ONGC News as on 30 December 2024 (Print & Online)

Publication : Mint	Editions : New Delhi
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CII seeks excise duty cut in fuel, hike in minimum wages

Selling price of petrol and diesel was last revised in March by govt-owned oil marketing cos

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NEW DELHI

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) has suggested excise duty cuts in petrol and diesel and a hike in key minimum wages in the upcoming Union budget to boost consumption amid high inflation.

In a statement on Sunday, the industry body said it wants to see targeted interventions to boost consumption, especially at the lower income level, including an increase in the daily minimum wage under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme and raise in the annual payout under the PM-KISAN scheme.

"Domestic consumption has been critical to India's growth story, but inflationary pressures have somewhat eroded the purchasing power of consumers. Government interventions could focus on enhancing disposable incomes and stimulating spending to sustain economic momentum. Persistent food inflationary pressures particularly impinge upon low-income rural households who allocate larger share to food in their consumption basket," said Chandrajit Banerjee, director general, CII. He further noted that while recent quarters have shown promising signs of recovery in rural consumption, targeted government interventions, such as increasing per unit benefit under its key schemes like MGNREGS, PM-KISAN and Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, and providing consumption vouchers to low-income households, can speed up the process. Noting that reducing excise duty on fuel is crucial as fuel prices significantly drive inflation, forming a substantial portion of the overall household consumption basket, the CII statement said: "The central excise duty alone accounts for approximately 21% of retail price for petrol and 18% for diesel."

Since May 2022, these duties have not been adjusted in line with the around 40% decrease in global crude prices, it said, adding that lowering excise duty on fuel would help reduce overall inflation and increase disposable incomes.

The selling price of petrol and diesel was last revised in March this year by the government-owned oil marketing companies, ahead of the general elections with cuts of around ₹2 per litre for both the fuels. The previous revision was in May 2022 in line with the excise duty cut amid high international crude oil prices due to the Russia-Ukraine war.

Further, highlighting high inflation and the eventual reduction in the buying power of lower- and middle-income earners, CII said that the budget should consider reducing the marginal tax rate for personal income up to ₹20 lakh per annum. This would help trigger the virtuous cycle of consumption, higher growth and higher tax revenue, it said.

It also suggested an increase in the daily minimum wage under MGNREGS from ₹267 to ₹375 as suggested by the 'Expert Committee on Fixing National Minimum Wage' in 2017. According to CII Research estimates, it would lead to an additional expenditure of ₹42,000 crore. On the higher support to farmers, CII statement said: "Raise the annual payout under the PM-KISAN scheme from ₹6,000 to ₹8,000. Assuming 10 crore (100 million) beneficiaries, this will entail an additional expenditure of ₹20,000 crore."

For targeted approach towards people in the low-income group, CII has suggested the government to introduce consumption vouchers to stimulate demand for specified goods and services over a designated period. The vouchers could be designed to be spent on designated items, specific goods and services and could be valid for a designated time period, to ensure spending. The beneficiary criteria can be defined as Jan Dhan account holders who are not beneficiaries of other welfare schemes, it said.

For an extended version of the story, go to livemint.com.

Confederation of Indian Industry director general Chandrajit Banerjee. @FOLLOWCII/X

21% The share of petrol price central excise duty accounts for

2022 The year since the excise duties remain unchanged

Publication : The Free Press Journal	Editions : Mumbai
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India's increasing oil demand attracting global players: S&P

Rising fuel consumption is prompting India's refiners to accelerate expansion plans and widen crude sourcing

ANI
NEW DELHI

India is ending 2024 with its oil demand growth rate surpassing neighbouring China's, a trend expected to spill over to the next year, according to S&P Global Commodity Insights. India has become one of the fastest-growing fuel consumption centres.

As per the global commodities information services provider, the increasing fuel consumption is prompting India's refiners to accelerate expansion plans and widen crude sourcing.

Oil players are increasingly turning their focus to India amid expectations of its peak demand scenario coming much later than that of China's, according to the latest commentary on India's oil sector by S&P Global Commodity Insights.

"India will be the leading driver, along with Southeast Asia and other parts of South Asia, of the region's future oil demand growth," said Kang Wu, global head of macro and oil demand research at S&P Global Commodity Insights.

"In 2025, India is forecast to deliver a relatively faster growth in oil demand of 3.2 per cent, compared with China's 1.7 per cent," Wu added.

Oil players are increasingly turning their focus to India amid expectations of its peak demand scenario coming much later than that of China's

In the first 10 months of 2024, China's oil demand rose 148,000 barrels per day or 0.9 per cent year-over-year, lagging India's 180,000 barrels per day or 3.2 per cent year-over-year growth, S&P Global Commodity Insights data showed.

In that context, it is believed that India will see significant refining capacity growth in 2025.

As India's refining capacity is set to rise, refiners and policymakers are intensifying efforts to diversify the crude import basket -- to reduce overdependence on a few supplying countries or regions.

"Recent diplomatic visits will help bring in crude oil from Africa and Latin America, but the growth in absolute volume would depend on the overall crude market," said Abhishek Ranjan, South Asia oil research lead at S&P Global Commodity Insights.

India imports oil and gas from various geographical regions including countries from the Middle East, Africa, Europe, North America, South America and South-East Asia.

ओएनजीसी ONGC

Publication : Western Times	Editions : Ahmedabad
Date :30 December 2024	Page : 2

2024: A Year of Energy for India

The year 2024 has proven to be a transformative period for India's energy sector, positioning the nation as a global leader in sustainable and innovative energy solutions. With visionary strategic policy frame works and advancements in renewable energy, the implementation of cutting-edge technologies, advancement in crude refining capability and LNG import Infrastructure, India has set an example for the world in energy transition and security.

Strategic Policy Frameworks- In 2024, India has strategically advanced its energy security through a multifaceted approach, emphasizing diversification of energy sources, international partnerships, and significant investments in both fossil fuels and renewable energy. To strengthen the Strategic Policy Framework, Prime Minister Modi's visits to Energy-Rich Countries this year is of great significance:

- Guyana (November 2024): Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Guyana focused on strengthening energy ties. India expressed interest in purchasing up to two million barrels of crude oil from Guyana, which has vast offshore oil and gas deposits. A memorandum of understanding was signed to enhance cooperation in hydrocarbon trade.
- Kuwait (December 2024): During his visit to Kuwait, Prime Minister Modi engaged in discussions aimed at deepening bilateral relations, with energy cooperation being a key focus. The visit underscored India's commitment to securing energy partnerships in the Gulf region.
- Nigeria (November 2024): The visit to Nigeria enhanced India's relations with one of Africa's key oil-producing nations. Discussions cantered on expanding energy cooperation and exploring investment opportunities in Nigeria's oil and gas sector.
- Brunei (September 2024): Brunei as an essential partner in India's 'Act East' Policy and rich in Oil and Gas. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi visit to Brunei is very significant for Energy security including Energy Transportation Infrastructure through South China Sea.

Ministry of External Affairs worked hard on International Collaborations in the field of Energy this year focussing of few important countries like: United States: India has strengthened its energy partnership with the United States, focusing on clean energy innovation and accelerating the deployment of clean energy technologies. This collaboration aims to establish resilient supply chains and drive economic development in the clean energy sector. US has also become India's major LNG supplier.

- Russia: India continues to enhance its energy ties with Russia, including potential deals with major Russian oil companies. This is part of a broader strategy to bolster bilateral trade and ensure a steady supply of energy resources. India was one of the largest importer of Russian Crude this year.
- Iran: The Government of India has undertaken to develop the Shahid Beheshti Port at Chabahar, Iran by equipping and operating General Cargo and Container Terminal for a period of 10 years, as per the Long Term Main Contract, from May 2024. This is going to be a game changer in Energy security in coming years with access to Central Asian Oil and Gas

Through these strategic policy frameworks and international engagements, India is making significant strides toward ensuring its energy security, balancing the development of renewable energy sources with the continued importance of traditional fossil fuels.

Renewable Energy Expansion- India's commitment to renewable energy reached unprecedented levels in 2024. With the government aiming to achieve 500 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2030, significant progress was made in the solar and wind energy sectors. In the Interim Budget for 2024-2025, the fiscal allocation for solar power grid infrastructure development surged to Rs. 8,500 Crore, a significant rise from the previous year's Rs. 4,970 Crore. Further, Rs. 17,490 crores were allocated for the Green Hydrogen Mission and the Strategic Interventions for Green Hydrogen Transition (SIGHT) Program. India's installed renewable energy capacity is expected to increase to about 170 GW in early New Year, from the level of 136.57 GW as of December 2023, according to research agency ICRA. Large-scale solar parks, including new installations in Rajasthan and Gujarat, became operational, contributing to a substantial reduction in carbon emissions. Offshore wind energy projects along the coasts of Tamil Nadu and Gujarat also began generating electricity, adding diversity to the energy mix.

Conclusion- 2024 has indeed been a year of energy for India. With visionary leadership, technological prowess, and a commitment to sustainability, the country is on track to achieve its ambitious energy targets. India's journey serves as an inspiration to the world, proving that economic growth and environmental responsibility can go hand in hand. As India continues to power its future with clean and innovative energy solutions, the achievements of 2024 will undoubtedly be remembered as a pivotal chapter in its energy evolution.

Col Dr Rakesh Shrivastawa Registrar Pandit Deendayal Energy University

Publication : Western Times	Editions : Ahmedabad
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Pawan Hans gets 10-year contract worth over Rs 2,000 crore for helicopter services to ONGC

(Agency) Mumbai: State-owned helicopter services operator Pawan Hans said it has secured a 10-year contract worth over Rs 2,000 crore to provide four helicopters to ONGC for transporting its personnel to off-shore duty locations. Under the contract bagged through competitive global bidding, Pawan Hans will deploy four HAL-manufactured Dhruva NG helicopters for ONGC off-shore operations, the company said.ONGC has issued the notification of award to Pawan Hans to provide these ultramodern Made-in-India helicopters, it said. The factory new helicopters from HAL would be deployed into offshore service (crew change) next year.

The contract, valuing over Rs 2,141 crore, has been awarded for a period of 10 years, Pawan Hans Ltd. said.

The indigenously built Dhruv NG is the civil variant of the Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) Mk III, which is currently in use by the Indian defence forces. These military helicopters have a proven track record, with more than 335 helicopters in operation to date, having logged over 375,000 cumulative flight hours, Pawan Hans said.

Pawan Hans has a fleet of 46 helicopters catering to Oil and Gas exploration, Police and Paramilitary forces, utility sector and providing air connectivity to remote regions and hilly tracts.

Publication : The Hindu	Editions : Bangalore
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1,414 more CNG stations to be established by 2030

CNG stations in Karnataka

- Bengaluru Urban: 77
- Bengaluru Rural: 41
- Dakshina Kannada: 35
- Ballari: 21
- Ramanagara: 17
- Bidar: 16
- Mysuru: 14
- Belagavi: 14
- Mandya: 11
- Gadag: 11
- Shivamogga: 11
- Kolar: 10
- Chitradurga: 10
- Udupi: 10
- Hassan: 12
- Dharwad: 9
- Tumakuru: 9
- Haveri: 9
- Davangere: 9
- Chickballapur: 4
- Chamarajanagar: 3
- Kodagu: 2
- Koppal: 7
- Vijayapura: 8
- Raichur: 6
- Kalaburagi: 11
- Bagalkot: 13
- Yadgir: 1

(As of September 30, 2024)

Darshan Devaiah B.P.
BENGALURU

As part of the Minimum Work Programme (MWP), 412 Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) stations have been established in Karnataka. The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas aims to set up an additional 1,414 CNG stations in the State by 2030.

Union Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas and Tourism Suresh Gopi stated that the establishment of CNG stations is part of the development of the City Gas Distribution (CGD) network, and the same is carried out by entities authorised by the Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB). "PNGRB has authorised 18 Geographical Areas (GAs), including one GA spread across Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka, and another GA spread across Telangana and Karnataka, covering the entire state of Karnataka. This is for the development of a City Gas Distribution (CGD) network with a Minimum Work Programme (MWP) target of 1,414 CNG stations to be established by 2030. As of September 30, 2024, entities have established 412 CNG stations in Karnataka," Mr. Gopi added.

Bengaluru leads

The Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) is the authorised body responsible for granting permissions to entities to lay, build, operate, or expand City Gas Distribution (CGD) or local natural gas distribution networks within Geographical Areas, as stipulated under the PNGRB Act, 2006.

According to the data, Bengaluru Urban leads the tally with 77 stations, followed by Bengaluru Rural with 41, both managed by GAIL Gas Limited. The coastal district of Dakshina Kannada ranks next with 35 stations. Districts such as Ballari (21), Ramanagara (17), and Bidar (16) have also seen significant development. While districts like Tumakuru and Dharwad each host nine stations, Udupi and Kolar districts have established 10 stations each. Kodagu, a tourist hotspot, has only two CNG stations.

Publication : BizzBuzz	Editions : Hyderabad
Date :30 December 2024	Page : 1, 2

CII's budget wishlist: Tax reforms, fuel duty cuts and rural stimulus

The industry body suggested the introduction of consumption vouchers, targeted at low-income groups to stimulate demand for specified goods and services over a designated period

NEED OF THE HOUR

- Central excise duty alone accounts for 21% of retail petrol price, 18% for diesel
- Global oil prices fell 40%
- Since May 2022, these duties not adjusted in line
- Lowering excise duty on fuel would help reduce inflation, increase disposable incomes

NEW DELHI

INDUSTRY body CII in its budget suggestions for 2025-26 has recommended lowering the excise duty on fuel to boost consumption, especially at the lower income level, arguing that fuel prices significantly drive inflation. The budget could also consider reducing marginal tax rates for personal income up to Rs 20 lakh per annum. This would help trigger the virtuous cycle of consumption, higher growth and higher tax revenue, said CII.

Asserting that the gap between the highest marginal rate for individuals at 42.74 per cent and the normal Corporate Tax Rate at 25.17 per cent, is high, it said, inflation has reduced the buying power of lower and middle-income earners.

"The central excise duty alone accounts for approximately 21 per cent of the retail price for petrol and 18 per cent for diesel. Since May 2022, these duties have not been adjusted in line with the approximately 40 per cent decrease in global crude prices. Lowering excise duty on fuel would help reduce overall inflation and increase disposable incomes," the industry body said.

Chandrajit Banerjee, Director General, CII, said domestic consumption has been critical to India's growth story, but inflationary pressures have somewhat eroded the purchasing power of consumers. "Government interventions could focus on enhancing disposable incomes and stimulating spending to sustain economic momentum. Persistent food inflationary pressures particularly impinge upon low-income rural households who allocate larger share to food in their consumption basket", he added.

According to him, while recent quarters have shown promising signs of recovery in rural consumption, targeted government interventions, such as increasing per unit benefit under its key schemes like MGNREGS, PM-KISAN and PMAY, and providing consumption vouchers to low-income households, can further enhance the rural recovery.

In its pre-budget proposals, CII has also recommended an increase in the daily minimum wage under the MGNREGS from Rs267 to Rs375 as suggested by the 'Expert Committee on Fixing National Minimum Wage' in 2017, with the industry body estimating that this will entail an additional expenditure of Rs42,000 crore. Further, it urged the government to raise the annual payout under the PM-KISAN scheme from Rs6,000 to Rs8,000. Assuming 10 crore beneficiaries, this will entail an additional expenditure of Rs20,000 crore, CII said.

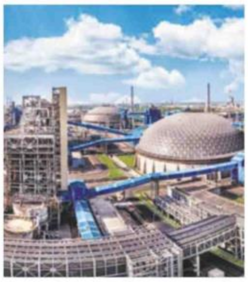
Publication : Business Standard	Editions : New Delhi
Date :30 December 2024	Page : 2

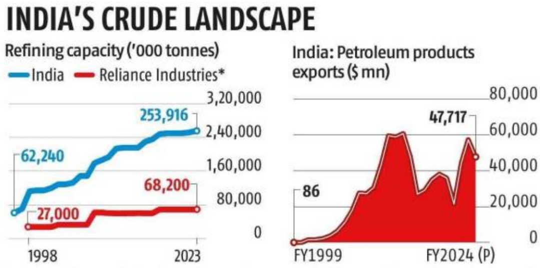
RIL's 'super' Jamnagar refinery completes 25 yrs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
New Delhi, 29 December

Twenty-five years ago, on December 28, 1999, Reliance launched its first refinery at Jamnagar, Gujarat. The refinery overnight turned India from a fuel deficit nation to a self-sufficient one and later into a surplus, exporting gasoline and gasoil to Europe and the US. Today, Jamnagar has become the world's refining hub - an engineering marvel that is India's pride.

When Reliance Industries first spoke of building an oil refinery to process and convert crude oil pumped out of ground and from below seabed, into fuels like petrol (gasoline) and diesel (gasoil), majority of the experts had said that it would be impossible for an Indian company to set up the world's largest grassroots refinery in three years. But Reliance achieved that in a world-record time of just 33 months, notwithstanding lack of infrastructure and a severe cyclone that had hit Jamnagar then, sources aware of the matter said.





*includes refining capacity data for DTA Jamnagar from 2000 and SEZ Jamnagar from 2009; Source: ppac.gov.in

More importantly, the 27 million tonnes a year (560,000 barrels per day) capacity unit was built at nearly 40 per cent lesser cost (per tonne) in comparison to contemporary refineries in Asia. The unit was later expanded to 33 million tonnes. When Reliance founder chairman Dhirubhai Ambani wanted to pursue his long-cherished dream of setting up a refinery, he was offered land in the barren and desolate region off Jamnagar, near a sleepy village called Motikhavdi.

Leading world-class project consultants advised Dhirubhai against investing in the desert-like region that did not have roads, electricity, or even sufficient drinking water.

The first private sector refinery of India single-handedly added 25 per cent to India's total refining capacity and made India self-sufficient in transport fuels, they said. Moreover, Reliance's focused efforts created a green zone in the arid land, resulting in the lowering of temperature and improved rainfall in the region. A decade later, Reliance, through a subsidiary, build another refinery adjacent to the old one. The new unit capable of processing a whopping 580,000 barrels per day (29 million tonnes) turned Jamnagar into world's largest single site refining complex.

Publication : The Free Press Journal	Editions : Mumbai
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NO RUSSIAN NATURAL GAS FOR MOLDOVA

ANI

MOSCOW

Russian energy company Gazprom announced that it will reduce natural gas supplies to Moldova to zero starting January 1, 2025, citing contract violations and the Moldovan government's failure to settle debts for gas deliveries, state agency TASS reported.

In a statement, the Russian company said it had notified Moldovagaz, one of the largest enterprises in the energy sector in the country, on Saturday about Moldova's repeated failure to meet payment obligations under the current contract, which constitutes a breach of its terms.

"In this regard, based on the provisions of the contract and applicable norms of Russian legislation, Gazprom will introduce a restriction on natural gas supplies to Moldova on January 1, 2025," the Russian company said in a statement.

Publication : The Hans India	Editions : New Delhi
Date :30 December 2024	Page : 7

OIL: Hovering in high volatility

Crude oil prices in 2024 remained volatile, influenced by geopolitical tensions, global economic recovery, and supply-demand dynamics. OPEC+ countries, led by Saudi Arabia and Russia, have continued managing production levels to support prices. Rising demand, especially from emerging economies, has helped stabilize prices, although recession fears in developed nations have led to some uncertainty.

As 2025 approaches, experts expect global oil demand to grow steadily, driven by increased transportation and industrial needs, particularly in Asia. However, the shift towards renewable energy and electric vehicles could dampen long-term growth. Crude oil prices are anticipated to hover between $70-$90 per barrel, barring any major geopolitical disruptions or economic shocks. Environmental concerns and energy transition policies will also play a significant role in shaping the future of oil. During the year Brent crude oil price marginally fell $3.07 or 3.99 per cent to $73.71 per barrel on December 26, 2024, from $76.78/bbl on December 29, 2023. And the 2024 year's high was $90.22 on April 5 and low was 68.93 on September 10. Brent crude witnessed price volatility in $21.29 or 30.88 per cent range in 2024.

Publication : The Hindu	Editions : New Delhi
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A pumpjack at an old oil field in Emlichheim, Germany. AP

Oil companies backtrack on renewables

Reuters

Major European energy companies doubled down on oil and gas in 2024 to focus on near-term profits, slowing down – and at times reversing – climate commitments in a shift that they are likely to stick with in 2025.

The retrenchment by oil majors comes after governments around the world slowed the rollout of clean energy policies and delayed targets as energy costs soared following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

Big European energy companies that had invested heavily in the clean energy transition found their share performance lagging U.S. rivals Exxon and Chevron, which had kept their focus on oil and gas.

Against this backdrop, the likes of BP and Shell this year sharply slowed their plans to spend billions on wind and solar power projects and shifted spending to higher-margin oil and gas projects.

BP, which had aimed for a 20-fold growth in renewable power this decade to 50 gigawatts, announced in December it would spin off almost all its offshore wind projects into a joint venture with Japanese power generator JERA.

Shell, which once pledged to become the world's largest electricity company, largely stopped investments in new offshore wind projects, exited power markets in Europe, and China and weakened carbon reduction targets.

"Geopolitical disruptions like the invasion of Ukraine have weakened CEO incentives to prioritise the low-carbon transition amid high oil prices and evolving investor expectations," Rohan Bowater, analyst at Accela Research, told Reuters. He said BP, Shell, and Equinor reduced low-carbon spending by 8% in 2024.

Shell said it remained committed to becoming a net zero emissions energy business by 2050 and continues to invest in the energy transition.

Equinor said: "The offshore wind

European energy companies that had invested heavily in the clean energy transition found their share performance lagging U.S. rivals Exxon and Chevron, which stayed focused on oil and gas

segment has been through demanding times in the last couple of years due to inflation, cost increase, bottlenecks in the supply chain, and Equinor will continue to be selective and disciplined in our approach."

BP did not respond to a request for comment.

The oil companies' retrenchment is bad news for efforts to mitigate climate change. Global heat-trapping carbon emissions are forecast to climb to a new high in 2024, which will be the warmest year on record.

And 2025 is shaping up to be another tumultuous year for the $3 trillion energy sector, with climate-sceptic Donald Trump returning to the White House. China, the world's biggest crude oil importer, is trying to revive its faltering economy, potentially boosting oil demand.

Europe faces continued uncertainty over the war in Ukraine and political turmoil in Germany and France.

All those tensions were laid bare at the annual United Nations climate conference in Azerbaijan in November, when the host country's President Ilham Aliyev hailed oil and gas as "a gift from god."

That summit yielded a global climate finance deal but disappointed climate advocates who had hoped governments would coalesce around a phase-out of oil, gas, and coal.

Publication : The Hindu Business Line	Editions : New Delhi
Date :30 December 2024	Page : 1, 3

YEAR IN REVIEW: RENEWABLE ENERGY.

Muft Bijli Yojana, capacity addition, green hydrogen to power up RE

GENERATING INTEREST. Several firms like Premier Energies, NTPC, came out with IPOs in 2024

KEY EVENTS 2024.

- PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana — launched with an aim of installing solar panels on 10 million rooftops — has seen 6.38 lakh installations and 25 lakh applications.
- Ten companies won contracts for 412,000 tonnes of green hydrogen and eight for 1,500 MW of electrolyser.
- RE installations rose to a record 20,849 MW of solar and 2,332 MW of wind in the first 11 months of 2024. There was a sharp uptick in wind-solar hybrid auctions and open access installations.
- PM E-Drive scheme launched for giving subsidies to EVs; electrics included for the first time.
- There was an uptrend in IPOs of RE firms.

THINGS TO WATCH OUT FOR 2025.

- Solar power installations will cross the 100-GW mark.
- Wind power installations will cross the 50-GW mark.
- Overall renewable energy capacity (not including other non-fossil energy sources such as hydro and nuclear) will cross the 200-GW mark.
- All three will likely happen in the first three months of 2025.
- A number of green energy companies will come out with their IPOs in 2025. Some of them are: ONGC Green, SJVN Green, NLC India Renewables, Integrum Energy Infra, Solarium Green and possibly, Solar Energy Corporation of India — the PSU which recently got the 'Navaratna' label.

M Ramesh
Chennai

Even though the hullabaloo around transitioning to renewable energy has been very much alive in the industrial space, its usage in the domestic space got a fillip with the launch of the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana in 2024. The programme has taken off well, with 6.38 lakh installations and 30 lakh applications.

The National Green Hydrogen Mission took root in 2024, with contracts having been awarded for 4.12 lakh tonnes of green hydrogen to ten companies and 1,500-MW electrolyser capacity to eight companies.

Some trends in renewable energy also escalated into megatrends during the year. The first was capacity addition itself.

In the first 11 months of the calendar year, a record 20,849 MW of solar and 3,223 MW of wind energy were added, taking the total capacity of installations to 94,167 MW and 47,959 MW, respectively. According to consultancy firm Mercom, 18.5 GW of solar capacity was offered across 27 auctions in 2024.

NATIONAL GREEN HYDROGEN MISSION. Contracts have been awarded for 4.12 lakh tonnes of green hydrogen to ten companies and 1,500-MW electrolyser capacity to eight companies REUTERS

OPEN ACCESS

Second, open access — or electricity generators selling directly to consumers — gained ground. According to India Solar Open Access Market Report of the consultancy, Mercom, in the first nine months of 2024, 4.8 GW of open access capacity was added, compared with 2.8 GW added in the same period last year.

Five States — Karnataka, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Gujarat (in this order) — accounted for 74 per cent of open access installations. This trend is notable because open access sales fetch better price for developers and lowers the cost of power for consumers.

In 2021-22, open access consumers constituted 36.2 per cent of the total power demand in the country, amounting to approximately 413 billion units, according to the Central Electricity Authority, which also expects it "to grow at a CAGR of 8.2 per cent with an estimated demand of 775.3 BU by 2030."

As more and more customers shift to open access and opt for renewable energy, the open access market will expand. The year 2024 will be remembered as the origin of this megatrend.

TARIFFS FLUCTUATE

Third, solar tariffs have fallen, while those for wind have gone up. Solar tariff fell to a record ₹2.15 a kWhr — Waaree won 170 MW in a Madhya Pradesh auction quoting that price. While that was more of an outlier, tariffs generally settled down around ₹2.50/kWhr.

Wind tariffs rose in the range of ₹3.60-3.70. In one bid, JSW Neo won 350 MW for ₹3.61/kWhr; in the same bid, 60 MW were awarded to Datta Power Infra for ₹3.98/kWhr. These levels of tariffs were unthinkable earlier.

However, it must be noted that tariffs for wind projects in Gujarat still hover around ₹3.24-3.30. Wind tariffs vary widely because different regions have different wind speeds, which affect generation.

The fourth megatrend — a significant one — is the momentum seen in wind-solar hybrid auctions. In 2024, there were 13 hybrid auctions and at least 11.2 GW of capacity awarded (or, are to be awarded), as against 7.7 GW in 2023 and 4 GW in 2022.

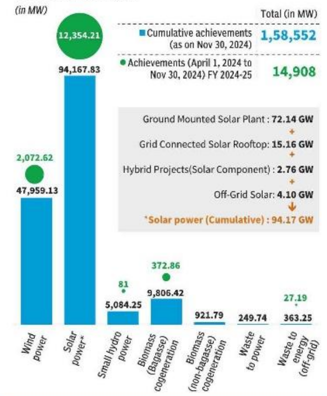
HYBRID AUCTION

Udit Garg, Managing Director & CEO, Kundan Green Energy, describes this trend as "interesting" and observes that "hybrid renewable energy tenders have gained prominence and should rise further". The fifth megatrend arises out of hybrid auctions — tariffs are falling below standalone wind projects. Hybrid projects attracted tariffs between ₹3.15 and ₹3.65/kWhr.

Moreover, several renewable energy companies came out with IPOs in 2024 and their success indicates the growing investor interest in the sector. Some notable examples are Premier Energies, Alpex Solar, NTPC Green, Waaree and ACME Cleantech.

As for electric mobility, in September, the Cabinet approved the ₹10,600-crore PM E-Drive scheme, which provides subsidies for electric vehicles. This scheme has evolved from the FAME schemes; a notable difference is the inclusion of electric trucks, for subsidies.

Renewable energy installations till November 2024



Source: Ministry of New & Renewable Energy

Online

Headline	Subdued crude prices help lower India's oil import bill in Sep-Nov even as volumes rise		
Publication	The Indian Express	Edition	Online Coverage
Published Date	26 Dec 2024		

Subdued crude prices help lower India's oil import bill in Sep-Nov even as volumes rise

https://indianexpress.com/article/business/subdued-crude-prices-help-lower-indias-oil-import-bill-in-sep-nov-even-as-volumes-rise-9744331/

A downward pressure on international oil prices, and consequently on India's oil import bill, is a positive for the country due to its extremely high dependence on oil imports.

The softening in global crude oil prices over recent months has resulted in India's oil import bill contracting on a year-on-year basis in September, October, and November, despite import volumes rising in each of these months, latest petroleum ministry data shows. This is in contrast to the first five months of the current financial year (FY25) when the value of oil imports rose vis--vis the corresponding months of the previous fiscal.

A downward pressure on international oil prices, and consequently on India's oil import bill, is a positive for the country due to its extremely high dependence on oil imports. Latest government data shows that India's reliance on imported crude was at 88.1 per cent for April-November. Oil and gas imports have the highest share in India's overall merchandise import bill.

Heavy dependence on imported crude oil makes the Indian economy vulnerable to global oil price volatility, apart from having a bearing on the country's trade deficit, foreign exchange reserves, rupee's exchange rate, and . The government wants to reduce India's reliance on imported crude oil but sluggish domestic oil output in the face of incessantly growing demand for petroleum products has been the biggest roadblock.

India's oil imports in value terms declined 9 per cent year-on-year in the September-November period to $31.2 billion, even as import volumes were higher by 4.4 per cent at 57.2 million tonnes, according to an analysis of provisional oil industry data from the Petroleum Planning & Analysis Cell (PPAC) of the oil ministry. Import value was lower by 13 per cent in November, 10.9 per cent in October, and 2.8 per cent in September, as compared to the respective months of the previous fiscal. On the other hand, import volume rose 2.7 per cent in November, 4.3 per cent in October, and 6.3 per cent in September.

In the previous five months (April-August) of the current fiscal, cumulative oil imports in value terms rose 14.2 per cent year-on-year to $60.3 billion, while volumes grew by just 2.6 per cent to 101 million tonnes.

Overall, in the first eight months of FY25, oil import volumes rose 3.5 per cent year-on-year to 159.4 million tonnes, while the value of those imports was higher by 5 per cent at $91.8 billion against $87.4 billion in April-November of the last fiscal. If the divergence in import volumes and value as observed in September-November persists over the coming months, the total oil import bill for the full financial year 2024-25 could end up lower on a year-on-year basis despite a growth in import volumes.

Oil prices in the international market have been under pressure for a few months now mainly due to softening in demand from China, recent strengthening of the US dollarwhich dampens demand as dollar-denominated commodities become expensiveand concerns about global economic growth.

The price of global benchmark Brent crude declined from around $91 per barrel in early April to around $71 per barrel by November-end. The price of Indian crude oil basket declined from $89.44 per barrel in April to $73 per barrel in November. The Indian basket of crude oil represents a derived basket comprising sour grade and sweet grade crudes processed in Indian refineries in the ratio 78.50 : 21.50.

Headline	India's increasing oil demand attracting global players: S&P Global Commodity Insights		
Publication	The Economic Times	Edition	Online Coverage
Published Date	29 Dec 2024		

India's increasing oil demand attracting global players: S&P Global Commodity Insights

https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/energy/oil-gas/indias-increasing-oil-demand-attracting-global-players-sp-global-commodity-insights/articleshow/116764934.cms

India's oil demand growth has outpaced China's in 2024 and is expected to continue growing faster in 2025. This increase is leading Indian refiners to expand capacity and diversify crude imports. India is focusing on broadening its exploration policy and attracting private and foreign investments to reduce its heavy dependency on imported oil.

India is ending 2024 with its oil demand growth rate surpassing neighbouring China's, a trend expected to spill over to the next year, according to S&P Global Commodity Insights. India has become one of the fastest-growing fuel consumption centres.

As per the global commodities information services provider, the increasing fuel consumption is prompting India's refiners to accelerate expansion plans and widen crude sourcing.

Oil players are increasingly turning their focus to India amid expectations of its peak demand scenario coming much later than that of China's, according to the latest commentary on India's oil sector by S&P Global Commodity Insights.

"India will be the leading driver, along with Southeast Asia and other parts of South Asia, of the region's future oil demand growth," said Kang Wu, global head of macro and oil demand research at S&P Global Commodity Insights.

"In 2025, India is forecast to deliver a relatively faster growth in oil demand of 3.2 per cent, compared with China's 1.7 per cent," Wu added.

In the first 10 months of 2024, China's oil demand rose 148,000 barrels per day or 0.9 per cent year-over-year, lagging India's 180,000 barrels per day or 3.2 per cent year-over-year growth, S&P Global Commodity Insights data showed.

In that context, it is believed that India will see significant refining capacity growth in 2025.

As India's refining capacity is set to rise, refiners and policymakers are intensifying efforts to diversify the crude import basket -- to reduce overdependence on a few supplying countries or regions.

"Recent diplomatic visits will help bring in crude oil from Africa and Latin America, but the growth in absolute volume would depend on the overall crude market," said Abhishek Ranjan, South Asia oil research lead at S&P Global Commodity Insights.

India imports oil and gas from various geographical regions including countries from the Middle East, Africa, Europe, North America, South America and South-East Asia.

Earlier this month, in a separate report, S&P Global Commodity Insights had noted that India's latest move to broaden the scope of its exploration policy beyond petroleum and natural gas while lately abolishing a windfall tax on domestically produced crude oil will likely draw in private and foreign entities to the upstream energy sector.

Rajya Sabha recently passed a Bill seeking to amend the Oil Fields (Regulation and Development) Act of 1948 by expanding its scope to include shale oil, shale gas and coal bed methane, in addition to oil and gas.

India depends on imports for over 80 per cent of its crude oil requirement. Various steps have been taken by the government to increase the production of domestic crude oil and bring down imports.

India in recent years has undertaken a series of upstream reforms, such as greater marketing freedom to producers.

Headline	Jaisalmer: Water gushed out of a borewell so forcefully that even a truck sank, watch video		
Publication	Daily Hunt (Mobile)	Edition	Online Coverage
Published Date	30 Dec 2024		

Jaisalmer: Water gushed out of a borewell so forcefully that even a truck sank, watch video

https://m.dailyhunt.in/news/india/english/ekjhalakeng-epaper-ekjhlken/jaisalmer+water+gushed+out+of+a+borewell+so+forcefully+that+even+a+truck+sank+watch+video-newsid-n645422371

A rare geological incident has caused a stir in the Mohangarh Canal area of Jaisalmer. While digging a borewell in a field, the ground suddenly split open.

As the ground cracked, water and gas began to gush out under high pressure. The machinery and a truck sank into the ground. The water level rose as high as 10 feet. Witnessing this scene, the nearby villagers panicked.

The farmer's field started resembling a river as water flowed through it. The administration has evacuated the surrounding areas and sought help from ONGC.

Watch the video:

According to the available information, this incident occurred in the Mohangarh Canal area of Jaisalmer. In a farmer's field, borewell drilling was underway when the ground suddenly split open after digging approximately 250 meters (around 850 feet). Along with the machinery, a truck got stuck in the ground, with only its upper part visible. Meanwhile, water and gas started gushing out from the hole under immense pressure. The force of the water was so strong that it rose nearly 10 feet above ground. Frightened by the scene, villagers fled the area. It appeared as if lava was erupting from a volcano.

The water has been gushing for 12 hours now.

Surrounding areas evacuated

Upon receiving the information, senior groundwater board scientist Dr. Narayan Das Inkhia, Deputy Tehsildar and Executive Magistrate Lalit Charan, along with police officials, reached the site. They took control of the situation and evacuated the surrounding areas.

ONGC contacted to control the situation

The district administration has reached out to ONGC to help control the situation. Groundwater board experts believe that there might be a large reservoir of water or an underground river beneath the sand layers, which burst open, causing the water to gush out at such high speed.

Water likely to flow for a long time

Senior groundwater board scientist Dr. Narayan Das Inkhia stated that during borewell drilling in the canal area of Jaisalmer's 27 BD, water suddenly started gushing out under pressure. The administration is trying to control the situation, but water has been continuously flowing for about 12 hours. The water spout is rising up to 10 feet high and is expected to increase further.

500-meter radius restricted, temporary police post established

Deputy Tehsildar Lalit Charan informed that people have been advised to stay 500 meters away from the water gushing area. Gas is leaking from underground, increasing the water flow. A temporary police post has been set up, and ONGC officials are being consulted for a resolution. Gas odors can be smelled on the site, and the truck stuck in the pit is releasing mud, water, and gas.

Headline	Massive Cave-In During Digging Of Tubewell Triggers Water Eruption In Rajasthan's Mohangarh		
Publication	ETV Bharat	Edition	Online Coverage
Published Date	29 Dec 2024		

Massive Cave-In During Digging Of Tubewell Triggers Water Eruption In Rajasthan's Mohangarh

https://www.etvbharat.com/en/!state/massive-ground-collapse-during-digging-of-tubewell-causes-panic-in-rajasthan-mohangarh-enn24122902026

The phenomenon is being attributed to artesian conditions while the ONGC has ruled out poisonous nature of the gas emanating from the site.

Jaisalmer: A dramatic collapse of ground during the digging of a tubewell here in Rajasthan's Jaisalmer district has caused panic in the area by causing a sudden burst of underground water and gas inundating vast expanses of land.

The incident unfolded on Saturday during the digging of a tubewell near Chak 27 BD in the canal area of Mohangarh in the district. It is learnt that at 850 ft depth, a fountain of water along with gas suddenly burst out from the ground causing the ground to cave in as a result of which the drilling machine as well as the truck also sank into the ground and the field turned into a pond in no time. The flow of water has not receded even after 24 hours leading to a deep pit of 15 to 20 feet width in the area.

Unusual Groundwater Flow

Explaining the unusual geological phenomenon, groundwater scientist Dr Narayan Das Inkhaiya, who visited the spot, attributed the incident to artesian condition. This incident can be a sign of the ancient flow of the Saraswati river. The water coming out here is coming out due to artesian condition in the language of ground hydrology, he added.

The geological layer that saves water here is buried in a confined condition by a thick layer of sandstone and clay. As soon as the original water layer is punctured by crossing this layer of about 200 meters thick, the water starts flowing upwards due to extreme pressure. This situation has been seen earlier also at many places of Mohangarh and Nachana Panchayat Samiti, Inkhaiya explained.

No Possibility Of Water-logging Or Damage

Ruling out water-logging or damage due to the cave-in, Dr Inkhaiya said that the incident is an unusual example of groundwater flow. Initially the height of the water was very high, but now the water level has decreased a bit, he noted.

Efforts were made by the administration to control the water flow, which is still not receding at the moment. More importantly, the pit that has formed around the tube-well, could be dangerous for the locals with the local administration preparing to seal the area for people to avoid any untoward incident.

Mohangarh's Deputy Tehsildar Lalit Charan said that on Saturday night, officials of the oil and gas company ONGC visited the spot and examined the gas emanating from the site. He said the visiting ONGC officials have ruled out the poisonous nature of the gas. However, as a precaution, the administration has evacuated the field and the surrounding 500 meter area as a precautionary measure, he added.

Headline	Resilience of ‘Maharatna' companies a must for ensuring inclusive growth		
Publication	The Hans India	Edition	Online Coverage
Published Date	29 Dec 2024		

Resilience of ‘Maharatna' companies a must for ensuring inclusive growth

https://www.thehansindia.com/business/resilience-of-maharatna-companies-a-must-for-ensuring-inclusive-growth-933316

Highlights There are 14 Maharatna' central public sector enterprises (CPSEs) in the country

We must be ever grateful to the political leadership that created Maharatna' companies one of the key pillars of the country's economy over the years.

As per the details updated on October 22, on the website of the Department of Public Enterprises (DPE), there are 14 Maharatna' central public sector enterprises (CPSEs) in the country.

They are Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL), Coal India Limited (CIL), GAIL India Limited, Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL), Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL), NTPC Limited, Oil & Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC), Power Finance Corporation (PFC), Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (PGCIL), Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL), Rural Electrification Corporation Limited (RECL), Oil India Ltd (OIL) and Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL).

According to a 2018-2019 DPE survey, the total assets of Maharatna companies are value at Rs. 26,33,956 crore. There are certain criteria for a CPSE to be granted Maharatna status.

For example, a CPSE should have Navratna status, should be listed on Indian stock exchange, with minimum prescribed public shareholding under SEBI regulations. It should have an average annual turnover during the last three years of more than Rs. 25,000 crore. Its average annual net worth during the last three years should be of more than Rs. 15,000 crore. It should also have an average annual net profit after tax during the last three years of more than Rs. 5,000 crore. Last but not the least, an aspiring Navratna CPSE eyeing Maharatna status must have significant global presence or international operations.

Let's briefly look at the history of the evolution of Maharatna CPSEs before I return to the core purpose of writing this critical piece. BHEL has its origin in the signing of an agreement by the Government of India on 17th November, 1955, with Associated Electrical Industries (AEI), UK, for the establishment of a factory at Bhopal complete in all respects for the manufacture of heavy electrical equipment in the country.

On 24th January 1976, a new era dawned, as a 100 per cent public sector enterprise, Bharat Refineries Limited, acquired complete ownership of Burmah Shell's interests in India. It is today's BPCL. CIL came into being in November 1975. With a modest production of 79 million tonnes (MTs) at the year of its inception, CIL today is the single largest coal producer in the world and one of the largest corporate employers with manpower of 228861 as on 1st April, 2024. Across eight states, CIL operates in 84 mining areas, managing a total of 313 active mines, consisting of 131 underground, 168 opencast, and 14 mixed mines.

GAIL (India) Limited, India's leading natural gas company with diversified interests across the natural gas value chain of trading, transmission, LPG production and trans-mission, LNG regasification, petrochemicals, city gas, and so on, was incorporated in August 1984 as a Central Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) under the Ministry of Petro-leum and Natural Gas. HPCL's history starts from 1910. It was finally formed in 1974 by merging Esso Eastern Inc, Lubes India Ltd, and Caltex Oil Refining (India) Ltd. Incorporated in Mumbai in 1959, IOCL has embarked on a bold journey to become a one trillion-dollar giant' by 2047. Incorporated on November 7, 1975, NTPC is India's largest integrated power company, dedicated to lighting every corner of the country and building a sustainable future for all.

The foundation of ONGC in the form of Oil and Gas division, under the Geological Survey of India, was laid in 1955. In its illustrious journey so far, ONGC has crossed many milestones to realize the energy aspirations of India a great tale of conviction, courage and commitment. PFC, incorporated on July 16, 1986, is a leading non-banking fi-nancial corporation in the country. PGCIL, India's largest electric power transmission utility, was incorporated in October 1989 under the Company Act, 1956.

RECL was incorporated in 1969 in the backdrop of severe drought and famine in the country to energize agricultural pumpsets for irrigation purposes, thereby reducing the dependency of agriculture on monsoons. With an over hundred-year legacy, OIL continues to uphold its unwavering commitment to the nation's energy security. Established on December 23, 1940, HAL is one of the oldest and largest aerospace and defence manufacturers in the world. It is, thus, crystal clear that our national leader-ship, irrespective of their affiliations and leanings, have not been able to evolve even a single Maharatna' CPSE in the past about 40 years. However, I have no complaints as well.

Why myself as a journalist is vouching for the vibrancy and resilience of Maharatnas, or for that matter, Miniratnas or CPSEs in general, is the fact that they are not only the backbone of our economy but are also comparatively much better in terms of transpar-ency and commitment in spending funds under the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and following affirmative policies in recruitments.

I am not convinced about value system of other entities in the public and private sector as regards their commitment to the principle of affirmative policies such as quota in jobs for SCs, STs, OBCs and other marginalized sections if any. If they are following quota norms and ensuring effectiveness of funds being spent under CSR, my heartfelt compliments to them as well. I have two suggestions to make - First, CPSEs should get a free hand in running their affairs but with total accountability towards the Union or State governments' affirmative policies and the utilisation of CSR funds. There must not be any political interference in their working. Rather, our CPSEs should be encouraged to become global players in their respective fields by acquiring the best of technologies, know-how through their R&D pursuits and collaborations.

Second, all commercial and business entities with over Rs. 100 crore annual turnover should make public their yearly spending on CSR works with complete details and recruitments in sync with the Constitution's affirmative policies in a manner which is easily accessible digitally and the physical copies are also readily available for scrutiny by the stakeholders and media as well.

Headline	Assam: Retired ONGC Official Himkanta Das Passes Away in Joysagar		
Publication	The Sentinel	Edition	Online Coverage
Published Date	29 Dec 2024		

Assam: Retired ONGC Official Himkanta Das Passes Away in Joysagar

https://www.sentinelassam.com/north-east-india-news/assam-news/assam-retired-ongc-official-himkanta-das-passes-away-in-joysagar

Himkanta Das, a prominent social worker and retired officer of the ONGC and resident of Kareng Tiniali, Joysagar, passed away at 12:30 AM on Friday night at the Syukapha Multi-speciality Hospital.SIVASAGAR: Himkanta Das, a prominent social worker and retired officer of the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) and resident of Kareng Tiniali, Joysagar, passed away at 12:30 AM on Friday night at the Syukapha Multi-speciality Hospital. He was 69 years old at the time of his demise and had been battling a prolonged illness.

Many people gathered at his residence today morning to pay their final respects. Das is survived by his wife, two sons, daughters-in-law, grandchildren, and a host of relatives. His last rites were conducted at the Shantiban Smashanghat, Thanamukh in Sivasagar, and attended by hundreds of well-wishers.

A host of organizations and individuals expressed their condolences. Among them were Dr Sabyasachi Mahanta, President of Sibsagar Press Club and Principal of Gargaon College ; Akhil Gogoi, MLA of Sivasagar constituency; and Manirul Islam Bora, President of the Central Committee of Ujoni Axom Muslim Kalyan Parishad. Organizations such as the Sivasagar District Journalists' Association, Sivasagar Zilla Xahitya Xabha, Web Media Association, ATASU, AASU, AYM, Dikhowporia Sanmilita Yuva Samaj, and several others also mourned his loss.

Headline	Trump's energy policies: Can India take a leaf to boost domestic production?		
Publication	The Financial Express	Edition	Online Coverage
Published Date	30 Dec 2024		

Trump's energy policies: Can India take a leaf to boost domestic production?

https://www.financialexpress.com/policy/economy-trumps-energy-policies-can-india-take-a-leaf-to-boost-domestic-production-3702835/

Trump's establishment of the National Energy Council, led by North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum, aims to coordinate federal energy-related agencies, reduce regulations, encourage private investments, and promote innovation.

Recent policy announcements by incoming US President Donald Trump signal a significant shift in the US energy landscape, with a focus on increasing oil and gas production. These moves, aimed at reducing regulatory burdens and promoting energy independence, offer valuable lessons for India, which faces high import dependency amid geopolitical turmoil.

Trump's establishment of the National Energy Council, led by North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum, aims to coordinate federal energy-related agencies, reduce regulations, encourage private investments, and promote innovation. Additionally, efforts to streamline and accelerate the approval process for drilling permits on federal and Indigenous lands are underway, reducing bureaucratic delays to facilitate quicker project initiation. The administration's plans to dismantle regulations that limit fossil fuel production, including those targeting methane emissions, further underscore its commitment to boost the sector. The revival of the Keystone XL Pipeline project is another significant move, aimed at enhancing oil transportation infrastructure from Canada to the US.

Moreover, Trump's executive order to open federally held waters in the Atlantic and Arctic for oil and gas exploration, along with the relaxation of rules limiting methane emissions from oil and gas operations, highlights a comprehensive approach to expanding fossil fuel extraction. These measures are poised to significantly boost the U.S. oil and gas sector, making it more competitive and self-reliant.

, faced with a high import bill amidst a strengthening dollar, can draw valuable insights from these policies to boost domestic production. Despite importing approximately 90% of its oil, 70% of India's oilfields remain unexplored. This heavy on imports exposes the country to geopolitical shocks and price volatility. Against this backdrop, India's underexplored hydrocarbon basins allow policy reforms more lucrative for global players to harness the full potential of oil and exploration to increase domestic production.

Streamlining regulatory processes, like the US, would expedite the approval process for drilling permits, reducing delays and encouraging quicker project initiation. India needs a balanced approach that allows for increased exploration and production activities while keeping the decarbonisation goals in sight. As the Hon'ble Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Shri Hardeep Singh Puri remarked earlier this year, E&P in India holds investment opportunities worth 100 Bn by 2030. By reducing regulatory hurdles, India can attract more private investments in the oil and gas sector, promoting innovation and technological advancements. With a significant portion of its oilfields unexplored, India must prioritise exploration activities, facilitated by policies that incentivise exploration and production.

India currently imports almost 90% of its needs and this dependency is expected to increase with an expected steady rise in the country's fuel demand. A rise in oil production in the US and other countries will increase supply in the global and might benefit India in the short term. However, this might not be a viable and sustainable solution for the country in the longer run. With only 10% of the country's sedimentary basin under exploration, it is imperative for India to fast-track upstream investment to exploit the remaining potential for its energy security, said Vandana Hari, Founder, Vanda Insights

India has started taking steps in the right direction to unlock its hydrocarbon potential. The scrapping of SAED (Special Additional Excise Duty) imposed in 2022, earlier this month was a welcome step. The recent passage of the Oilfields Act in the Rajya Sabha marks an important policy milestone for India. This act is vital for strengthening India's energy security and safeguarding it from geopolitical shocks. Key provisions of the act include an enhanced regulatory framework, streamlining processes, providing financial and regulatory incentives for exploring new oilfields, and implementing advanced monitoring and mitigation measures to protect the environment. By adopting these provisions, India can bolster its energy security, reduce its dependence on imports, and ensure a stable and sustainable energy future.

The direction of announcements by the incoming US Administration offers cues for India to reform its oil and gas sector. The US, which was a net importer of oil until just a few years ago, has turned the corner to become a net exporter with the right policy measures on shale. By streamlining regulatory processes, reducing environmental burdens, and encouraging private investment, India too can unlock its vast untapped potential. It is time for decisive action to secure India's energy future.