

# In export push, govt steps in to raise container capacity

Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal announces purchase of second-hand vessels

SHREYA NANDI & DHRUVAKSH SAHA  
New Delhi, 19 September

Concerned over the fallout of the Red Sea crisis and severe shortage of containers against the backdrop of a steep decline in merchandise exports in August, the Union government is pulling out all the stops to find a solution. To begin with, the government has devised a strategy aimed at boosting container supply and supporting exporters.

An inter-ministerial meeting chaired by trade minister Piyush Goyal, on Thursday, decided that the state-owned Shipping Corporation of India (SCI) will start

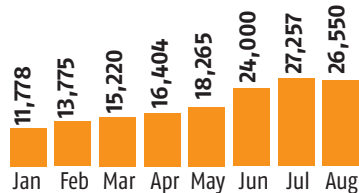
operating a large container ship and purchase five additional second-hand container vessels apart from reducing loading and handling cost of empty containers by the Container Corporation of India (Concor). A simultaneous container scanning will also begin at Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority (JNPA) for faster clearances and reduction in turnaround time.

"I am confident that it (decisions taken today) will result in bringing down the shipping cost, improve the availability of empty containers, help faster evacuation of export consignments, and significantly reduce the congestion at ports," Goyal told reporters during a briefing. [Turn to Page 10 ▶](#)



## COSTLY AFFAIR

Average charter rate in 2024 (\$/day)



Source: Crisil Market Intelligence & Analytics

## TO BRING RELIEF

- Implement simultaneous container scanning at JNPA to speed up clearances and cut turnaround time
- Lower handling and loading costs for empty containers by Concor
- Enable quicker evacuation of consignments

# Share of strong hybrid vehicles in UP rises in August

When contacted, Maruti Suzuki India (MSIL) and Honda Cars India (HCIL) — two of the three leading players in the strong hybrid market — expressed satisfaction with the jump in strong hybrid cars sales in India's most populous state in the past two months, while Tata Motors, India's pre-eminent electric car manufacturer, and Kia India indicated their disappointment.

Rahul Bharti, executive director of corporate affairs at Maruti Suzuki, welcomed the UP government's decision to "recognise the importance" of strong hybrid vehicles in achieving national goals of reducing carbon emissions, as well as curbing oil imports.

"Customers in UP have responded positively. It is good to see that the combined penetration of BEVs (battery electric vehicles) and SHEVs (strong hybrid electric vehicles) reached 4.6 per cent in UP, slightly surpassing the national average for August. Several states are encouraging hybrid technology, along with EVs... (which) will lead to faster adoption of environment friendly technologies," Bharti said.

The data, reviewed by Business Standard, revealed that the share of strong hybrid vehicles in total car sales in UP grew from 1.2 per cent in June to 3.3 per cent in August.

The UP government's deci-

sion to waive the 8-10 per cent registration tax on strong and plug-in hybrid vehicles reduced the on-road price of these cars by up to ₹4 lakh.

Kunal Behl, vice-president of marketing and sales at HCIL, told Business Standard that the registration tax waiver significantly boosted the affordability of hybrids, drawing in a larger customer base for these "environmentally friendly" vehicles.

"At Honda, we offer advanced hybrid technology in our Honda City e:HEV. Sales of the City e:HEV nearly doubled (in India) in July compared to June; this momentum continued into August with a notable increase in enquiries and showroom walk-ins. In 2023, the City e:HEV made up 11 per cent of our total City sales; this year, it has risen to 14 per cent," Behl noted. He further emphasised that favourable tax policies and reduced duties could accelerate the adoption of hybrid vehicles.

However, Tata Motors, Hyundai Motor India, Kia India, and Mahindra & Mahindra had opposed the July 5 order during a meeting with the UP government last month, arguing that the nascent electric car market needed undivided attention and support. Conversely, MSIL, Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM), and HCIL endorsed the policy,

arguing incentives should be extended to all green technologies, including plug-in and strong hybrids, to expedite emission reductions.

Hyundai, Mahindra & Mahindra, and TKM did not respond to Business Standard's queries concerning the surge in strong hybrid car sales in UP following the July 5 order.

A spokesperson for Tata Motors, which held a 64 per cent share of India's EV market as of July, highlighted that the PM E-DRIVE scheme, which was recently cleared by the Union Cabinet, focuses exclusively on EVs to fulfil several national interests, such as zero-emission mobility, energy security, and job creation and skill building.

"Supporting non-zero emission technologies does not help in fulfilling these objectives," the spokesperson added.

Hardeep Singh Brar, senior vice-president of sales and marketing at Kia India, echoed this sentiment, saying the company endorses and aligns with the central government's policy towards providing incentives for EVs as they are truly zero-emission vehicles.

"In line with this, we plan to launch a couple of new EVs in the coming years. If market demand and customer preference shift towards strong hybrids, as a leading car manufacturer, we have the expertise to cater that demand," he said, but stressed "we believe that continuous support for hybrids may slow down the

adoption of EVs and the development of the necessary infrastructure in the country."

"Our focus remains on accelerating the shift to a fully electric future," Brar added.

Reflecting on the broader implications of UP's policy,

Ravi Bhatia, president of Jato Dynamics India, said: "This dramatic shift (in strong hybrid car sales in UP) underscores the potential of targeted policies to accelerate the adoption of greener technologies."

## BS SUDOKU

# 4383

2	3				1		4	
		1		9			3	
	7	9			3		1	
1		8	4	7	2	9		
	2		6					4
	4		1	3				6
7	1	4			8	6		9
		2						
						8		

SOLUTION TO #4382

1	8	3	2	9	6	7	5	4
6	5	7	3	1	4	9	8	2
9	2	4	7	5	8	1	6	3
8	3	1	6	7	9	2	4	5
2	6	5	8	4	1	3	7	9
4	7	9	5	2	3	8	1	6
5	9	6	1	8	2	4	3	7
3	1	2	4	6	7	5	9	8
7	4	8	9	3	5	6	2	1

Very easy:



Solution tomorrow

### HOW TO PLAY

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9