

The Government is clear that acts of violence against the minority communities, whenever and in whatever form they occur, must be dealt with sternly and exemplary punishment awarded to the perpetrators.

Increase in Oil Import Bill

1185. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR-BIRLA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the oil import bill of Government are increasing day-by-day

(d) whether Government have taken any steps to check the increase in oil import bill; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR) (a) and (b) The value of crude oil and petroleum products imported during 1995-96, 1996-97 and 1997-98 is as under:—

(b) if so, the details of oil import bill during the last three financial years;

(c) the estimated oil import bill during the current financial year;

Value : Rs./Crores

	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98*
Crude Oil POL products	11517.00 12577.85	18538.19 15633.49	15897.15 12431.92
TOTAL :	24094.85	34171.68	28329.07

*Provisional.

(c) The Oil Economy Budget (OEB) for 1998-99 has estimated foreign exchange requirement of US \$ 8418.10 million for import of crude oil and petroleum products.

(d) and (e) In order to contain oil import bill, steps are being taken to increase crude oil production in the country through application of improved technologies, better understanding of reservoir behaviour, development of new fields, additional development of existing fields and by inviting foreign and private capital in the upstream sector. The refining capacity is also being increased in the country by expansion of existing refineries in the public sector and setting up of refineries in joint sector and private sector to minimise the product imports.

Reduction in Diesel Price

1186. MISS MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the diesel price is likely to be cut in tune with the fall in the international price of crude oil; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and by when the reduction would be effective?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR) (a) and (b) Government announced a comprehensive package to end the oil "pool deficit on September 1, 1997. The Government also decided that hence forth the price of HSD would be on import parity basis.

Accordingly, the ex-storage point price of HSD has been revised as under:

Effective Dates	Ex-storage point price (Excluding ex-cise duty etc.) Rs. / KL
07.11.97	7918.04
25.12.97	7996.84
01.03.98	7839.24
04.04.98	7645.47
20.05.98	7536.89

Petrol and Diesel Outlets in Remote and Rural Areas

1187. SHRI C. RAMCHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indian Oil Corporation has any plan to invite entrepreneurs to open petrol and diesel outlets in remote and rural areas;

(b) whether it is a fact that Indian Oil Corporation has not embarked on any imaginative marketing strategy;

(c) the reasons for the slow extension of distribution network in rural areas; and

(d) the steps proposed to review the present system?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR) (a) Yes, Sir. 252 new retail outlets have been included in the approved RO Marketing Plan 1996-97 for Indian Oil Corporation and AOD.

(b) No, Sir. IOC has been taking planned initiative and revising and improving its marketing strategy from time to time.

(c) and (d) In line with the existing policy, retail outlets are being developed in remote and rural areas after carrying out feasibility study. Locations meeting

volume / distance norms are included in the marketing plan and are developed. This is an ongoing and continuous process. Accordingly, based on the above criteria, Indian Oil Corporation and its Assam Oil Division (AOD), as on 1.10.1998, are having 6801 retail outlet, dealerships all over the country including the rural areas.

LPG Agencies in Chittoor and Cuddapah of Andhra Pradesh

1188. SHRI C. RAMCHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether new LPG agencies and outlets are planned in 1998-99 during the refraining period in Chittoor and Cuddapah districts of Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, the locations selected;

(c) whether Government are aware of the acute shortage of LPG in these districts; and

(d) the steps proposed to relieve this shortage of LPG connections?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) to (d) To meet the increased demand of LPG of Chittoor and Cuddapah districts in Andhra Pradesh, 12 new distributorship in Chittoor district and 21 new LPG distributorships in Cuddapah district have been included in the approved LPG Marketing Plan 1996-98. Selection process has been set in motion with the constitution of three Dealer Selection Boards for Andhra Pradesh. With the commissioning of the LPG distributorships, the demand of the area will be met adequately.

Small and Medium Oil Fields

1189. SHRI BHAGABAN MAJHI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of small and medium oil fields discovered and offered for de-