

# Now, Kolkata on CNG radar

## Dankuni Test To Decide Future Market For Clean Fuel

Krishnendu Bandyopadhyay | TNN

Asansol: Kolkata is waiting for a CNG revolution. Right now, it is just 260-km away from the city.

Great Eastern Energy Corporation Ltd (GEECL) is laying pipelines in Durgapur. "From Durgapur, we will take CNG to Dankuni, which is a fairly big market. We can test the market demand there before taking it elsewhere," said GEECL general manager V K Varshney.

GEECL, which has successfully tapped coal-bed-methane (CBM) in the Ranigunge coalfield area and brought it to Asansol as automobile fuel, is preparing to bring CNG to Kolkata soon. "Kolkata is a very big market. So, we have to ensure adequate supply. We need to lay pipelines till Kolkata. But I am confident those days are not very far away," said GEECL president and chief operating officer Prashant Modi.

GEECL, whose licence area is 210 sqkm in the Ranigunge area on the bank of the Damodar, has already built 30 vertical production wells. "We will eventually have 300 wells to produce 30 lakh cubic metre of CNG per day. Our estimate says Kolkata at best may require 10 lakh cubic metre if most of its vehicle get converted to CNG. So it would not be difficult for us to supply 30% of the production to Kolkata for the

### GREEN REVOLUTION



#### CNG ADVANTAGE

1 kg CNG  
↓  
1.4 litre petrol

#### MILEAGE

1 kg CNG	Auto-rickshaw	40 km	Four-wheeler	18 to 20 km
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#### PRICE OF CNG CONVERSION KIT

Auto-rickshaw	Commercial petrol car
Rs 22,000 (for 5-kg cylinder)	Rs 35,000 (for 12-kg cylinder)

next 35 to 40 years," said Varshney.

GEECL first found the reserve not big enough. But later, they engaged Netherland Sewell (NSAD) for the assessment of the reserve. "In June 2007, the company put the original gas-in-place at 1.92 trillion cubic feet. This is an increase from the estimate we had at the time of inception of the company. So, with the reserve, we can sustain the supply for the next 35 years," said Modi.

Because of the price advantage, CNG should become an instant hit. Currently, it is priced at Rs 30 per kg. One kg is equivalent to 1.45 litres of petrol. GEECL has signed a memorandum of understanding

with Indian Oil Corporation Ltd to distribute CNG in Asansol and other cities. Two big IOC fuel stations at Jubilee and Siddheswar at Barakar are selling CNG.

There is a two-fold advantage of extracting CBM for automobile and industrial use. "Firstly, a fraction of the methane escapes into the air and gets wasted. Methane is poisonous and thus, pollutes the ambient air. Secondly, extracting methane makes coal mining safer. A large number of miners die after inhaling methane. But the biggest advantage is that you need to import less fuel," said Chinmoy Chakraborty, an automobile expert.

## Switch to green fuel, activists tell state

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Kolkata: Environmentalists want the government to act quickly on the CNG find. "CNG is the fuel of the future. The faster it comes to the city, the better," said green crusader Subhas Datta.

CNG is better than LPG in many ways, one of them being that it can be used in both petrol and diesel vehicles with a conversion kit attached. "What's more, unlike the CNG available in oil-wells, coal-bed methane (found in Asansol) has the least impurities like hydrocarbons, propane and butane. You always get 100 per cent combustion and almost zero emission. Carbon monoxide (CO) emission, which is a matter of concern in Delhi, is almost absent in this CNG. You could say we are the first to bring the environment-friendliest fossil fuel to market," said Paramjeet Singh, GEECL-DGM, who was directly associated with Delhi's CNG-shift.

"CNG will sort out a lot of automobile and environmental problems. Both CNG and LPG are clean fuels but CNG has some advantages. We have to import LPG but CNG is our own natural resource. Also, CNG being a lighter gas easily escapes into air and is safer," said automobile expert professor P K Bose of Jadavpur University.

GEECL is confident CNG will be a success in Kolkata. "We have started promoting it through media and FM channels. We are expecting a fast change," said V K Varshney, GEECL general manager.