

**Protest against hydrocarbon exploration
at Pudukkottai, Tamil Nadu**

2367. SHRI T. K. RANGARAJAN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) when was the project for exploration of hydrocarbons started in Pudukkottai district in Tamil Nadu;

(b) whether there were strong protests by the villagers of Neduvasal against the same;

(c) whether Government has taken the consent of the State Government before the exploration;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) whether Government took the consent of the people living in Neduvasal and whether the people were appraised of the project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DHARMENDRA PRADHAN): (a) and (b) The Government has approved Discovered Small Field (DSF) Policy for monetisation of 69 discovered small fields of Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) and Oil India Limited (OIL), which had not been put into production by these companies. Under the Policy Government has recently approved award of 31 contract areas including Neduvasal, Tamil Nadu contract area to the successful bidders under DSF bid round 2016 for development of the field. Some local people/organizations, have submitted representations, and also filed two petitions in National Green Tribunal (NGT), Southern Zone, Chennai objecting to the award of some discovered small fields expressing apprehension regarding possible environmental impact.

(c) to (e) For starting any petroleum activity in an awarded field under the DSF Bidding Round, 2016, the operator of the fields has to obtain or get the requisite Mining Lease transferred from ONGC/OIL as the case may be through the respective State Government. After the grant/transfer of lease, to start any actual operations the operator will have to get requisite environmental clearances from State Government/Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change by following the prescribed process, which may involve public hearing also. The awarded projects will be taken up for production after following the requisite process including obtaining environmental clearances. ONGC in collaboration with local administration is disseminating information through various local media to allay the apprehensions of people.