Petrochemicals production hub in Gujarat

1207. SHRI C. M. RAMESH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a petrochemicals production hub will be set up in Gujarat under a joint venture, if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether the designated site has been identified and a feasibility study has been carried out before a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed, if not, by when it will be completed, the details thereof; and

(c) how it is going to benefit the State of Gujarat and the country in particular in respect of chemicals production, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DHARMENDRA PRADHAN): (a) Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals has informed that the Government of India has approved setting up of Petrochemical Chemical and Petrochemical Investment Region (PCPIR) at Dahej, Gujarat. Government of Gujarat has declared Gujarat PCPIR under the provisions of Gujarat Special Investment Regions Act, 2009.

(b) ONGC Petro additions Ltd. (OPaL) has set up a Mega petrochemical complex at Dahej SEZ.

(c) This facilitates domestic and foreign investments, availability of feedstock to downstream industries and multiplier effect in employment.

Exploration of shale reserve

1208. SHRI SANJAY SINGH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government is considering changes in the definition of petroleum to let oil and gas exploration firms explore shale reserves in the country;

(b) if so, what methods of the extraction are going to be allowed and which companies, whether public or private would be eligible to undertake exploration; and

(c) what safeguards would be taken to ensure that fresh water does not get wasted in the process of hydraulic fracturing?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DHARMENDRA PRADHAN): (a) to (c) Government has amended the definition of 'Petroleum' under clause (k) of Rule 3 of the Petroleum and Natural Gas Rules, 1959 and notified the same on 24.07.2018 to enable issuance of License/Lease for exploration/extraction/exploitation of unconventional hydrocarbons. Generally, methods of extraction of shale gas or oil are horizontal drilling and multi-stage hydraulic fracturing. Any Exploration & Production (E&P) company, public or private, can undertake exploration of shale gas/oil as per the contractual terms and conditions. All contractors/operators are under legal obligation to obtain prior written clearance/approval of the concerned environmental authority before carrying out activities for exploration/exploitation of oil and gas. They are required to comply with various statutes such as the Environmental (Protection) Act, 1986/Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980/Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981 and Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 etc. while undertaking activities for exploration/exploitation of oil and gas.

Capacity expansion of Numaligarh refinery, Assam

1209. SHRIMATI WANSUK SYIEM: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has cleared the way for the expansion of capacity at Numaligarh refinery, Assam by 6 million tonnes to bridge the demand gap for petroleum products in the region;

(b) whether plans are also on the anvil to raise the capacity of LPG bottling facility at the Bongaigaon refinery in Assam aimed at increasing the LPG availability in the region by over 4 times the present capacity; and

(c) whether laying of new crude pipeline from Paradip to Numaligarh will facilitate further capacity additions for petro products for refineries in the region?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DHARMENDRA PRADHAN): (a) Government has approved the project to expand capacity of Numaligarh Refinery from 3 to 9 MMTPA along with laying of a crude oil pipeline from Paradip to Numaligarh.

(b) The Bottling capacity of Bongaigaon LPG Bottling plant has been augmented from 30 TMTPA to 60 TMTPA w.e.f. 02.07.2018 by operation of plant from single shift to two shift operations.