

(d) Exploratory efforts for hydrocarbons in any area, including Tripura, are targeted both for oil and gas. However, Tripura and the adjoining areas of Bangladesh are gas prone, as proven from exploration results so far.

Agreement with Iraq in Oil Exploration

715. SHRI HARENDRA SINGH MALIK: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Iraq has asked India for assistance and know-how for setting up a major oil refinery and also for oil exploration;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the present status of its consideration?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) to (c) During the 15th Session of the Joint Commission for Economic and Technical Cooperation of India and Iraq, held in Baghdad of 6th & 7th July, 2002, India agreed to consider the Iraq's proposal for setting up and investing in a new grass root refinery of 1,50,000 barrels per day (about 7.5 million metric tonnes per annum) capacity in Mosul area of Iraq.

As far as oil exploration activities are concerned, ONGC-Videsh Limited, a 100% subsidiary of Oil & Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC), has signed an exploration and development contract with Oil Exploration Company of the Ministry of Oil, Iraq on 28.11.2000 for the exploration block-8 in the western desert of Iraq.

Investments in Oil Sector in Kazakhstan

716. SHRI PRASANTA CHATTERJEE: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India propose to make major investments in the oil and gas sector in Kazakhstan;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether major investments are to be made in four identified Caspian Sea oilfields in Kazakhstan; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) to (d) ONGC-

Videsh Ltd. (OVL), a 100% subsidiary of Oil & Natural Gas Corporation Ltd. (ONGC), is actively persuing opportunities in equity oil and gas abroad in various countries, including Kazakhstan.

LNG terminal at Kochi

717. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any proposal to set up LNG terminal project in Kochi, Kerala;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the above proposal is approved by the competent authority; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Petronet LNG Limited, a Joint Venture of four oil PSUs namely Gas Authority of India Ltd., Oil and Natural Gas Corporation, Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd., and Indian Oil Corporation Ltd. are setting up 2.5 million metric tonnes per annum (MMTPA) capacity Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) terminal at Kochi in Kerala. Most of the pre-project activities, including pre-qualification of Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) bidders for lumpsum turnkey contract have been completed and statutory clearances, except environment clearance, have been obtained.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Exploration of CBM in West Bengal

718. SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the status of Coal Bed Methane (CBM) gas exploration in West Bengal in both public and private sector; and

(b) the expected time by which CBM would be available for commercial utilisation from the above on-going explorations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) Systematic evaluation Coal Bed Methane (CBM) began in Durgapur depression in the