

Bihar:

During the year, 1997-98, ONGC acquired 122 GLK of 2D seismic data in the State. At present, ONGC has initiated Research and Development (R&D) work in CMB exploration and drilled 4 wells in Jharia (Parbatpur block).

Orissa:

In the years 1973—75, the erstwhile Oil and Natural Gas Commission had carried out seismic surveys in the Mahanadi basin of Orissa. During the period 1976—90, OIL carried out extensive surveys in the Mahanadi offshore and onshore areas and in North-Eastern Coast (NEC) offshore area. A total of 15 wells had been drilled in these areas. Contracts for five offshore blocks under the New Exploration Licensing Policy have been awarded for carrying out further exploration in Mahanadi and NEC areas.

North Eastern States:

ONGC is presently pursuing exploration mainly in the states of Assam, Tripura and Meghalaya. During the years 1997-2000, ONGC has acquired 2053 GLK of 2D and 5038 GLK of 3D seismic data and drilled 59 exploratory wells. It plans to acquire 2235 GLK of 2D and 4350 GLK of 3D seismic data and drill 79 exploratory wells during 2000—2002;

OIL has acquired 3944 Standard Line Kilometre (SLKM) of 2D, and 5000 Square Kilometre (SQKM) of 3D seismic data and has achieved approximately 118.5 Thousand Metre of exploratory drilling in Assam and Arunachal Pradesh during the years 1997—2000. OIL has plans to acquire 1400 SLKM & 1000 GLK of 2D seismic data and 350 SQKM of 3D seismic data, and to drill approximately 55 Thousand Metre of exploratory drilling in these states during 2000-01.

As regard the private companies, four blocks in North-Eastern States were contracted to private companies during 7th and 8th Round of exploration bidding. In the first round of New Exploration Licensing Policy, one exploration block in Arunachal Pradesh has been awarded to consortium of Geoenpro, Geopetrol and Petro-India.

Pending applications for LPG Agencies in Bihar

†871. SHRIMATI KUM KUM RAI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of applications pending, so far, out of the total applications for LPG agencies in Bihar;

(Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.)

(b) by when the pending applications would be cleared; and

(c) the steps being taken or proposed to be taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI E. PONNUSWAMY): (a) to (c) At present 190 LPG distributorships are pending for selection of distributors through interviews by the Dealer Selection Boards (DSBs) in Bihar. 57 DSBs have been set up, which include 7 for Bihar, for early selection of dealers/distributors. Selection is made in a phased manner, and it may not be possible at this stage to indicate the exact time frame for completion of selection for the pending locations.

Review of Prices of Petroleum Products

872. SHRI BACHANI LEKHRAJ: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are considering to review the price of the petroleum products;

(b) if so, whether Government have taken any steps in this regard, so far;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, by when the steps are likely to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI E. PONNUSWAMY): (a) to (d) International as well as domestic prices of petroleum products is monitored and reviewed regularly.

Government, in November, 1997, decided to dismantle the Administered Pricing Mechanism in a phased manner. The said decision, *inter alia*, includes the following:

- (i) That subsidy on kerosene for public distribution would be brought down to 33.33% of the import parity price by the year 2001-02.
- (ii) That subsidy on domestic LPG would be brought down to 15% of import parity price during the year 2000-01.
- (iii) That price of diesel would continue to be fixed on the principle of import parity as per Cabinet decision of 01.09.1997.

Review of petroleum prices is a continuous process.