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Non-availability of LPG at night puts auto drivers in a fix



[Staff Reporter](#)

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An autorickshaw driver checks the reserve fuel of his LPG-powered vehicle in Kozhikode on Friday. | Photo Credit: [S](#)

Fuel station owners reluctant to sell gas after 10 p.m., they allege

The alleged reluctance of fuel station owners to sell Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) after 10 p.m. claiming staff shortage is causing huge trouble to hundreds of autorickshaw drivers in Kozhikode city.

The LPG autorickshaw drivers here are forced to discontinue night service as not even one of the three LPG dispensing stations within the city limits is offering 24x7 service. More than 1,000 drivers who solely depend on the supply of LPG are now in a situation to use petrol option frequently in their vehicles, which is hardly a viable method considering the rising fuel cost. Though the issue has already been taken up with district-level authorities, a long-term solution is still pending.

“Till very recently, two LPG dispensing units within the city remained shut due to some mechanical errors. One of them was repaired only on Friday. We are actually going through a tough time,” says Sajeew Kumar, president of the Kozhikode District LPG Autorickshaw Drivers Association. He alleges that there is no staff shortage in LPG outlets as claimed by fuel station owners and they are deliberately redeploying the available staff to cater only to petrol and diesel vehicles for better sales margin.

As of now, there are only three LPG dispensing stations in Kozhikode city. Only the station opened at Kundayithode is operating properly. The other two dispensing stations at Sarovaram and Puthiyangadi are facing technical glitches very frequently forcing the owners to stop the service.

Yasser Arafath, secretary of drivers’ association, says uninterrupted gas supply can be ensured only with the presence of a competent technical team to address unexpected mechanical errors. Now, such complaints are attended by technicians from other States after a long wait, he says.

The drivers are also unhappy over the delay in opening more LPG dispensing stations within the city limits.

The situation is not any different in the case of CNG autorickshaw drivers as there is not even a single filling station in the city. Balasubrahmanyam, a CNG autorickshaw driver in the city, says he is still using petrol as there are no other options available. “Like me, there are nine other drivers who are running pillar to post now to seeking a solution to the fuel crisis,” he adds.