

Maintenance shut downs in the Refineries

513. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN:
SHRI VIREN J. SHAH:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indian refineries have planned a series of maintenance shut downs in 1995;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard;

(c) what are the details of maintenance shut downs, the duration of each shut down and the expenditure incurred during each of the last three years in respect of each refinery, and

(d) what safeguards have been taken or are proposed to be taken by Government to ensure that the regular supply of oil in the country is not affected by these shut downs?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPTAIN SATISH SHARMA): (a) to (d) Maintenance shutdowns of the various units of the refinery are planned according to requirements and normally ranges from 20 to 30 days. It is part of normal refinery operation and maintenance practices. Such maintenance shutdowns of the refineries have also been planned for 1995.

Shutdowns are planned and staggered in such a way that overall availability of petroleum products is not affected. Maintenance cost of the refineries is monitored on overall basis.

Introduction of lead-free petrol

514. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI:
Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to introduce lead-free petrol in four Metropolitan cities from April, 1995;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether scientists are divided about the utility of lead-free petrol;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) whether lead-free petrol is likely to increase the emission of aromatic hydrocarbons which are equally or more harmful as lead?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPT. SATISH SHARMA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir Government have decided to introduce lead-free petrol in four metropolitan cities w.e.f. 1-4-95 through some selected number of petrol pumps to meet the demand of petrol driven vehicles fitted with catalytic converters to reduce toxic emission.

(b) to (e) There is a general consensus among the scientists that lead free petrol would be desirable provided catalytic converters are installed in the petrol driven cars. Generally, unleaded petrol contains more aromatics and use of such petrol without catalytic converter is not desirable.

Allocation of gas to Fertilizer units along HBJ pipeline

515. SHRIMATI CHANDRIKA ABHINANDAN JAIN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to increase the allocation of natural gas for the fertilizer units along HBJ pipeline; ..

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the quantum of increase in 1994 as compared to 1993?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAP. SATISH SHARMA): (a) to (c) The allocation under the Action Plan to fertilizer units along the HBJ pipeline was increased from 5.76 MMSCMD in 1993-94 to 6.45 MMSCMD in 1994-95.

Steps to Enhance Participation of Private Oil Companies in Exploration Activities

516. SHRIMATI CHANDRIKA ABHINANDAN JAIN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether private oil companies are given loan on concessional terms for exploration of oil;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government are aware that these companies are not making a good headway in exploration of oil;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the steps proposed for active and full participation of private companies in oil exploration?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPT. SATISH SHARMA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The companies with whom contracts have been signed are making progress as per schedule.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) To give further boost to oil exploration by private companies, the Government of India is shortly launching a Joint Venture exploration programme between National Oil Companies (ONGC/OIL) and private companies.

Failure of ONGC to extinguish oil well fire

517. SHRI RAM DAS AGARWAL:
SHRI PASUMPON THA.
KIRUTTINAN;

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Internationally acclaimed fire fighter Neil Adams has blamed ONGC for an inordinate delay to tame the blow out at the Pasarlapudi-19 gas well in the East Godavari district even after the 46th day of the flare up as reported in the 'Hindustan Times' dated 23rd February, 1995 under the caption "US expert blames it on ONGC";

(b) if so, who are the officers responsible for this inordinate delay and whether it is a fact that the required/relevant equipment was not made available to team of Mr. Adams with the result that the work for the digging of a relief well has yet to start at Pasarlapudi which in all probability would not be taken up;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the loss to the exchequer on account of fire is much more as it is one of the biggest which the US expert has ever encountered and much bigger than anything he handled in Kuwait or at Komarada in Andhra Pradesh in 1995; is so, what are the figures of total losses on this account till date and time likely to be taken to cap the well; and

(d) what steps Government have taken use far to overcome the inherent flaws in ONGC's management structure so as to deal in effectively in such an emergency situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPTAIN SATISH SHARMA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. However, the claim made by Mr. Neal Adams is not correct.