

Green drive: CNG may come to city soon

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Kolkata: Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) may come to Kolkata earlier than expected. After the botched attempt to introduce LPG as vehicle fuel, the state environment department is keen to bring the clean fuel to the city. The officials will meet oil company representatives and automobile experts on May 30 to finalize the introduction of CNG in the city.

Spearheading the move is Great Eastern

Energy Corporation Limited (GEECL). The company has taken the first step by drawing coal-bed methane from the Asansol-Raniganj coal bed area. It is selling CNG in Asansol at Rs 30/kg. A kilogram of CNG equals 1.45 litre petrol. "Unlike CNG available in oil-wells, coal-bed

methane has the least possible impurities like hydrocarbons, propane and butane. So, you always get 100% combustion. This CNG does not lead to emission of carbon monoxide either. So, we are the first to bring the most environment-friendly fossil fuel to the market," said Paramjeet Singh, GEECL's DGM.

The company has applied for clearance to sell the same to automobile owners through IOC, its biggest franchisee. Its first target will be Durgapur. It has laid a pipeline from

Barakar, Asansol to Durgapur.

"GEECL has applied for a clearance. It would be good for the environment," said Biswajit Mukherjee, senior law officer in the environment department. CNG has changed Delhi's environment and its low price has also made commuting cost-effective in the capital.

"We will soon start supplying CNG to Durgapur and then to Dankuni. We are also considering using the Durgapur Projects Limited line from Durgapur to Kolkata. But Kolkata is a big market and we would have to ensure



Hoardings like this may soon be a common sight in Kolkata

uninterrupted supply, once introduced in the city," said GEECL general manager V K Vasney.

Being the cheapest fuel, CNG becomes an automatic choice. "An autorickshaw can ply 40 kilometre on a kg of CNG," added Vasney, who experienced the CNG-rage in Delhi during his

stint with the Gas Authority of India Limited (GAIL). Interestingly, both petrol and diesel vehicles can switch over to CNG by adding conversion kits to their engines.

"CNG will address the environmental issues as well. Both CNG and LPG are clean fuels. But CNG has some basic advantages over LPG. Also, CNG is our own natural resource. Secondly, CNG has an inherent security aspect which LPG lacks," said Jadavpur University's automobile expert, professor P K Bose.