

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) Government are constantly monitoring and keeping under careful review the prices of all sensitive petroleum products.

Considering India's high dependence on oil imports, the increase in international prices does impact on the domestic consumer prices of petroleum products. However, steps have been taken to contain the impact of such increases in the domestic consumer prices of four major products, viz., PDS kerosene, domestic LPG, diesel and petrol. The Government had reduced excise duties and customs duties on petrol, diesel, PDS kerosene and Domestic LPG.

PDS kerosene and domestic LPG are subsidized products. In addition to the Government subsidy, oil PSUs have been sharing the burden by not passing the full increase in international prices on to the domestic consumer prices of these products. Despite the steep increase in international prices, the selling price of PDS kerosene has not been increased since 1.4.2002 and the RSP of domestic LPG was increased by only Rs. 20/cylinder each, effective 16.6.2004 and 5.11.2004 respectively. The oil PSUs have suffered under-recoveries of around Rs. 7,760 crore during the first half of 2004-05 on account of these two products.

In addition, oil PSUs have suffered under-recoveries during 2004-05 on account of non-revision in the domestic consumer prices of petrol and diesel in line with the international prices.

(c) and (d) Government are in constant dialogue with coalition partners in the UPA and outside supporters on issues relating to the prices of sensitive petroleum products.

Safety in ONGC

526. SHRI M.A.M. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether an ONGC helicopter crashed in the Arabian Sea on the 11th August, 2004;

(b) if so, the reasons for this crash and the number of people who lost their lives in this crash;

(c) whether Government have paid any compensation to the kiths and kins of the victims of this crash;

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the steps taken by Government to enhance safety in ONGC?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKARAIYAR): (a) to (e) No, Sir. It was not an ONGC helicopter which crashed on 11th August, 2004, but a MI-172 helicopter chartered by ONGC from MESCO Airlines which crashed into the Arabian Sea on 11 August 2003. 20 employees of ONGC, 3 employees of contractors, and 4 crew members died in the accident. The details of compensation given to next of the kin of victims are given in the enclosed Statement (See below).

As regards the airworthiness and safety aspects, as also the cause (s) of the accident, these are statutory functions of the Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) under the Aircraft Act and Rules framed thereunder. Accordingly an inquiry was ordered by DGCA on 11.8.2003 to find out the cause(s) of the accident. DGCA's report has been received and accepted by the Government. Statutory investigation has concluded that the accident occurred due to loss of directional control and lift immediately after takeoff leading to the helicopter hitting the sea water and crashing into the sea. The combined effect of mal-adjusted rudder controls and improper technique used for takeoff from the helideck in the prevailing wind conditions led to the loss of directional control and lift after takeoff. Hasty actions by the crew to meet the callout by ONGC and the non-conforming helideck in respect of obstructions requirements were the contributing factors.

DGCA have stated that the recommendations for safe offshore operations as given in the said report are being taken up by them for implementation with ONGC so as to enhance the safety of helicopters engaged by ONGC.

Statement

Payments made to the Nominees of the Dependent of Deceased of ONGC who died in Crash of Helicopter on 11-08-03.

Sl. No.	Name of deceased employee Late S/Shri	Total Compensation payment made (in Rupees)
1.	Akshay Mathlas SE(D)	5,029,066
2.	T.K. Sarkar SE(E)	5,360,352
3.	A.K. Das Dy. SE (M)	4,532,367
4.	B. Sahay Dy. SE (E)	4,656,995
5.	Ajoy Sinha Dy. SE (M)	4,467,536
6.	V.K. Dabholkar JT (M)	3,195,981

Sl. No.	Name of deceased employee Late S/Shri	Total Compensation payment made (in Rupees)
7.	K.H. Pailarkar R/A-I	3,107,033
8.	S.R. Roy SC	4,837,300
9.	C.M. Naithani DSE (C)	5,554,499
10.	R.P. Biswas SE (D)	5,091,299
11.	D.V. Sawant JT (M)	3,013,907
12.	A.K. Singh SE (D)	4,806,868
13.	A.J. Mhatre AGI-(MM)	3,222,956
14.	H.B. Pokala R/A-II	3,087,412
15.	S.H. Dangle Topman	3,727,322
16.	S.D. Kodag DGM (M)	6,156,913
17.	R.M. Murthy AEE (D)	3,649,742
18.	D.J. Jani Dy. SE (M)	4,880,766
19.	S.K. Dey	2,002,810
20.	J.J. Vorkey	4,520,881

ONGC Videsh's investments

527. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether ONGC Videsh Ltd. is actively considering massive investment in oilfields in Caspian sea area and if so, the quantum of investment and crude output expected to yield therefrom;

(b) whether ONGC Videsh's earlier investments in Sakhalain oilfields in Russia and pipeline project in Sudan have started yielding dividends; and

(c) if not, how soon the Sakhalain (Russia) and Sudanese projects are expected to be on stream?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) To enhance energy security of the country, ONGC Videsh Limited (OVL) is pursuing acquisition of equity oil as well as oil