

LPG connections by 2015 especially in rural areas and uncovered areas and also examine the possibility of providing more Retail Outlet/Kisan Seva Kendra (KSK).

In order to increase rural penetration and to cover remote as well as low potential areas, a new scheme namely, "Rajiv Gandhi Gramin LPG Vitrak Yojana" (RGGLVY) for establishing small size LPG distribution agencies for locations having potential of 600 or more refill sales per month has been formulated.

The scheme has been launched on 16.10.2009 and subsequently advertisement inviting applications for distributors under the scheme have been released by OMCs in 8 States where the reach of LPG is very low namely, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal covering 1266 locations.

The setting up of LPG distributors under this scheme will now be a continuous process till all parts of the country deficient in LPG were covered by LPG network.

During the year 2007-08, 2008-09 and between April and December 2009, OMCs have commissioned 325 LPG distributors and 3250 ROs including 1866 KSKs in the country.

As regards CNG agencies, Government is taking multi-pronged steps to increase the availability of natural gas in the country. Further, Government is undertaking efforts to ensure development of natural gas transportation infrastructure. Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) has been set up to encourage investment in natural gas transportation infrastructure and City Gas Distribution projects.

Drop in crude oil output

1316. SHRI P.R. RAJAN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

- (a) the amount of crude oil output in the country for December and January;
- (b) whether Government is aware of the reports that the crude oil output has dropped recently; and
- (c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI JITIN PRASADA): (a) the amount of crude oil production in the country for December '09 and January '10 is 2.9052 million metric ton (MMT) and 2.9194 MMT respectively.

(b) and (c) Although the crude oil production has gone up for OIL and Pvt./JVs for the period April '09 to January '10 as compared to the same period in the last year, there is a marginal decline in ONGC's crude oil production mainly due to following reasons:—

- New wells under Heera Redevelopment Plan could be put on production only recently.

- Less inputs in terms of side track wells in Mumbai High.
- Less than envisaged gain from new side-tracked wells from Mumbai High and Vasai East field.
- Decline in base production in Assam Asset and increase in water cut in major matured fields of Ankleshwar and Ahmedabad Assets.
- Less than envisaged gain from ongoing IOR schemes in Assam Asset and EOR schemes in Mehsana Assets.

Ethanol Blended Petrol Programme

1317. SHRI B.K. HARI PRASAD: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) to what extent the sharp sugarcane production shortfall this year will affect Government's Ethanol Blending Programme (EBP) and whether sugar mills are likely to default on ethanol supply in the previous round of contracts;

(b) whether the recent changes in the Sugarcane Control Order, 1966 allows ethanol supplies to EBP only after meeting domestic sugar needs and ethanol needs of other sectors like alcohol and chemicals;

(c) whether last month Brazil cut the mandatory amount of ethanol mixed into gasoline to 20 per cent from 25 per cent due to lower sugarcane production; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI JITIN PRASADA): (a) The sugar industry has submitted to MoPNG that the potential alcohol production during the year 2009-10 was likely to be 160 crore litres. After supplying 90 crore litres alcohol for potable purposes, the balance available alcohol for fuel ethanol and other purposes would be about 70 crore litres. There have been shortfalls in the supply of ethanol in the period 2006-09.

(b) No. There is no such law, order, instructions or rule which provides that ethanol supplies to EBP are to be made only after the needs of alcohol and chemicals sectors are met.

(c) The Government of India has launched the EBP Programme based on the indigenous availability of ethanol. The Government of India is not importing ethanol for this programme. Therefore, level of sugarcane production in Brazil is of no consequence to the EBP Programme in India.

(d) Does not arise.

Natural gas reserves in the country

1318. SHRI BHAGAT SINGH KOSHYARI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the estimated and actual reserves of natural gas in the country;