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# WORLD EARTH DAY

## 'Let's improve the quality of air that we breathe'

### What is the current scenario in the primary energy market?

The contribution of coal has come down over the years, but the growth of green energy has not been as much as expected. If we look at the primary energy basket in India, today less than seven per cent is natural gas. Though the share of renewable energy has increased, we still have a long way to go. With India pushing for a gas-based economy, gas accounts for around 6.2 per cent of India's primary energy mix as compared to the global average of 24 per cent. The central government plans to increase its share to 15 per cent by 2030. This will lead to a reduction in our crude oil imports by at least 10 per cent. So, if India's share reaches 15 per cent, we will have at least 350 million cubic metres of natural gas. Today, the domestic and commercial sectors use Piped Natural Gas (PNG), the transport sector uses Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) and industrial establishments use R-LNG.

### In the domestic sector what is the extent of PNG's reach?

The reach of Piped Natural Gas (PNG) has been a major thrust area of the government. The government is aiming to convert one crore households to PNG by 2022. Last year, around 7 lakh new PNG connections were added in the country, of which Indraprastha Gas Limited (IGL) installed 2.1 lakh, setting an all-time record in the City Gas Distribution (CGD) industry. If we look at the last three years' data, IGL has grown by 4 lakh domestic PNG connections. From being at just over six lakh, it has crossed a million PNG connections in three years.

### What were the challenges you faced in installing PNG connections in households?

We commissioned a leading market research agency to undertake a survey to understand why people were not opting for PNG connections. Lack of adequate information is the main reason for the same. Hence, we need to change the mindset whereby people feel comfortable using PNG. We need to dispel myths such as PNG is not safe, etc. I would go on record to say that it is an economical, clean, green and safe fuel. On the technical side, we are facing issues like laying pipelines in the narrow and congested colonies of Delhi. Through our



**ES Ranganathan**, Managing Director, Indraprastha Gas Limited

*Committed towards providing safe, reliable and clean energy solutions to improve quality of life, Indraprastha Gas Limited (IGL), incorporated in 1998, took over Delhi City Gas Distribution Project in 1999. Currently the largest CNG distribution company in India, IGL has expanded to 11 Gas (Geographical Areas), covering 4 states and 20 districts. This World Earth Day, Somdatta Saha approached Managing Director of IGL Mr ES Ranganathan to gain an insight into the reasons why the institution has had such a successful innings.*

technical innovation in such colonies, we would reduce gas pressure to 100 millibar, with a remotely operated valve provided every 250 metres to close and open in case of an emergency alarm.

### What is the government's contribution in installing connections?

The government's role is more of a facilitator. We have been lobbying for declaring some zones of Delhi as LPG-free zones. For example in Dwarka, 90 per cent of people in apartments have PNG connections, whereas 10 per cent are still using cylinders. If the government turns Dwarka into an LPG-free zone, then the rest of the 10 per cent will also get converted.

### Why is CNG a better fuel?

CNG, when used in vehicles, reduces carbon monoxide and sulphur oxide emissions. Pollution gets reduced as there is less particulate matter suspended in air. Apart from being a clean, green and safe fuel, it is economical to run vehicles on CNG. At current prices, the operational cost of running on CNG is over 35 per cent less than on diesel

and over 55 per cent less than on petrol. One can get a CNG Kit for Rs 40,000, and the 55 per cent savings on petrol will help the person recover it in eight months if one drives 100 km per day, five days a week.

### Has CNG-usage in vehicles grown?

Currently, Delhi has more than six lakh private cars running on CNG, and around 20 lakh cars which use petrol and diesel. There is a conversion rate of at least 5000 cars per month because running on CNG makes it more economical for the users.

### What are the challenges of CNG-usage, for private cars especially?

It is again in the mindset. The most important issue is the time consumed in re-filling CNG. Normally, private car users can afford running a petrol-run car too, hence avoiding long queues for re-filling CNG. So, to motivate non-CNG users to adopt CNG as their favoured fuel and to provide more fuelling facilities, we have come up with new models for CNG stations, and plan on increasing their numbers across our authorised geographical areas (GAs). We have commissioned

### BUST THE MYTH

CNG cylinders in vehicles are very safe and do not burst. Whatever incidents of cylinder bursting take place are due to human error. CNG tanks are made to withstand 3600 psi of internal pressure. If a CNG tank has a leak, the natural gas will dissipate and float out of the tank, quickly dissipating into the air. Without an ignition source close to the leak, the leaked natural gas will not ignite. Odour is added to the gas, so if at all there's a leak, one can sense the smell beforehand and prevent any kind of mishap. The recently launched Type3 cylinder has a special system of 'leakage-before-burst'. It is made of fibre - so before bursting it will release the gas, removing a chance for explosion.



door marketing agents, etc. We are trying to create awareness among people through every possible medium. We also keep introducing various schemes to push PNG registrations and CNG conversion, such as attractive EMI schemes. We also organise various customer meetings with senior officials from our organisation. This provides an excellent platform to us to redress any query or complaint from the customers.

### Please elucidate on your CSR initiatives.

Apart from delivering excellence in our business operations, as a socially responsible organisation, we are touching and changing lives through engagements in several corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives focused on multiple focus areas such as health, education, women empowerment, skill development, upliftment of underprivileged children and women, etc. CSR is the responsibility of an organisation that goes beyond its legal obligations, and integrates social, environmental and ethical concerns into the company's business processes. It is, therefore, closely linked with the aim of achieving Sustainable Development Goals.

Some of our key CSR interventions include: IGL Suraksha Yojana, a group accident insurance scheme for all public transport drivers running CNG vehicles in Delhi-NCR; IGL Swasth Saarthi, a comprehensive preventive healthcare programme for all commercial drivers running CNG vehicles in Delhi-NCR; a gender sensitisation programme for public transport drivers in Delhi, Noida and Gurugram which is focused on making public transportation safer for women; we are empowering women by training rural women from villages in Noida and Greater Noida as sewing machine operators, which is providing them with employment opportunities -- and several of them have turned entrepreneurs. We are also providing self defence training to government school girls in Delhi. We are running several programmes in Education and skill development. We are also contribution towards skill development through Ayurvedic Skill Development sector with assured employment. We have also set up our own gas plumbing training centre at ITI Arab-ki-Sarai, providing an opportunity to the ITI students in Delhi to get trained as

gas plumbers, and thus providing them employment or self-employment opportunities in the sprawling CGD industry of the country.

Our CSR interventions have been recognised at several platforms, and we have won numerous awards in the past two years.

### What are the achievements of IGL last year?

During the last one year, IGL has set up benchmarks for the entire industry in the country. We reached the milestone figure of over 1.1 million domestic kitchens being fuelled by PNG, apart from fuelling over 1 million CNG-run vehicles. Setting a record number of CNG stations by any CGD company in India, we have established 500 CNG stations. In PNG also, we reached over 2.8 lakh new PNG registrations and completed installation of over 2.1 new PNG connections, which is again the highest ever number of PNG connections installed by any CGD company in the country.

### What are the further developments by IGL that are on the horizon?

We have recently introduced new Type 3 cylinders, which can double the quantity of gas transported by each vehicle. This service will be offered in areas that have CNG stations and where pipeline infrastructure is yet to be established. The Type 3 cascade (cylinder casing) is a structured bunch of aluminium-lined, carbon fibre-wrapped cylinders. These ultra-light weight cylinder cascades are about 70 per cent lighter than conventional steel cylinders.

We are also planning to expand to the overseas markets, starting with neighbouring countries, through partnerships with international players in the business. We are searching for technological advances with regard to CNG refilling. We are coming up with small and integrated CNG stations in the parking lots of apartment complexes, railways stations, metro parking, etc. Another area we are looking at is the conversion of domestic generators into gas, which will reduce the per unit cost of the generator.

### Your message to readers.

This World Earth Day, I would like to request the citizens of Delhi-NCR to opt for PNG, keeping its convenience and economical advantage in mind. I would also appeal the transportation space to opt for CNG, so that the air we breathe gets better.

## Championing India's Green drive, Since 1998.

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