India

ADD (previously HOLD)

Consensus ratings*: Buy 23	Hold 4	Sell 3
Current price:		Rs145
Target price:		Rs200
Previous target:		Rs121
Up/downside:		37.9%
InCred Research / Consensus:		43.2%
Reuters:	(	GAIL.NS
Bloomberg:		GAIL IN
Market cap:	US\$ <sup>2</sup>	11,482m
	Rs98	53,718m
Average daily turnover:	US	S\$25.2m
	Rs2	2093.3m
Current shares o/s:	6	,575.1m
Free float: *Source: Bloomberg		34.7%



#### Research Analyst(s)



Satish KUMAR T (91) 22 4161 1562 E satish.kumar@incredresearch.com Abbas PUNJANI T (91) 22 4161 1598 E abbas.punjani@incredresearch.com

# **GAIL India**

Gas Transmission & Dist | India | December 19, 2023

## Volume tailwinds ahead; upgrade to ADD

- Global LNG and European gas prices are falling, with European gas reserves at a record high giving India a sweet spot to fulfill its needs via LNG imports.
- Gas transmission volume is poised to rise, given India's record-high gas usage across sectors, with a significant contribution from CGD & fertilizer sectors.
- Consol. EPS is likely to post a 26% CAGR over FY24F-26F. We upgrade our rating on the stock to ADD (HOLD earlier) with a higher target price of Rs200.

#### Gas volume to surge amid rising sectoral demand

Global liquefied natural gas or LNG prices and European gas prices are falling. European gas reserves are at an all-time high and incremental imported gas consumption is still below incremental purchases (on a weekly basis, ergo reserves are rising). The era of European power inflation seems to be over, with Europe showing reduced urgency to procure LNG at any cost. This shift is detrimental to coal and LNG prices, as panic buying by Europe was the key driving force behind elevated prices in 2022 and the early part of 2023. With the diminished need to stock coal and LNG, the prices of these commodities are now falling. This trend suggests that Indian city gas distribution or CGD and fertilizer companies are poised for significant volume growth, with the surge in demand likely to contribute to higher volume, benefiting GAIL India or GAIL's volume.

### Tailwinds in gas transmission business

Multiple favourable factors are shaping GAIL's transmission business as capacity utilization, which is likely to rise from 52% in FY23 to 58% in FY24F, positions the company to achieve a utilization rate of 70% and touch 145mmscmd by FY26F. This growth is propelled by increased domestic demand, especially from sectors like CGD, fertilizer, industrials, refineries, and power, contributing to India's record gas demand. Moreover, with the implementation of Unified Tariff Regulations from 1 Apr 2023, under 'One Nation, One Grid and One Tariff,' GAIL stands to benefit, particularly with higher tariffs and reduced LNG purchases. Additionally, GAIL's significant gas contribution of 67% to the fertilizer sector in FY22-23 and its role as a pool operator for the Government of India's natural gas pooling initiative further strengthens its position in the market. However, there is a potential risk like the possibility of a decline in propane (LPG) prices if Brent crude oil prices decrease from their current levels. Moreover, there is ongoing pressure in the petrochemicals sector, as is evident in the clear downturn marked by falling spreads. We believe this persistent pressure will continue in the petrochemicals sector.

#### Growth concerns are behind us; upgrade rating on the stock to ADD

The volume growth trajectory is promising for GAIL, paving the way for a rise in its earnings. We upgraded the rating on the stock to ADD (from HOLD earlier) with a higher target price of Rs200 (from Rs121 earlier). However, downside risks could arise from a double-digit rise in LNG prices or any change in the government's policy for the sector.

Financial Summary	Mar-22A	Mar-23A	Mar-24F	Mar-25F	Mar-26F
Revenue (Rsm)	927,698	1,456,683	1,416,266	1,556,649	1,711,450
Operating EBITDA (Rsm)	151,516	73,731	138,557	187,322	219,502
Net Profit (Rsm)	120,018	56,160	101,136	136,521	159,445
Core EPS (Rs)	24.3	6.8	13.7	19.0	22.5
Core EPS Growth	126.1%	(72.2%)	101.8%	39.4%	18.3%
FD Core P/E (x)	5.37	16.98	9.43	6.99	5.98
DPS (Rs)	9.0	4.7	5.4	8.3	9.7
Dividend Yield	6.20%	3.22%	3.71%	5.73%	6.69%
EV/EBITDA (x)	4.52	14.74	7.66	5.45	4.41
P/FCFE (x)	28.42	(10.90)	(45.94)	29.29	17.35
Net Gearing	6.0%	20.2%	13.9%	7.8%	1.5%
P/BV (x)	1.00	1.47	1.24	1.12	1.00
ROE	18.4%	6.9%	12.7%	15.4%	16.4%
% Change In Core EPS Estimates			(31.06%)		
InCred Research/Consensus EPS (x)					

SOURCE: INCRED RESEARCH, COMPANY REPORTS

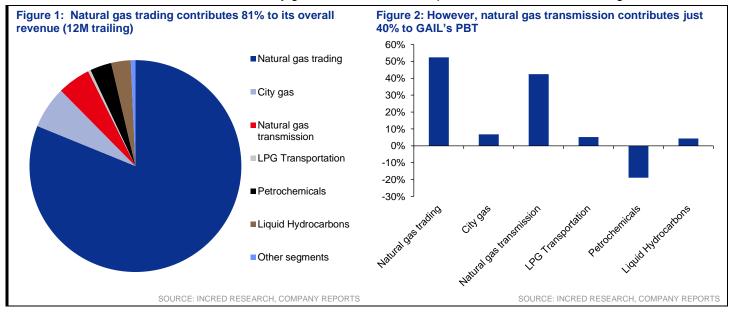
## Major beneficiary of volume growth

### **Business overview**

GAIL is a major natural gas company in India, with diverse interests across the entire natural gas value chain.

### Key activities >

- Gas trading: GAIL imports and trades liquefied natural gas (LNG) and domestic natural gas, serving as a key player in ensuring India's energy security.
- **Gas transmission:** GAIL owns and operates a vast network of pipelines across India, transporting natural gas from the producers to the consumers.
- **Marketing and distribution:** GAIL sells natural gas directly to large consumers like power plants and industries and works with distributors to reach smaller consumers through city gas networks.
- **Exploration and production (E&P):** GAIL is involved in exploring new natural gas resources, both domestically and internationally, to expand its supply portfolio.
- Petrochemicals: GAIL has investments in petrochemical plants that produce various products like fertilizers, plastics, and chemicals.
- **Other services:** GAIL also offers various services like pipeline construction, city gas infrastructure development, and technical consulting.



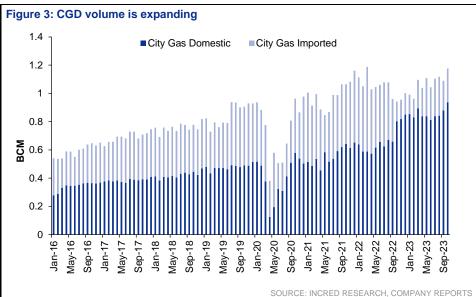
## Gas marketing business

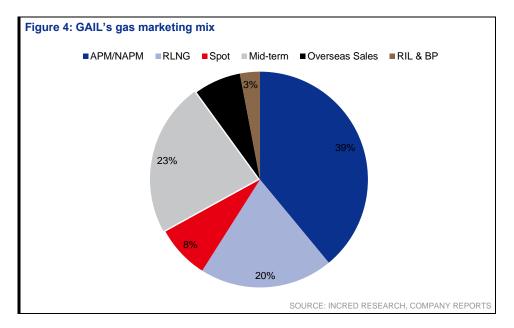
Natural gas trading business encompasses both gas trading and city gas operations. However, gas trading makes up 93% of the total gas marketing revenue while city gas contributes 7%. The city gas distribution (CGD) business is characterized by high stability, whereas the trading business experiences significant volatility. In trading, GAIL sources imported and APM/NAPM gas, distributing it across various sectors, including 40% to fertilizer, 25% to CGD, 11% to power, 9% to overseas companies and the remaining 15% to other sectors. (such as steel, refineries, sponge iron, internal consumption, etc.)

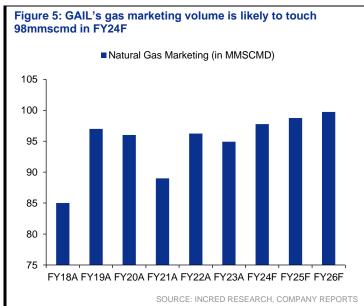
### Robust growth in CGD volume reflects positive prospects >

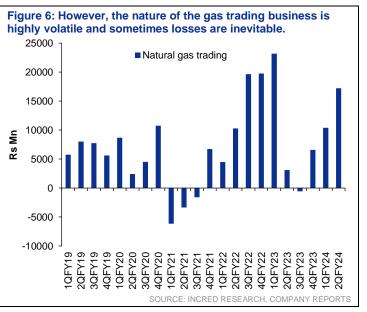
In FY22-23, the company recorded a sales volume of 94.91mmscmd, with 83.03 mmscmd in domestic sales and 11.88mmscmd in overseas sales. Going ahead, in FY23F-24F, we project the transmission business to touch a sales volume of

approximately 98mmscmd, benefitting GAIL with a heightened contribution from CGD in the gas marketing segment.



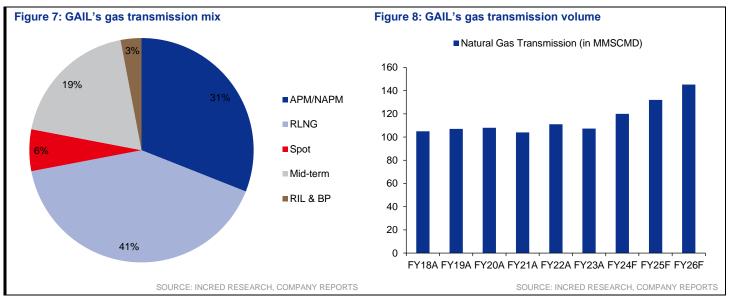






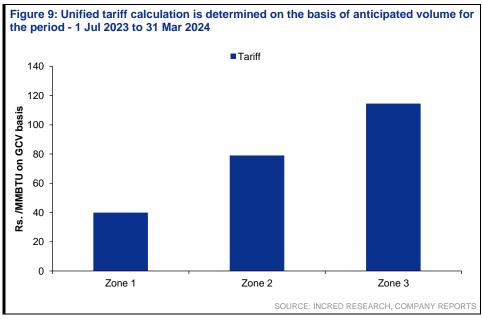
## Gas transmission business >

GAIL has significantly expanded its nationwide natural gas pipeline network, totalling around 15,600km. The average gas transmission within this network slightly decreased to 107.28mmscmd in FY22-23. However, we expect the gas transmission business to post a volume of nearly 120mmscmd in FY23-24F. The company maintains a dominant 65% share in the country's natural gas transmission sector.



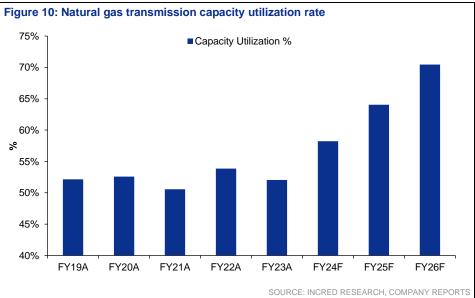
# Unified tariff amid lower LNG prices to potentially contribute to increased transmission volume across the mix ➤

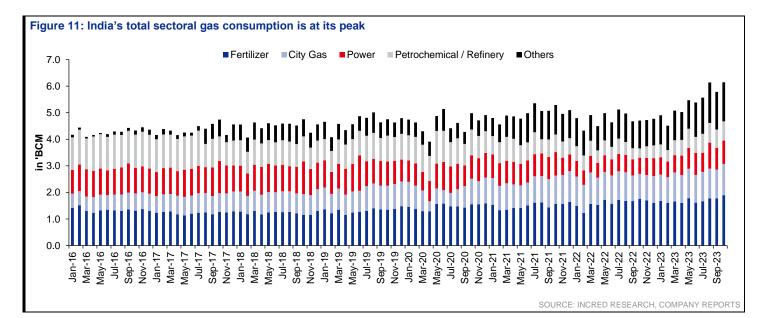
The Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board or PNGRB has implemented Unified Tariff Regulations from 1 Apr 2023 under **'One Nation, One Grid and One tariff'**. According to these regulations, the unified tariff is determined as the weighted average zonal tariff for all constituent natural gas pipelines within the National Gas Grid System (NGGS). Subsequently, the unified tariff is divided into three zones: the first zone covering a distance from the gas source to 300km, the second zone covering more than 300km and up to 1,200 km, and the third zone covering more than 1,200km.



# Capacity utilization to touch 70% by FY26F amidst highest-ever demand for gas from fertilizer, power & CGD sectors ➤

Capacity utilization stood at 52% in FY23 and is projected to touch 58% in FY24F, with GAIL having the potential to easily achieve a capacity utilization rate of 70%, reaching 145mmscmd by FY26F in average pipeline capacity. In 2QFY24, natural gas transmission volume increased to 120.31mmscmd from 116.33mmscmd in 1Q. The pipeline capacity utilization stood at 58% in 2QFY24, driven by increased demand from the domestic market, especially from sectors like fertilizer, power, industrials, refineries and CGD, contributing to India's highest-ever gas demand.

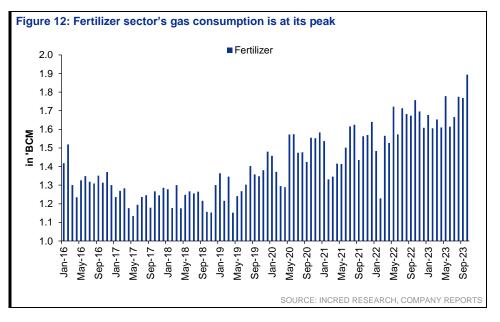




# Urea plants to contribute to the rise in overall gas transmission volume ➤

GAIL provided approximately 67% of the gas utilized in the fertilizer sector in India in FY22-23. Throughout this financial year, the company supplied gas to Matix Fertilizers & Chemicals in Panagarh, as well as to Hindustan Urvarak & Rasayan (HURL) for the commissioning of its Gorakhpur, Sindri and Barauni plants. GAIL played a crucial role in assisting these facilities in achieving successful commercial urea production.

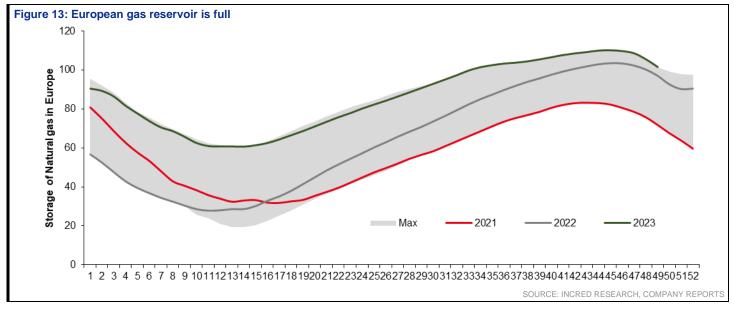
GAIL is serving as a pool operator, following the decision of the Government of India to pool natural gas for urea plants.



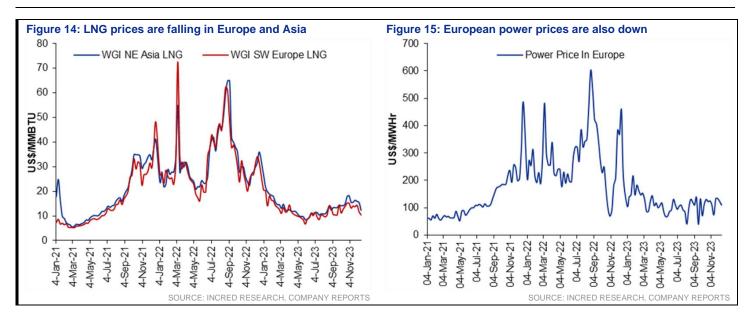
# Falling global LNG and European gas prices in a resilient energy market >

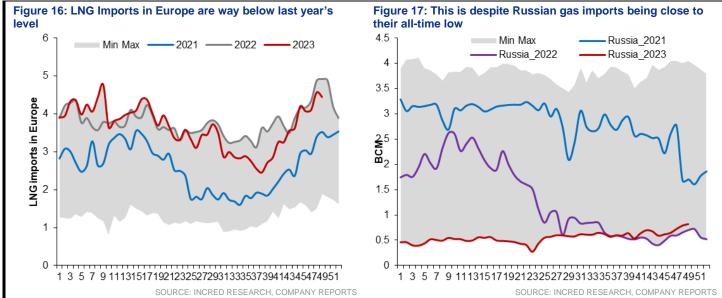
LNG prices and European gas power prices are falling. European gas reserves are at an all-time high and incremental imported gas consumption is still below incremental purchases (on a weekly basis, ergo reserves are rising). European power inflation is behind us, and Europe no longer appears to be in a great hurry to buy LNG at any price.

Panic buying by Europe primarily drove LNG and coal prices in 2022 and the early part of 2023. As the need to stock coal/LNG doesn't exist anymore, prices of coal as well as LNG are falling. In the current scenario, GAIL looks very attractive because of volume growth prospects.

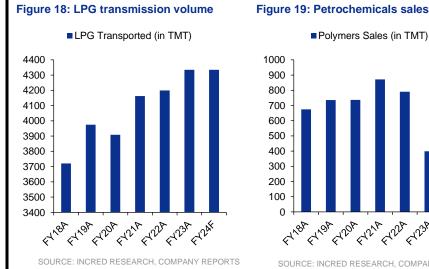


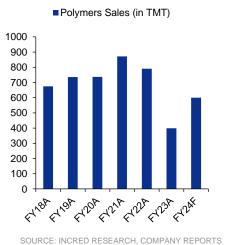
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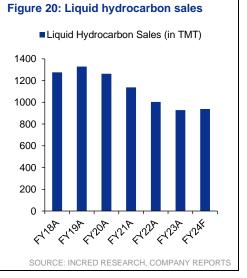




### Petchem, liquid hydrocarbons & LPG transportation contibuted 7% to GAIL's overall revenue >





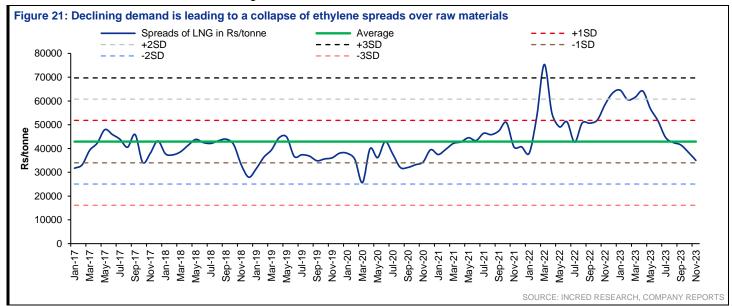


## **Petrochemicals business**

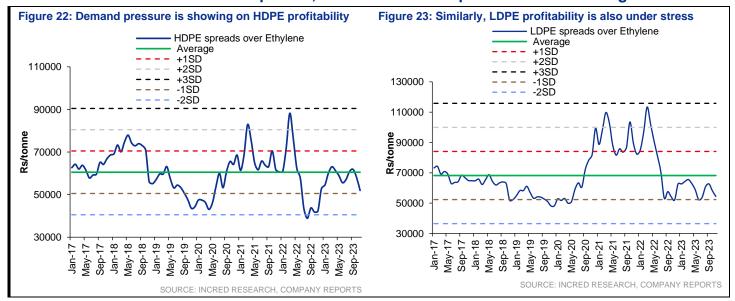
From natural gas GAIL makes ethylene, which is then converted into HDPE (high density polyethylene) and LDPE (low density polyethylene). Apart from PE (polyethylene), the company also makes propylene and butadiene.

### GAIL uses natural gas to make ethylene>

2.436m Btu per barrel (0.058m Btu per gallon) is the conversion factor for ethylene from natural gas. GAIL gets administered pricing mechanism or APM gas to make ethylene from ONGC and Oil India. The company doesn't sell ethylene in the open market but rather it uses ethylene to make HDPE and LDPE. It's another matter that weakening demand is leading to collapse in ethylene spreads over natural gas.



Ethyelene is used to make HDPE and LDPE; like ethylene spreads, HDPE and LDPE spreads are also falling **>** 

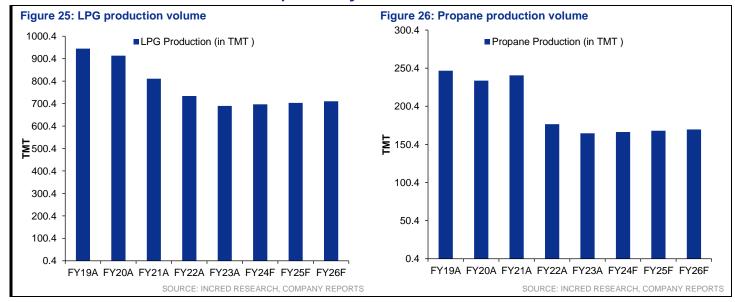


# The profitablity of propylene is no different and it's also under stress ▶



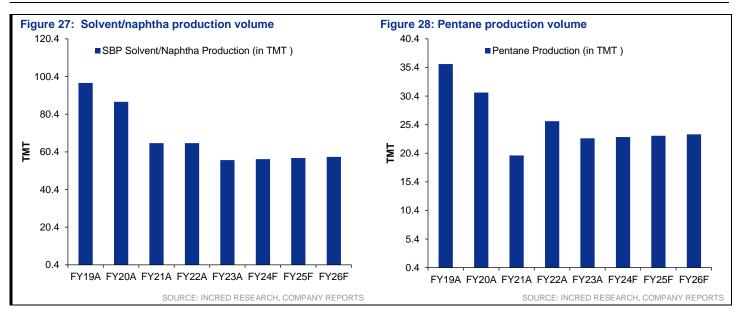
## Liquid hydrocarbon business

Liquid petroleum gas (LPG) is one of the main products in the liquid hydrocarbon business. Apart from LPG, GAIL makes SBP solvents as well as pentane and propane. GAIL has five gas processing units (GPUs) at four locations in the country having a total LPG & LHC production capacity of 1.4mmt. During FY22-23, total liquid hydrocarbon production from GPUs was about 0.93mmt, of which almost 90% constitutes LPG and propane.

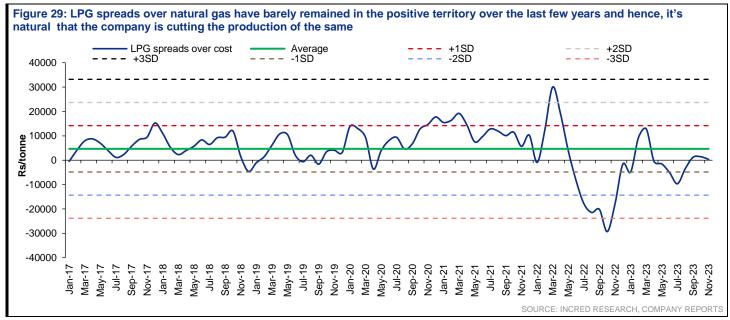


# Overall liquid hydrocarbon production has been declining over the past few years ➤

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# LPG spreads over natural gas determine the segment's profitability for the company **>**



# Naphtha is manufactured from natural gas in the following steps $\blacktriangleright$

**Natural gas sourcing**: Natural gas, primarily comprising methane, is obtained through drilling and extraction processes.

**Steam reforming:** The natural gas undergoes a process called steam reforming, where it reacts with high-temperature steam in the presence of a catalyst (usually nickel-based) to produce synthesis gas or syngas. This syngas primarily contains hydrogen (H2) and carbon monoxide (CO).

**Cracking process**: The produced syngas is then subjected to further reactions in a high-temperature furnace in a process known as cracking. This process breaks down the molecules of the syngas into smaller hydrocarbon molecules. The cracking of these molecules produces a mixture of various hydrocarbons, including naphtha.

**Fractional distillation**: The resulting mixture is subjected to fractional distillation in a distillation tower. This process separates the various hydrocarbons based on their boiling points. Naphtha, being a mixture of hydrocarbons with intermediate boiling points, is collected at a specific range of temperatures within the tower. **Refining and further processing**: The collected naphtha might undergo additional refining processes to adjust its composition and properties. It can be further processed in various ways depending on the intended use, such as in the production of gasoline, petrochemicals, or as a feedstock for other chemical processes.

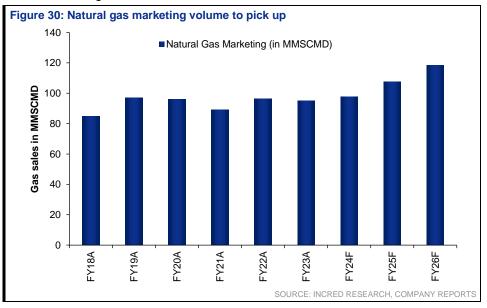
Selling naphtha manufactured through the natural gas route is not viable for GAIL. Hence, the production decline is logical.

### Earnings and valuation

We believe that after the EPS decline in FY23, tremendous growth is likely in FY24F-26F and the EPS is set to grow, as we expect higher volume growth. EBITDA to top the Rs200bn-mark by FY26F.

# We expect gas trasmission volume to grow in the coming years $\blacktriangleright$

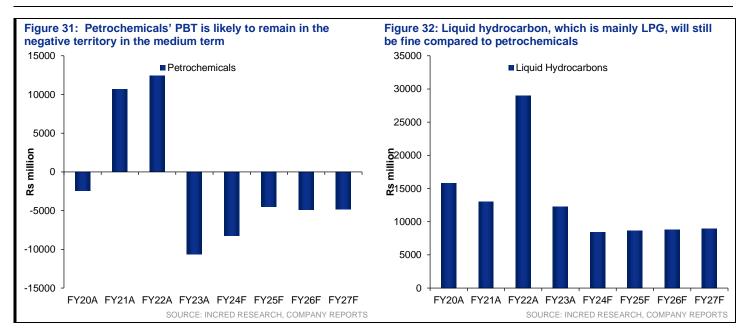
As LNG becomes cheaper in global markets, we are likely to see increased imports and hence, a rise in the transmission volume of GAIL. In the recent tariff order, the levelized tariff of gas has been increased to 58.61/mmBtu. Increased volume, coupled with increased tariff, will lead to a rise in EBIT of the gas transmission segment.



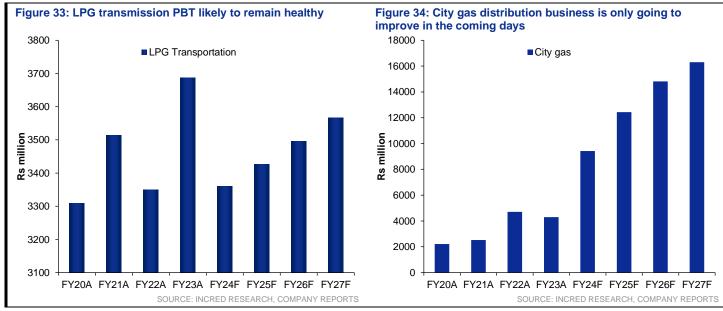
### We don't expect any revival in petrochemicals bsuiness >

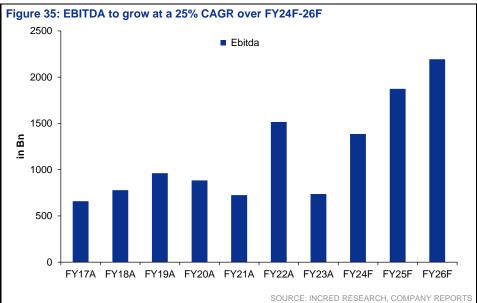
Demand slowdown is hitting the petrochemicals business, and its margins are falling. We don't expect any revival soon, more so when we expect crude oil prices to rally (mainly driven by supply squeeze).

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# LPG transmission is a steady revenue growth business and we don't expect any big changes here **>**





### Overall EBITDA to grow at a 25% CAGR over FY24F-26F ➤

# We believe in the voume growth story going ahead; we value the stock at 8.3x EV/EBITDA to its historical mean >

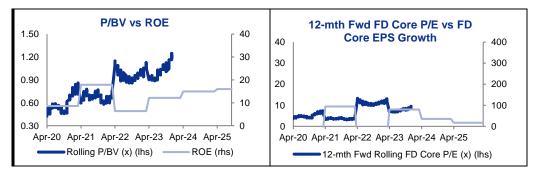
Figure 36: We have valued GAIL at its 10-year historical mean to arrive at our higher target price of Rs200; upgrade its rating to ADD

Item	Valuation	Unit
Sep-25 EBITDA	1,62,939	Rs mn
1- year Forward Multiple	8	х
Sept-25 EV	13,57,202	Rs mn
Sept-25 Net Debt	40,587	Rs mn
Sept-25 Equity Value	13,16,615	Rs mn
1-year Forward Price Target	200	Rs/share
	SOURCE: INCRED RESEARCH, COMPAN	Y REPORTS



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### **BY THE NUMBERS**



### Profit & Loss

(Rs mn)	Mar-22A	Mar-23A	Mar-24F	Mar-25F	Mar-26F
Total Net Revenues	927,698	1,456,683	1,416,266	1,556,649	1,711,450
Gross Profit	226,627	168,370	244,776	304,071	347,861
Operating EBITDA	151,516	73,731	138,557	187,322	219,502
Depreciation And Amortisation	(24,202)	(27,016)	(29,196)	(30,656)	(32,189)
Operating EBIT	127,314	46,715	109,360	156,666	187,313
Financial Income/(Expense)	(2,133)	(3,710)	(3,710)	(3,710)	(3,710)
Pretax Income/(Loss) from Assoc.	15,081	15,081	15,081	15,081	15,081
Non-Operating Income/(Expense)	11,830	14,478	14,478	14,478	14,478
Profit Before Tax (pre-El)	137,012	57,483	120,128	167,434	198,081
Exceptional Items					
Pre-tax Profit	152,092	72,564	135,209	182,515	213,162
Taxation	(31,599)	(16,605)	(34,073)	(45,994)	(53,717)
Exceptional Income - post-tax					
Profit After Tax	120,494	55,959	101,136	136,521	159,445
Minority Interests	(476)	201			
Preferred Dividends					
FX Gain/(Loss) - post tax					
Other Adjustments - post-tax					
Net Profit	120,018	56,160	101,136	136,521	159,445
Recurring Net Profit	108,070	44,530	89,856	125,241	148,165
Fully Diluted Recurring Net Profit	108,070	44,530	89,856	125,241	148,165

Cash Flow					
(Rs mn)	Mar-22A	Mar-23A	Mar-24F	Mar-25F	Mar-26F
EBITDA	151,516	73,731	138,557	187,322	219,502
Cash Flow from Invt. & Assoc.					
Change In Working Capital	(35,981)	(34,291)	(21,480)	(5,000)	(7,059)
(Incr)/Decr in Total Provisions					
Other Non-Cash (Income)/Expense					
Other Operating Cashflow	(953)	82	(56)	(56)	(56)
Net Interest (Paid)/Received	(4,717)	(6,955)	(3,710)	(3,710)	(3,710)
Tax Paid	(32,842)	(16,138)	(34,073)	(45,994)	(53,717)
Cashflow From Operations	77,023	16,430	79,238	132,562	154,961
Capex	(69,713)	(88,306)	(100,000)	(100,000)	(100,000)
Disposals Of FAs/subsidiaries					
Acq. Of Subsidiaries/investments					
Other Investing Cashflow	15,352	11,904			
Cash Flow From Investing	(54,360)	(76,401)	(100,000)	(100,000)	(100,000)
Debt Raised/(repaid)		(13,289)			
Proceeds From Issue Of Shares					
Shares Repurchased					
Dividends Paid	(39,954)	(30,693)	(35,398)	(54,608)	(63,778)
Preferred Dividends					
Other Financing Cashflow	787	73,702	62,378	35,811	33,917
Cash Flow From Financing	(39,167)	29,721	26,980	(18,797)	(29,861)
Total Cash Generated	(16,504)	(30,251)	6,218	13,765	25,100
Free Cashflow To Equity	22,663	(73,260)	(20,762)	32,562	54,961
Free Cashflow To Firm	24,795	(56,262)	(17,052)	36,272	58,670

SOURCE: INCRED RESEARCH, COMPANY REPORTS

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## BY THE NUMBERS...cont'd

(Rs mn)	Mar-22A	Mar-23A	Mar-24F	Mar-25F	Mar-26F
Total Cash And Equivalents	28,040	11,030	38,271	81,650	136,365
Total Debtors	74,465	106,796	99,279	109,120	119,972
Inventories	35,766	59,179	49,640	54,560	59,986
Total Other Current Assets	24,800	28,302	29,175	28,366	31,177
Total Current Assets	163,072	205,307	216,365	273,696	347,499
Fixed Assets	445,721	496,969	521,817	547,908	575,303
Total Investments	318,986	338,948	355,896	373,690	392,375
Intangible Assets					
Total Other Non-Current Assets	71,860	51,551	54,129	56,835	59,677
Total Non-current Assets	836,566	887,468	931,841	978,434	1,027,355
Short-term Debt	12,196	53,801	56,491	59,315	62,281
Current Portion of Long-Term Debt					
Total Creditors	53,613	71,436	62,823	67,299	73,314
Other Current Liabilities	85,124	91,874	62,823	67,299	73,314
Total Current Liabilities	150,933	217,110	182,137	193,913	208,909
Total Long-term Debt	54,681	88,797	88,797	88,797	88,797
Hybrid Debt - Debt Component					
Total Other Non-Current Liabilities	108,977	91,847	62,823	67,299	73,314
Total Non-current Liabilities	163,658	180,644	151,620	156,096	162,111
Total Provisions	41,992	43,951	46,148	48,456	50,879
Total Liabilities	356,583	441,705	379,906	398,465	421,898
Shareholders Equity	641,143	649,274	768,300	853,665	952,957
Minority Interests	1,912	1,796			
Total Equity	643,055	651,070	768,300	853,665	952,957
Key Ratios	Mar-22A	Mar-23A	Mar-24F	Mar-25F	Mar-26F
Revenue Growth	61.7%	57.0%	(2.8%)	9.9%	9.9%
Operating EBITDA Growth	109.2%	(51.3%)	87.9%	35.2%	17.2%
Operating EBITDA Margin	16.3%	5.1%	9.8%	12.0%	12.8%
Net Cash Per Share (Rs)	(8.75)	(20.01)	(16.28)	(10.11)	(2.24)
BVPS (Rs)	144.39	98.75	116.85	129.83	144.93
Gross Interest Cover	59.70	12.59	29.48	42.23	50.49
Effective Tax Rate	20.8%	22.9%	25.2%	25.2%	25.2%
Net Dividend Payout Ratio	38.1%	74.7%	41.1%	45.0%	44.2%
Accounts Receivables Days	21.54	22.71	26.55	24.43	24.43
Inventory Days	17.09	13.45	16.95	15.18	15.33
Accounts Payables Days	25.55	17.71	20.92	18.96	18.82
ROIC (%)	18.5%	6.0%	13.0%	17.7%	20.0%
ROCE (%) Return On Average Assets	<u> </u>	5.9% 4.2%	12.2% 7.9%	15.6% 10.3%	17.0%

SOURCE: INCRED RESEARCH, COMPANY REPORTS

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