

DELAY IN COMMISSIONING OF HALDIA  
REFINERY PROJECT

501. SHRI INDRADEEP SINHA:  
SHRI LAKSHMAN MAHA-  
PATRO:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the commissioning of the Haldia Refinery will be delayed further;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor, and when it is expected to be commissioned;

(c) whether it is a fact that due to this delay the refinery has been facing serious losses, since the entire administrative and refinery staff has already been recruited; and

(d) if so, the facts thereof?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS (SHRI C. P. MAJHI): (a) and (b). The trial runs of the Distillation Unit of the fuel sector commenced during the end of August, 1974. The unit operated with minor interruptions and there was a planned shut down towards the end of September, 1974 to prepare for the next phase of trials. Presently the testing of various equipment and loading of reactors of the Catalytic Reforming Unit are in progress. The Catalytic Reforming Unit would be put on\* trial runs shortly; on stabilising the operations of this unit, the Distillation Unit will also be started and both units will run on guarantee tests for three to four weeks during December, 1974. The lube sector is expected to be commissioned by end of 1975. Delay in the completion schedule of the Visbreaker Unit and the various units of the lube sector due to delay in the receipt of the equipment from foreign suppliers, scarcity of construction materials etc. have contributed to the delay in the commissioning of the units.

(c) and (d). In a complex project like a Petroleum refinery, positioning of the operation staff in advance of the commissioning would be essential so that the staff get acquainted with the units during pre-commissioning tests and trial runs. Therefore, the expenditure towards staff prior to commissioning cannot be considered as a loss.

CLOSURE OF BRANCH LINES BETWEEN  
BHAGALPUR-BARARI AND SAHEDUR KAMAL  
JUNCTION-MONGHYR GHAT

502. SHRI BHOLA PRASAD: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is fact that branch lines between Bhagalpur-Barari and Sahedur Kamal Junction-Monghyr Ghat on the North Eastern Railway are going to be closed from 1st January, 1975; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and whether the backwardness of the areas scived by these two branch lines have been kept in view?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SARDAR BUTA SINGH): (a) No.

(b) Does not arise.

FOREIGN COLLABORATION FOR OIL  
EXPLORATION AND DRILLING

503. SHRI LAKSHMAN MAHAPATRO: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM & CHEMICALS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have recently decided to negotiate foreign collaboration for oil exploration and drilling; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS (SHRI C. P. MAJHI) : (a) and (b). During May, 1974 two contracts were signed for off-shore exploration and production in the Bengal and Kutch Basins. The main terms of both the contracts are given in the statement laid on the Table of the Sabha in reply to Starred Question No. 4 answered on 22nd July, 1974.

Discussions are being, held in connection with awarding contracts for certain other off-shore areas.

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504. SHRI LAKSHMAN MAHAPATRO: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS be pleased to slate :

(a) whether it is a fact that the Indian Drugs and Pharmaceuticals Limited is considering an offer of technical collaboration from