

GAS

Gas: A state of matter that can propel beings to the moon, begin wars, derail presidencies and re-instate new presidents; A state of matter that affects all other matters, including the gray in people's brains, which gets agitated even more when there is visible paucity, as happens to be the case now.

It is only when the pocket book is affected however, that there is enough mass hysteria to churn the gray for a positive outcome, as it is today, when we suddenly have a race to find alternative fuels and alternative energies, because it seems definite that that OPEC cartel doesn't seem to want to deal on our terms anymore.

With China and India adding to the club of gas guzzlers, there is no dearth of consumers. And with Russia and Iran included, there is perhaps no dearth of suppliers as well. (Of course, given the current world situation, whether they will form a happy relationship with us in another matter altogether!)

Regardless, what about the status under the ground, where this matter formed for millions of years until the pipes bored in sucking and sucking at those vast, what seemed to be unending reserves? As the meaning of the word suggests and as we are realizing only now, a reserve will ultimately exhaust itself.

Almost everything in the modern world runs on it, consumes it in some form or another: Transportation, machineries, electricity, generators, even clothes and cosmetics. Everything solid that we see around us, based on that loose coupling of molecules: gas.

There is only so much earth, only so much of the gaseous underground. And so much we don't understand. Geothermal clean energy is being harnessed for heating more and more, but geothermal bores in the town of Staufen in Germany penetrated an underground reservoir causing water leakage, and the town began to sink. Another similar experiment triggered a series of small earthquakes in Switzerland.

But alternative energy is the way of the future- we just need to learn more: About ways of harnessing the currents in the waves and in the air; and the energy literally bombarding us from the sun; matters we did not pay much attention to when gas was cheap.

And oh yes, we were polluting then too, it's just that we didn't really need to think about it too much at a dollar a gallon. Even with the airing of an Inconvenient Truth coupled with strange climatic changes across the world, it was not so much of an issue, but Bam! Raise the price of gas four fold and there's cleaner energy and climate change and green fuels and Stop Polluting signs everywhere.

The Modern day equation $\text{Gas} = \text{Pollution} = (\text{Climate Change})^2$ is on its way to becoming a children's chant. So perhaps, we are in for a new era? And hopefully, it's not a hair brained scheme to mass produce another edible fuel such as corn, causing rising prices and famine in already impoverished countries.

It is perhaps easy to say: Stop using gas. Stop using wood. Stop using corn. But how does one heat the homes in Maine when it gets brutally cold? How does one get to work in a country which depends on cars to perform long commutes? How does one get watermelons in winter from the tropics? What! No orange juice in summer, what are you talking about?

A change in lifestyle is in order, yes. But more practically perhaps is the need to rapidly come up with a viable fuel: Electricity from the sun, waves and the wind that can be stored and transmitted, maybe over an international grid. There is sun somewhere all

the time, isn't it? Waves don't stop, do they? Is it that far fetched? Why, don't we already have a phone grid, cables laid under the sea, and oil pipelines that span sea floors?

As for me, I am holding out for my electric car, one that will charge in ten minutes flat anywhere, everywhere, and hold the charge for at least say, three hundred miles. And did I mention it before, cost about two quarters to charge. Finally its time I think, for practical utopia.