January 6, 2026.

New Delhi: Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC) has floated a fresh procurement tender through the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) platform for the supply of Ethylene Glycol Mono Butyl Ether (EGMBE). The bid has been issued by ONGC's Central Procurement Department under the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.

The total quantity to be procured under this tender is 11.15 lakh kilograms. The bid number is GEM/2025/B/6991004, dated December 16, 2025.

The bid submission deadline is January 6, 2026, at 12:00 PM, while the bid opening is scheduled for the same day at 12:30 PM. The bid validity period is 90 days from the closing date.

The procurement will follow a two-packet bidding process, comprising technical and financial evaluation. Reverse auction has been enabled, with elimination of the highest quoted bidder as per the qualification rules. Inspection of materials will be carried out post-dispatch by ONGC's empanelled inspection authority.

ONGC has provided purchase preference to Make in India (MII) and Micro & Small Enterprises (MSEs), in line with government procurement policies. Only Class 1 and Class 2 local suppliers will be eligible to participate, subject to local content norms.

The supply will be distributed across multiple ONGC locations in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, and other regions, with staggered delivery schedules extending up to 330 days from the contract start date.

No Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) is required for this bid. However, the successful bidder must furnish an e-Performance Bank Guarantee (e-PBG) of 3%, valid for 26 months.

The tender forms part of ONGC's ongoing efforts to ensure timely availability of critical chemicals required for its operational activities.

Headline	KV ONGC celebrates Kendriya Vidyalaya Foundation Day		
Publication	Pioneer Edge	Edition	Online Coverage
Published Date	16 Dec 2025		

KV ONGC celebrates Kendriya Vidyalaya Foundation Day

<https://www.pioneeredge.in/kv-ongc-celebrates-kendriya-vidyalaya-foundation-day/>

Kendriya Vidyalaya Foundation Day was celebrated at Kendriya Vidyalaya ONGC with enthusiastic participation of teachers, students and staff members.

The organisers said that the programme aimed to commemorate the rich legacy of Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan and to reinforce its core values among students and staff. Jyoti Sharma highlighted the significance of the foundation day.

Students Anjanay and Sushant of Class XI delivered speeches, reflecting on the role of Kendriya Vidyalayas in nurturing responsible and capable citizens.

The teachers were felicitated for the school's good results in the CBSE Board examinations, acknowledging their dedication and hard work.

The highlight of the programme was the address by the chief guest, Chandan Sushil Sajan who lauded the role of Kendriya Vidyalayas in strengthening the nation through quality education.

Headline	ONGC shares fall nearly 2% as crude oil slips below \$60 per barrel		
Publication	Tezzbuzz	Edition	Online Coverage
Published Date	16 Dec 2025		

ONGC shares fall nearly 2% as crude oil slips below \$60 per barrel

<https://tezzbuzz.com/ongc-shares-fall-nearly-2-as-crude-oil-slips-below-60-per-barrel/>

Shares of Oil and Natural Gas Corporation declined sharply in Tuesday's session, falling nearly 2% as weakness in global crude oil prices weighed on upstream oil stocks.

ONGC shares were trading around Rs 231.96 on the NSE down after touching intraday lows near Rs 232 . The stock had closed at Rs 235.35 in the previous session.

The decline comes as Brent crude slipped below the \$60-per-barrel mark for the first time since May, intensifying concerns over realizations for upstream oil producers. West Texas Intermediate was also trading lower near \$56 a barrel adding pressure across the energy sector.

ONGC's stock movement mirrored broader sentiment in oil and gas counters, as lower crude prices tend to impact revenue visibility for exploration and production companies.

As of the latest trade, ONGC's market capitalisation stood at about Rs 2.93 lakh crore with the stock trading within its intraday range of Rs 232.20 to Rs 235.30

Headline	Rs 23,000 crore Reliance-ONGC case: Defining test of India's energy governance and law		
Publication	Tezzbuzz	Edition	Online Coverage
Published Date	16 Dec 2025		

Rs 23,000 crore Reliance-ONGC case: Defining test of India's energy governance and law

<https://tezzbuzz.com/rs-23000-crore-reliance-ongc-case-defining-test-indias-energy-governance-law-894171/>

When the Bombay High Court issued notice to Reliance Industries in a gas migration dispute now valued at approximately 23,000 crore, it was not merely reviving an old commercial disagreement.

It was reopening one of the largest unresolved questions in India's energy governance: who ultimately bears responsibility when public natural resources migrate, are monetised, and allegedly enrich private operators without explicit authorisation. The scale of the claim, the strategic nature of offshore gas, and the judiciary's willingness to revisit arbitral outcomes together make this case a watershed moment for India's hydrocarbon law and policy architecture.

The allegation that natural gas originating from ONGC-allocated offshore blocks in the Krishna-Godavari basin was extracted and sold from adjoining private fields has been contested for over a decade. What has changed decisively is the quantum and the context. The Government of India's claim, which earlier hovered around 13,700 crore based on limited volume and price assumptions, has now risen to approximately 23,000 crore, reflecting updated gas pricing, cumulative production over multiple years, and judicial recognition of unjust enrichment principles. With this escalation, the dispute has crossed the threshold from a technical contractual matter into a question of constitutional stewardship of national resources.

Reliance has categorically denied any wrongdoing, maintaining that the gas came on its own due to natural reservoir connectivity and that its extraction activities complied with the Production Sharing Contract. Scientifically, the phenomenon of hydrocarbon migration is well recognised. Legally and from a public policy standpoint, however, the issue is far more consequential. The central question before the courts and policymakers is no longer whether gas migrated, but whether monetisation of a public resource without compensation can be legitimised by contractual silence and geological inevitability.

Data Box: The Case in Numbers

Current government valuation: ~23,000 crore (USD 2.82.9 billion)

Earlier estimate: ~13,700 crore (pre-revision)

Basin: Krishna-Godavari offshore

Nature of allegation: Unauthorised extraction and monetisation of migrated gas

Key judicial trigger: Delhi High Court setting aside arbitral award on public policy grounds

Present stage: Bombay High Court notice; scope widening beyond arbitration

Why the Valuation Rose and Why It May Rise Further

The upward revision from 13,700 crore to 23,000 crore is not arbitrary. It reflects a recalibration on three fronts: volume, price, and principle. First, cumulative production estimates now account for a longer extraction window and more complete reservoir modelling. Second, gas valuation has shifted from older administered prices to more market-linked benchmarks. Third, and most importantly, courts have begun to frame the issue not merely as breach of contract but as unjust enrichment derived from a sovereign asset.

What is less discussed, but critically important, is that 23,000 crore may still be a conservative figure. An independent valuation, using global best practices, could potentially raise the liability substantially. Such a valuation would likely incorporate:

Opportunity cost to ONGC from accelerated depletion and pressure loss

Time-value of money over prolonged unauthorised monetisation

Cost of foregone future production

Strategic value of gas during periods of peak domestic scarcity

Externalities affecting national energy security

In comparable international disputes, independent reassessments have often increased liabilities by 2040 percent once full economic and strategic costs are factored in. Applied here, that would push the notional exposure well beyond 35,00040,000 crore. The absence of such an independent, transparent valuation mechanism in India is itself a regulatory failure that this case brings into sharp relief.

From Arbitration to Public Trust Doctrine

For years, this dispute remained confined to arbitration and expert committees. That era appears to be ending. The Delhi High Court's decision earlier this year to set aside the arbitral award marked a turning point. By holding that the award violated public policy, the Court implicitly reaffirmed the doctrine that natural resources are held by the State in trust for the people, and that contractual interpretation cannot defeat this obligation.

The Bombay High Court's intervention builds on this foundation. It signals judicial recognition that disputes involving resources of this magnitude and strategic importance cannot be treated as routine commercial disagreements. Arbitration, while valuable, is not designed to adjudicate questions of sovereign loss, public fiduciary duty, or long-term national interest.

Timeline Box: How a Technical Issue Became a National Governance Question

Early 2000s: Allocation of offshore blocks under PSC regime

20092013: ONGC flags abnormal reservoir behaviour and pressure decline

20142017: Expert committees estimate unauthorised gains

2018: Arbitration favours contractual interpretation allowing extraction

2025 (Feb): Delhi High Court sets aside award on public policy grounds

2025 (Dec): Bombay High Court issues notice; dispute enters wider legal scrutiny

The Limits of the Natural Flow' Argument

Reliance's assertion that gas migrated naturally is scientifically credible but legally incomplete. Across mature petroleum jurisdictions, migration triggers obligations, not exemptions. Unitisation, joint development, and compensation are standard responses precisely to prevent private appropriation of shared or originating resources.

If India were to accept natural flow as a complete defence, it would institutionalise a perverse incentive structure. Operators would be encouraged to drill aggressively near block boundaries, while public sector entities, constrained by oversight and caution, would bear disproportionate losses. More dangerously, it would allow geology to trump governance, effectively converting public resources into first-mover private gains.

What This Case Exposes About India's Energy Framework

Three structural deficiencies stand exposed.

First, legal vacuum. India lacks statutory provisions governing unitisation and compensation for migrated hydrocarbons. This silence has forced courts to retrofit public law principles onto private contracts.

Second, regulatory asymmetry. Public sector operators are accountable ex ante, while private gains are often scrutinised only ex post, after value has already been extracted.

Third, policy inertia. Despite repeated expert warnings, India has not modernised its upstream legal framework to reflect geological realities and market scale.

The Reform Imperative

If this case ends merely in damages or settlement, a historic opportunity will be lost. India urgently needs:

Statutory unitisation rules for connected reservoirs

Independent valuation protocols for migrated resources

Continuous pressure and depletion monitoring across block boundaries

Explicit alignment of arbitration law with the public trust doctrine

Such reforms would not weaken investor confidence. On the contrary, they would replace uncertainty with clarity and reduce the risk of decade-long disputes over sovereign assets.

A Defining Moment

At approximately 23,000 crore and potentially more the Reliance-ONGC gas dispute is among the largest natural-resource liability cases India has ever confronted. How the courts and the government respond will signal whether India is prepared to govern its strategic resources with the seriousness, transparency, and foresight they demand.

Beneath the seabed lies not just gas, but a test of governance. What emerges from this case will shape India's energy law for decades to come.

Ultimately, the burden of resolution in this 23,000-crore dispute does not rest on geology, contracts, or corporate statements alone; it rests squarely on India's institutions. The judiciary must carry this case to its logical conclusion with clarity, urgency, and unwavering fidelity to the public trust doctrine, resisting both technical obfuscation and procedural fatigue. The Government of India, as the constitutional trustee of national resources, must pursue this matter with institutional resolve, independent valuation, and policy reform rather than episodic litigation. And the media, as the fourth pillar, bears a duty that goes beyond episodic headlines to sustain scrutiny, explain the stakes, and keep public attention focused until final accountability is fixed. This is not about corporate rivalry or retrospective blame; it is about whether the wealth beneath India's seas is protected for the common citizen or allowed to dissipate quietly through governance gaps. Until this question is decisively answered, the case deserves unrelenting visibility, because national resources lost are not abstract numbers—they are schools not built, energy not secured, and public trust irreparably eroded.

(Major General Dr. Dilawar Singh, IAV, is a distinguished strategist having held senior positions in technology, defence, and corporate governance. He serves on global boards and advises on leadership, emerging technologies, and strategic affairs, with a focus on aligning India's interests in the evolving global technological order.)

Headline	Production at Ashoknagar oil field to start soon: Petroleum minister		
Publication	The Times of India	Edition	Online Coverage
Published Date	16 Dec 2025		

Production at Ashoknagar oil field to start soon: Petroleum minister

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolkata/production-at-ashoknagar-oil-field-to-start-soon-petroleum-minister/articleshow/125990019.cms>

Production at the Ashoknagar oil field project in Bengal will start soon with both and the state govts making efforts to finalize the

deal, said Union minister of petroleum and natural gas. The minister said that with the Petroleum & Natural Gas Rules, 2025 being notified recently, he hopes issues related to stamp duty on lease and royalty would be "resolved". Replying to supplementaries during the Question Hour, Puri said the oil and gas discovery was made in 2018 and ONGC has spent Rs 1,000 crore on the project. The state govt has paved the way for ONGC to start activities in the new oil and discoveries in Ashoknagar. CM Mamata Banerjee announced at the valedictory session of the last Bengal Global Business Summit that it had given land to the oil and gas major on lease for Rs 1.

Headline	Ethanol producers face overcapacity as blending program hits roadblock		
Publication	Business Standard	Edition	Online Coverage
Published Date	16 Dec 2025		

Ethanol producers face overcapacity as blending program hits roadblock

https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/ethanol-producers-face-overcapacity-as-blending-program-hits-roadblock-125121601274_1.html

The government is reassessing its ethanol blending programme after reports claimed that a vehicles efficiency and mileage is affected due to the presence of ethanol, an agricultural by-product obtained from the processing of sugar and other sources like rice or maize, in fuel. Ironically, besides vehicle owners, ethanol producers are now feeling the pain from the blending controversy.

For ethanol supply year (ESY) 2025-26, several ethanol producers have procurement orders less than their capacities. Meanwhile, some producers have dropped plans of increasing production capacity due to policy uncertainty. The Ethanol Supply Year (ESY) in India runs from November 1 to October 31.

Grain Ethanol Manufacturers Association (GEMA) said the current situation of oversupply was not the result of speculative investment by producers, but a direct outcome of strong policy signals and a future-oriented programme led by the government.

The Ethanol Blending Programme (EBP) was never intended to stop at 20% blending, which was envisaged only as a checkpoint to assess feedstock availability, investor capability, rural impact and system readiness. In line with consistent policy signals, industry invested ahead of demand to build long-term capacity, the industry body said.

The Indian government had introduced the ethanol blending programme with the aim of reducing reliance on fossil fuels, reducing imports of crude oil while also empowering Indian farmers. Ethanol blended fuel is also a greener alternative with 65 per cent lesser emission, the government has claimed.

Before the controversy, there was speculation that the government was planning to introduce 27 per cent ethanol blending with petrol after it met the 20 per cent target earlier than expected. Union Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas Hardeep Singh Puri had earlier in the year said that a government committee was working on a roadmap for increasing ethanol blending beyond 20 per cent.

An industry executive told Business Standard that the sector was now urging the government to increase blending to at least 21-22 per cent as it would provide partial relief to producers whose plants might be shut for as long as three months in a year.

In ESY 2025-26, many producers got orders for only 30-40 per cent of their capacities. This means plants will be shut for more than 45 days or three months as they dont have orders. This is a very big jerk to the ethanol industry, discouraging people to increase capacities any further. We were also planning to increase production capacity by 10-15 per cent but the plan has been put on a hold for now, said Aditi Pasari, joint managing director at Gulshan Polyols Ltd.

For ESY 2025-26, the Indian oil marketing companies (OMCs) allocated only around 1,050 crore litres of ethanol, against offers of 1,776 crore litres submitted by manufacturers across the country.

To withstand such policy uncertainties, some ethanol producers are also planning to diversify the use of ethanol and venture into sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) and specialty chemicals.

Instead of additional capacity built up for ethanol blending, we are now trying to add value to the ethanol we are producing. We are diverting at least 30 per cent of our total production capacity for SAF and we also have plans to venture into bio-rubber. Our focus is to be less dependent on the blending program alone and diversify ethanol into specialty chemicals and aviation fuel, said Vijay Nirani, founder and managing director, TruAlt Bioenergy.

TruAlt Bioenergy, for example, has dropped its plans to increase gross capacity from 2,000 kilo litres (kL) to 2,700 kL by July.

However, all ethanol producers in India cannot follow the same path. Dedicated ethanol plants (DEPs), which only produce ethanol for the EBP, would lose central and state subsidies and long-term offtake agreement if they shift to any other product, pointed out Pasari.

Despite the controversy around E20 fuel, the Indian government has denied allegations of reduced fuel efficiency because of the blend, and has instead highlighted the scheme's benefits. On December 11, Puri said in Lok Sabha that the country has been able to save about Rs 1.4 trillion in import bills while strengthening the agricultural economy by giving Rs 40,000 crore annually to the Indian farmers growing the stock crops for ethanol extraction.

Ethanol capacity was created in response to a clear national mandate. The need of the hour is to expand demand, not contract capacity, so that the full economic, rural and environmental benefits of the programme can be realised, said C K Jain, president of GEMA.

Headline	Why India's new Petroleum and Natural Gas Rules matter		
Publication	Finshots	Edition	Online Coverage
Published Date	17 Dec 2025		

Why India's new Petroleum and Natural Gas Rules matter

<https://finshots.in/archive/india-new-petroleum-and-natural-gas-rules/>

In today's Finshots, we dive into India's new Petroleum and Natural Gas Rules, and why they matter not just for the oil and gas sector, but for the broader economy too.

But here's a quick sidenote before we begin. This weekend, we're hosting a free 2-day Insurance Masterclass where we'll walk you through simple rules to pick the right insurance plan and the common mistakes you should avoid.

? Saturday, 20th Dec at 11:00 AM: Term Insurance

How to protect your family, choose the right cover amount, and understand what truly matters during a term claim.

? Sunday, 21st Dec at 11:00 AM: Health Insurance

How hospitals process claims, common deductions, the mistakes buyers usually make, and how to choose a policy that won't disappoint you when you need it most.

Now, on to today's story.

The Story

For a while, I've lived in a place called Ashoknagar in West Bengal, about 50 km from Kolkata. You've probably never heard of it. And that's fair because it's a small town, not particularly known for anything out of the ordinary.

But in 2018, something unexpected happened. ONGC struck its first commercial crude oil discovery just ten minutes from my home. Test production followed between 2020 and 2022, and since then, ONGC has gone on to make a few more discoveries nearby.

And yet, years later, commercial oil extraction still hasn't begun.

The reason?

ONGC and the West Bengal government got stuck arguing over a deceptively simple question: what exactly is the value of the lease on which stamp duty should be paid?

To see why this stalled everything, you need a bit of context. When a company wants to do upstream oil business basically find oil and gas and extract it, it needs something called a petroleum mining lease. If the oilfield lies within a state, the state government grants the lease. If it's offshore, the Central government does.

This lease gives the company exclusive rights to explore, develop, produce, and sell oil and gas. Think of it like renting land. One party owns the land, the other pays to use it. Here, the state is the owner, and the oil company pays an annual lease rent. On top of that, it also pays royalty, which depends on how much oil is actually produced and sold. All of this is governed by the Oilfields (Regulation and Development) Act, 1948.

But before the lease becomes operational, there's one more step. The company has to pay stamp duty or a one-time tax when the lease deed is executed. For the state, this is upfront revenue. And it's calculated as a percentage of the lease's value.

And that's where Ashoknagar's project hit a wall.

ONGC and the West Bengal government disagreed on what should count as the value of the lease for stamp-duty purposes. Should it be the lease rent paid over the full period? Should it include future royalty from oil that hadn't even been produced yet? Or should stamp duty be charged on whichever number turned out to be higher?

The problem was that the Petroleum and Natural Gas Rules (we'll just call it the PNG Rules), written back in 1959, never clearly defined this. That single ambiguity was enough to slow down the lease approval by quite a few years.

And the cost of that delay has been massive. ONGC has already spent over 1,000 crore on exploration and appraisal, yet production hasn't started. The state hasn't earned any royalty or revenue. To put this in perspective, the Ashoknagar field, being the first identified oilfield in West Bengal, is estimated to produce oil worth around 45,000 crore, with West Bengal's potential revenue at roughly 4,500 crore over the field's life. None of that has come in yet. There's also been no jobs boost and no local services boom the kind that usually follows drilling and accompanying operations.

The cost doesn't stop at the state level. For the country as a whole, this delay matters because India still imports about of the crude oil it consumes. Sure, Ashoknagar, wouldn't have transformed that equation overnight. But it definitely could have helped chip away at that dependence a little. Instead, its barrels are still stuck underground.

But this isn't an isolated case. For years, the old PNG rules quietly held back India's entire oil and gas sector.

The most visible damage showed up in domestic production. Under an uncertain and cumbersome regulatory regime, India's crude oil output steadily slipped. Production stood at about 34 million metric tonnes (MMT) in 2019. But by 2024, it had fallen to around 29 MMT. In simple terms, we were extracting less oil from our own ground, which automatically pushed us to rely more on expensive imports.

ONGC tells an even sharper story. In FY25, it saw crude production fall by about 3%, despite capital expenditure more than doubling to 62,000 crore. Yes, the government has rolled out several policy reforms over the years. But the fact that ONGC spent twice as much and still got less output suggests something deeper was broken. The regulatory framework was choking productivity, even as investment kept rising.

This decline fed straight into India's import bill. If you look at the numbers you'll see that India spent roughly \$161 billion importing crude oil and petroleum products in FY25, which is about 3% more than the year before. And since oil imports are paid for in dollars, even small movements in the rupee make a big difference. A 1% depreciation for instance, can add 8,000 crore to the annual import bill, putting pressure on foreign exchange reserves and the currency. It's a vicious cycle, and the old rules did little to break it.

Perhaps the most damaging consequence, though, was how India scared away global oil majors. On paper, the country allowed 100% foreign direct investment (FDI) in oil and gas. But in practice, a dense regulatory maze kept international players at bay. Projects required multiple approvals across different stages of exploration, development, and production, often from different government ministries, taking years to secure. So it wasn't unusual for companies to spend years chasing just one permit.

Pricing policy made things worse. Under the Administered Price Mechanism, fuel prices were capped by the government. That meant even if a company's costs went up, it couldn't sell fuel above government-set prices. State-owned firms like ONGC were compensated for losses, but private and foreign players weren't. This created a lopsided risk equation where investors bore the downside if costs rose but had limited upside even when things went well.

Add to that, lease terms that were temporary and could be changed or withdrawn at the government's discretion, and it became hard to justify pouring billions of dollars into long-term oil and gas infrastructure.

The result was predictable. Despite its scale and energy needs, India attracted very little upstream oil and gas FDI.

At this point, you might be wondering: if these rules caused so much damage, why did we have them in the first place?

The answer is pretty straightforward. These rules were written for a very different India, shaped by memories of colonial extraction. After decades of foreign exploitation, the instinct was to keep strategic sectors like oil firmly under state control, with private capital viewed with suspicion.

That made sense back then. But as India changed and the country opened the sector to 100% foreign investment, even in public sector firms, the old rules began to work against it. So, what was meant to keep private capital out became a roadblock just when India needed investment most. This in turn slowed development, cut output, and chased away foreign money.

But just last week, the government amended the Oilfields (Regulation and Development) Act and notified the new PNG Rules, 2025. These rules replace the decades-old 1959 framework and, more importantly, fix the core issues that kept upstream oil projects stuck for years.

First, the new rules remove all ambiguity around what counts as the value of the lease. They clearly state that the value of the lease is the total lease rent payable over the entire lease term. Royalty is treated as a completely separate stream. In simple terms, rent is what the company pays to hold the lease, while royalty is what the state earns later, as oil is actually produced.

That gives everyone a single, objective way to calculate stamp duty. Take the annual lease rent, multiply it by the number of years in the lease, say, 30 years, and that number becomes the value of the lease for stamp-duty purposes. So the old debate over lease rent or royalty, whichever is higher simply disappears, because royalty isn't part of the lease valuation at all.

Second, the rules finally put a time limit on approvals. Any application for a petroleum lease now has to be decided within 180 days. This means disputes and paperwork can't drag on endlessly the way they did in Ashoknagar. If the lease falls under the Centre and no decision is taken within this period, the application is deemed approved. If it falls under a state and there's still no decision after 180 days, it's deemed rejected

Third, instead of forcing companies to juggle multiple licences at different stages, a single petroleum lease now covers exploration, development, production, and even related activities like renewable energy projects.

Lease periods have also been extended. Companies can now hold leases for up to 30 years, with extensions tied to the economic life of the field. That kind of long-term certainty is crucial if you're going to sink billions into drilling rigs, pipelines, and processing facilities.

There's also a quiet but important fix around infrastructure. Companies are now required to report unused pipeline and facility capacity every year and make it available to others on fair terms. Earlier, large players could sit on spare capacity and block smaller operators. This change improves utilisation, lowers costs, and makes the sector more competitive.

And perhaps the biggest signal to global investors is that the new rules let foreign investors settle disputes through international arbitration, even outside India if they want. Since Indian courts can be slow, this gives investors more confidence and makes India an equally attractive destination as other oil-producing countries.

Which brings us back to Ashoknagar. As Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Hardeep Singh Puri told the Rajya Sabha just a couple of days ago, oil production in the town could start within the next few weeks. And an issue that's been stuck for years now has a clear path forward.

Sure, the new PNG Rules won't work miracles overnight. And better rules can't conjure up new reserves, and even the oil we do have will still take years to explore and extract.

But they do remove some of the biggest self-inflicted roadblocks. And that makes this a clear step in the right direction.

Until next time

If this story helped you make sense of the new Petroleum and Natural Gas Rules in the simplest way possible, do us a favour and share it with a friend, family member, or even strangers on WhatsApp LinkedIn , and X . And tell them to subscribe to Finshots too.

Headline	MP Chunnilal Garasiya Raises LPG Affordability Issue in Rajya Sabha; Centre Details Subsidy and Pricing Measures		
Publication	The News Strike	Edition	Online Coverage
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MP Chunnilal Garasiya Raises LPG Affordability Issue in Rajya Sabha; Centre Details Subsidy and Pricing Measures

<https://thenewstrike.com/mp-chunnilal-garasiya-raises-lpg-affordability-issue-in-rajya-sabha-centre-details-subsidy-and-pricing-measures>

New Delhi, December 15 Rajya Sabha MP Chunnilal Garasiya on Monday raised concerns over the affordability of domestic LPG cylinders , particularly

for beneficiaries of the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) , during Question Hour in Parliament.

Through Starred Question No. 159 , Garasiya sought clarity from the Union Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas on the steps taken by the government to keep LPG prices affordable. He also asked about India's LPG pricing compared to neighbouring countries, the government's strategy to diversify LPG import sources, and whether losses incurred by oil marketing companies (OMCs) due to under-recoveries were being compensated by the Centre.

Government Response on LPG Pricing and Subsidy

Replying to the question, Union Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Hardeep Singh Puri stated that India imports nearly 60 percent of its LPG requirement , making domestic prices inherently linked to international market trends.

He pointed out that while the average Saudi Contract Price (CP) the global benchmark for LPG pricingrose by 21 percent , from USD 385 per metric tonne in July 2023 to USD 466 per metric tonne in November 2025 , domestic LPG prices in India moved in the opposite direction. During the same period, the price of a domestic LPG cylinder declined by nearly 22 percent , from 1,103 in August 2023 to 853 in November 2025

Targeted Support for PMUY Beneficiaries

The minister informed the House that for FY 202526 , the government is providing targeted financial assistance of 300 per 14.2 kg LPG cylinder for up to nine refills to PMUY beneficiaries. Proportionate support is also extended to users of 5 kg LPG connections

At present, the retail price of a 14.2 kg LPG cylinder in Delhi is 853 . After applying the subsidy, PMUY consumers effectively pay 553 per cylinder . This represents a 39 percent reduction in effective LPG prices for PMUY householdsfrom 903 in August 2023 to 553 in November 2025

India Cheaper Than Neighbours on LPG

Highlighting regional comparisons as of November 1, 2025 , the minister noted that India's effective LPG prices remain significantly lower than those in neighbouring countries:

India (Delhi): 553

Pakistan (Lahore): 902.20

Sri Lanka (Colombo): 1,227.58

Nepal (Kathmandu): 1,205.72

Diversifying LPG Imports to Strengthen Energy Security

To reduce risks arising from geopolitical disruptions and ensure supply security, the government is actively diversifying LPG import sources. As part of this strategy, public sector OMCs have contracted approximately 2.2 million metric tonnes (MMT) of US-origin LPG for calendar year 2026

This volume accounts for nearly 10 percent of India's total LPG import requirement and marks a significant step toward reducing reliance on traditional suppliers from the Gulf region, thereby enhancing the country's long-term energy resilience.