

consumption of natural gas (including KG D6 gas) does not exceed 50,000 scmd, 2.165 million metric standard cubic meters per day (mmscmd) of KG D6 gas has been allocated to various CGD entities,

Further, the CGD entities as well as SMEs, are free to contract Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) from *inter alia* GAIL (India) Ltd., Indian Oil Corporation (IOCL) and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd. (BPCL), as adequate capacity for LNG re-gasification exists in the country.

Lifting of Government control on diesel prices

†896. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD:

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

(a) whether it is a fact that the Chairman of Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council has advised to lift Government control on diesel prices at the earliest;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that with the implementation of this advice, the retail prices of diesel are likely to be increase; and

(d) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MURLI DEORA): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. In an interview to a newspaper on 20th October, 2010 Chairman, Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister in response to a specific question is learnt to have observed that "the deregulation of the Diesel prices is a natural corollary to the deregulation of Petrol. Otherwise, it will create price distortions. The best time for doing this will be when inflation starts coming down".

The Government has taken a decision 'in principle' to make the price of Diesel market-determined, both at the Refinery Gate and Retail level. However, Government has initially increased the retail selling price of Diesel by Rs. 2/- per litre with effect from 26th June 2010 (at Delhi) with corresponding increases in the rest of the country.

Complaints regarding malpractices by gas agencies

897. SHRI GOVINDRAO ADIK:

SHRI SANJAY RAUT:

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

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(a) whether Government has received a large number of complaints of blackmarketing, supply of underweight cylinders and stealing gas by various gas agencies like Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation (BPC), Hindustan Petroleum Corporation (HPC) etc. in the country;

(b) if so, Government's response thereto; and

(c) the details of corrective steps taken or proposed to be taken against such agencies by formulating any new law to halt such illegal business?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MURLI DEORA): (a) and (b) It is the endeavour of Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) namely, Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) to provide complaint free service to customers. However, in the process of supplying refill to 11.85 crore LPG consumers, some complaints are received. OMCs have reported that based on the established complaints of diversion/supply of partially used cylinders/under-weight cylinders/pilfering product from LPG cylinders, action has been taken in 637 cases against the erring LPG distributors in the country during the last three years and between April and September, 2010 under the provisions of Marketing Discipline Guidelines (MDG)/Distributorship Agreement.

(c) The possibility of blackmarketing/diversion of subsidized domestic LPG cylinders by some unscrupulous elements can not be ruled out due to the wide gap between the retail price of LPG for domestic use and the market price for commercial LPG.

Surprise Quality Control Checks which include weighment of cylinders, are carried out at the distributor's godowns and weight checking of filled cylinders in transit is being done by the field officers to check pilferage/presence of any underweight cylinders. The distributors have also been instructed to satisfy the customers about the correct weight of cylinders by weighing them, to ensure that the seals are verified and shown to the customers at the time of delivery. In case any under-weight cylinder is received by the customer, such cylinders are replaced free of charge by the OMCs.

Government has enacted "Liquefied Petroleum Gas (Regulation of Supply and Distribution) Order, 2000" and formulated "Marketing Discipline Guidelines, 2001" which provide for penal action against erring LPG distributors for serious malpractices like diversion of domestic LPG cylinder for non-domestic use, recovery of unauthorized charges from customers, supply of underweight cylinders, etc.

MDG, 2001 provides *inter alia* following action against erring LPG distributors for major offences :

- Fine of Rs. 20,000 plus the price of LPG diverted at commercial rates for 1st offence.
- Fine of Rs. 50,000 plus the price of LPG diverted at commercial rates for 2nd offence.
- Termination of the distributorship for 3rd offence.

In addition to the action taken by the OMCs, State Governments are also empowered to take action under the LPG (Regulation of Supply and Distribution) Order, 2000. Similarly, the Weights and Measures Departments of the States/UTs initiate legal action against those LPG distributors found supplying under -weight LPG cylinders.

No new guidelines has been framed to prevent misuse of domestic LPG. However, State Governments have been advised from time to time to take necessary action to prevent/curb blackmarketing/diversion of domestic LPG..

Regularisation of Medical and other allied staff in ONGC, Hazira unit

898. SHRI PARSHOTTAM KHODABHAI RUPALA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

- whether the Ministry is aware that in ONGC's Hazira unit and other units located in Gujarat, many qualified doctors, pharmacists and other allied workers are working on term basis contract system;
- whether ONGC intends to regularize them after certain duration in lower grade so that it will be beneficial for ONGC as ONGC will get trained and qualified manpower; and
- if so, by when ONGC would announce policy on this matter?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MURLI DEORA): (a) to (c) There is no plan to regularize the services of Doctors and Paramedics presently working on contract basis in Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC), Hazira Plant. However, as and when vacancies for regular appointment arises, those engaged on contract basis and fulfilling the eligibility criteria on application shall be subjected to a normal recruitment procedure for final selection in ONGC.

Audit findings on expenditure on KG Basin-D6 gas field

899. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

- whether the Ministry has received a part of its audit finding on the expenditure for its comments that Reliance Industries involved in developing the Krishna Godavari (KG) Basin D6 gas field which was at the centre of an inflated billing controversy;