

first question relates to the Ministry of Agriculture, which is dealing with it. As far as the second question is concerned, may be he is referring to 1989 policy, which has not been operationalised.

**SHRI LOKANATH CHOUDHURY:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to know whether any area has been specified for the chartered vessels and if so how many chartered vessels are operating in this country. Also I want to know whether by allowing the chartered vessels they are disturbing the areas or not and whether any objection has come to the Government from the areas where our vessels are fishing.

Secondly, I would like to know whether in the deep sea still there is some potential of fishing which is not so far taken into account either by the Government or by the chartered companies or by joint ventures or by our private sector.

**SHRI GIRIDHAR GOMANGO:** Though this question is not related to the main question, still the question is being asked again. The small fishermen are sometimes raising the objection saying that the chartered ships are creating problems - this type of things we are co-ordinating with the Ministry of Agriculture. Then, about the other things which are there, by taking all precautionary measures (*Interruptions*). We have allowed the chartering... (*Interruptions*). We have framed the policy and the joint ventures which have been approved - all these problems will be overcome because only the Indian vessels will come under the joint venture policy. So, the problem will be overcome. More and more joint venture projects are encouraged by the Government, in order to overcome all these problems which are arising. If we undertake these joint ventures, the problems will be over.

#### **Demands of LPG Dealers**

\*342. **SHRI M. KRISHNASWAMY:**  
**SHRI M. V. CHANDRA-**  
**SHEKARA MURTHY:**

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND

NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the LPG dealers all over the country have threatened to stop home delivery of gas cylinders after December, 25, 1992;

(b) if so, the details of their demands; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to resolve the dispute?

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI S. KRISHAN KUMAR):** (a) to (c). A section of LPG Distributors under the name "All India LPG Distributors' Federation" have given notice demanding an increase in the Distributors' Commission, failing which they would resort to closing the distribution from December 22 to 24, 1992 and thereafter stop home-delivery of cylinders w.e.f. December 25, 1992. Their demands were discussed in the Ministry in a meeting with them and are under consideration of Government.

**SHRI KRISHANSWAMY:** Sir, the Government says that it is under consideration. But the distributors are going to stop the home delivery after 22nd December. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Government is going to take a decision before 22nd December.

**SHRI S. KRISHAN KUMAR:** We have already stated that the demands of this Federation are under the consideration of the Government. There are 13 demands. We shall try our best to see that there is no disruption in LPG supply to consumers.

**MR. SPEAKER.** Mr. Krishnaswamy, do you want to put the second supplementary?

**SHRI M. KRISHANSWAMY:** The details are not here. We never expected that the Question Hour would be there today. (*Interruptions*). I would like to know the details of the demands from the hon. Minister.

SHRI S. KRISHAN KUMAR: The LPG Federation have raised 13 demands. They mainly relate to the Distributors' commission, ceiling limits, stopping penal recovery, regularisation of unauthorised connections etc. Some of these demands are not acceptable. There is some merit in some of the demands. We are analysing the various elements included costs which go into the distribution system.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: Probably, there has been no briefing today.

SHRI S. KRISHAN KUMAR: I have been briefed quite properly. I am quite ready, always ready. The demand that the MRT P Act should not apply to LPG distributors and some of the other demands are unacceptable. Such things cannot be accepted by us. So, it is these very demands which are under consideration... (*Interruptions*) and a proper decision will be taken by the Government in time.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS: Sir, it may be true that the distributors have very many problems but the consumers are very much astonished to see that though it is very difficult to get a gas connection, if you pay Rs. 5,000 or Rs. 6,000, any number of gas connections can be obtained from many agencies. Now the M.Ps. are finding it very difficult because we have just forty-eight connections and thousands of people come to us for connections. Leave alone that, what I am trying to suggest and ask is whether the arms of the Government are strong enough to catch hold of the distributors who are giving connections to people by getting money from them and doing lot of corruption in this field.

SHRI S. KRISHAN KUMAR: Sir, as per rules, the distributors cannot give any out-of-turn connection. They have to go strictly by the rules, by the waiting list. Only the hon. Members of Parliament have the privilege to recommend out-of-turn connections. They have a quota and we follow that. Even the officers individually of the oil companies do not have this privilege. It is quite possible that some of the distributors may be

committing irregularities. We have very strict guidelines. We have a system of inspections and punitive action. If the hon. Member points out any specific instance, we will be only too happy to take the strictest possible action.

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE: Sir, we have already deviated from the principal question. But I would like to come back to the principal question. Today's newspapers have come out clearly that these distributors from 22nd onwards are going on three days strike and after 24th they will stop the whole delivery. That means actually from 22nd it will be on unless it is settled. The hon. Minister says that all the demands cannot be accepted. So, I would like to know what alternative arrangements the Government is in a position to make so that we can get the LPG supply. As it is, the situation is quite complicated and it will be further complicated if you do not do that.

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND): Mr. Speaker, Sir, the issue raised by the hon. Member is really deserving the consideration not only by the parliament but also by the Government. The distributors do have their problems. We do not say that they do not have their problems, they do have their problems... (*Interruptions*).

SHRI ANIL BASU: How are you going to resolve them?

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: That is what I am saying. On the other hand, earlier the hon. Member from this side raised the problems of the consumers. In view of the limited product availability, we are attending to the problems of the distribution. The Government is seized of the matter. I had a meeting with the representatives of this Federation a couple of weeks ago and I could feel that they were convinced about the honest intention of the Government for attending to their problems. I do not think such a situation will arise as is said by the hon. Member.

SHRI ANIL BASU: What is the

contingent plan? You tell us about the contingent plan. If it happens, then get your Minister prepared with the contingent plan.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: We are attending to this problem. I can only assure the House that all efforts will be made to see that such a problem does not arise.

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, while the honest distributors whose number may be very small - suffer from inadequacy of commission, you cannot deny the fact that the unscrupulous ones amongst them thrive in this environment of scarcity. I suppose the Government's policy itself has led to the creation of monopoly in this trade. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he would consider giving gas agencies to more people, liberalise the system and ensure that people can go to the shop and get the cylinder. One would not really mind going to the shop to get a cylinder provided he is assured of the delivery when the need arises. I would like to know from the hon. Minister what steps would be taken in this direction.

SHRI S. KRISHAN KUMAR: Sir, it is not as if the L.P.G. is in abundant supply. It is a scarce commodity. We have 18.5 million consumers and 8.5 million are on the waiting list. We are trying to step up production of L.P.G. in our refineries and our fractionators and we are also trying to import more L.P.G. But we are not able to do so because of infrastructural constraints in the ports, apart from the scarcity of foreign exchange. Therefore, there is a waiting list. It is not a situation in which it is a buyer's market in which people can go to the shop and purchase cylinders.

Secondly, we have the system of agencies and these agencies have to be viable. You cannot give agencies and start increasing the number of agencies *ad infinitum*. Then the existing agencies will not be able to function. Our policy is that the non-viable distributors are progressively given additional business so that they are viable. That is why we have fixed a ceiling limit on the number of connections per agency. This

is a situation where the supply is short. We hope to correct situation through a very intensive development programme in the next three years. My hon. senior colleague has already announced that we want to decimate this waiting list in the next three years. Till that situation arises, we have to go by this agency system and a regime of control.

SHRI CHANDRAJEET YADAV: Sir, the main question relates to the L.P.G. dealers who have given a notice for the strike if the Government does not take a decision before 22nd of this month. This is another matter that how to improve the entire system and make the delivery better and also see that the consumers may not suffer. That is altogether a separate question.

The hon. Minister said that he met the representatives of the L.P.G. dealers a few weeks before. But till today no decision has been taken. Now there are only 3 or 4 days left. I want to know whether the Government will give a categorical answer that before 22nd of this month they will take a decision so that this situation may not arise where the consumers all over the country suffer. If necessary, will the hon. Minister meet them again and try to find a settlement to this issue?

SHRI S. KRISHAN KUMAR: Sir, I have already answered. (*Interruptions*) I have already said that the Government shall take all steps which are necessary to prevent a breakdown in the distribution system. I may also add that just because the federation has given a time limit and said that they are going on strike, Government cannot be forced to take - shall I say - an improper decision of giving too much of commission and all that. Government has to keep the public interest in view before taking a decision. We shall take appropriate decision. We are considering the matter. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI CHANDRAJEET YADAV: Sir, the hon. Minister is evading the reply to the question. Shri Shankaranand said that the distributors have a genuine ground and the Government is also considering it with

sympathy. Once you admit that they have got their problems, you have to give a categorical answer. It is not enough to show sympathy with them but you have to save the entire consumers who will be suffering from the situation. This is what we wanted. The hon. Minister must take a decision. (Interruptions)

**SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE:** We want a commitment that the demands should be finalised before that date.

**SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA:** What are the steps you are taking to tackle the situation? You must tell the House about them. (Interruptions)

**SHRI A. CHARLES:** What are the main demands of the distributors? They are also to be told. (Interruptions)

**SHRI NITISH KUMAR:** You form a negotiating Committee under the chairmanship of Shri Basudeb Acharia. Are you going to form the Committee?

**SHRI B. SHANKARANAND:** It is a suggestion.

Sir, I must tell the House that the distributors have given a demand charter—they have 13 demands, not only the commission. We must know that.

**SHRI CHANDRA JEET YADAV:** That is the major demand.

**SHRI B. SHANKARANAND:** Just a minute. What are these demands? The demands are that the distributors want remunerative commission, they want us to revise the ceiling limit, they want us to stop penal recovery on the alleged spurious distribution of cylinders, they want us to increase the release of new connections, they want us to introduce "No Fault Liability Insurance Policy", they want us to introduce measures for conservation of LPG and also regularise unauthorised connections. I must ask whether the House agrees to all this - regularise unauthorised connections. (Interruptions).

Now, they want us to scrap the MRTTP directive. They want us to declare Gas stove as integral part of installation. There are many things which we, the Government, cannot agree. Let us understand what are their demands. It is very easy to say that let there be demands. But I do not think the House will agree to all their demands.

**SHRI CHANDRA JEET YADAV:** Nobody is agreeing. You said that there are demands. That is why I have asked.

**SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA:** In order to tackle the situation what are the steps you are going to take, you tell the House. We want to know that. (Interruptions)

**SHRI B. SHANKARANAND:** First try to learn how to listen to others. May I request the hon. Member there on that side to also listen?

So, there are various demands which I do not think the House will agree to admit. I also said, I had a very long discussion with these people and I did convince that they agree to our approach in solving their demands and I do not think such a situation will arise.

**SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE:** Whether the matter is settled or not is a subjective feeling. I think it was settled. What is all this?

**SHRI B. SHANKARANAND:** We are approaching the problem.

**SHRI SHARAD DIGHE:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister specifically what is the increase they are demanding as far as the commission is concerned and what burden it will put either on the Government or are you going to pass it on to the consumers? (Interruptions).

**SHRI ANIL BASU:** Sir, we want an assurance. He should assure this House that the consumers are covered. (Interruptions).

SHRIB. SHANKARANAND: I am happy that a suggestion has come from the senior Member on this side that this burden of the distributors should be passed on to the consumers.

SHRI SHARAD DIGHE: Are you going to put it on the consumer or on the Government?

AN HON. MEMBER: That is what he is suggesting.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: Sir, this is a good suggestion from the point of view of distributors. That is what they want. The distributors want that the consumers should pay for their services.

[Translation]

SHRI VIJOY KUMAR YADAV: Mr. Speaker, Sir, of course the LPG distributors have highlighted their problems as pointed out by the hon. Minister just now. One of their demands is the regularisation of all the unauthorised connections. I think that the genuine consumers are also facing a lot of difficulties in obtaining the refills of LPG and often have to pay between 1.5 to 2 times the prescribed charges for the refills of LPG. No doubt the problems of the distributors are genuine and the Government has stated that it is considering the matter. But as far as the consumers are concerned, they are worried about the time limit given by the distributors, so it is necessary to resolve the problem so that the consumers may not feel any sort of harassment.

MR. SPEAKER: What is your question? You come to it straightway.

SHRI VIJOY KUMAR YADAV: Sir, even the MPs are not supplied the refills of LPG in time. Recently I had to wait for 14 days for the refill of LPG. When I try to contact on telephone the officers posted in the Parliament, they are simply not available on the line. I would like to make a submission to the hon. Minister that some arrangements should be made so that black marketing.....

MR. SPEAKER: You straightway come to the question instead of telling the background.

SHRI VIJOY KUMAR YADAV: I am coming to that. Will the hon. Minister make the arrangements so that all the dealers....(Interruptions)... Mr. hon. Minister please look into it whether you reply in the affirmative or not. I would like to submit that all the genuine consumers are facing difficulties in obtaining the refills...

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Yadav, you come to the question.

SHRI VIJOY KUMAR YADAV: I would like to seek an assurance that the consumers have not to pay more than the prescribed charges for the refills and also get the delivery in time?

MR. SPEAKER: He wants an assurance whether some arrangements are being made?

[English]

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: Sir, I can only say that this is a suggestion for us to consider.

[Translation]

SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, dealers are not going to supply LPG after the 25th December. Does the Government propose to take any action to cancel the dealership of those who defy its instruction on so that the problems of the consumers could be solved?

[English]

SHRI S. KRISHNAN KUMAR: Sir, he is repeating the same question which was asked earlier. We will take all the measures which are at our command to ensure that LPG supply is not disrupted.

SHRI SRIKANTA JENA: Sir, I would only like to know from the hon. Minister as to what is the total quantum of subsidy which

is now available per cylinder. If the demands of the distributors are met by the Government, then the only thing that is to be done is to enhance the subsidy which the Government is now providing for LPG. But, in my view it should not be done. The subsidy which is being given now is around Rs. 70/- . So, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he is going to enhance the subsidy or cut down the subsidy.

SHRI S. KRISHAN KUMAR: Sir, in all priced about Rs. 150/- or so per cylinder on an average, the subsidy element is about Rs. 70/- and the Government is subsidising to the tune about Rs. 1000/- crores in one year as a purpose subsidy in the supply of LPG. Now, there is no scope for immediately increasing the price of LPG and therefore, any additional commission that we have to pay to the LPG distributors has to be borne by the Government. They have asked for certain increase in the commission. We are trying to limit it to a reasonable extent. The Committee which has gone into it has suggested a particular increase. We have to negotiate and see that they do not get a commission more than they are entitled to in economic terms. We also have to see that the subsidy elements does not unduly increase and Government is not put to unnecessary financial pressure.

#### Issue of Identity Cards

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\*343. SHRI R. SURENDER REDDY:  
SHRI D. VENKATESWARA  
RAO:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre has submitted a proposal to the Union Government for preparation of identity cards through computerised laser-based technology to be distributed to citizens residing in border areas of the country.

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the proposal has been

approved by the Union Government; and

(d) the time by which it is likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI M.M. JACOB): (a) to (d). A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

#### STATEMENT

To meet the requirement of security and unambiguous identification of the card holder, the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), Bombay has developed Computerised Laser Image Printing System. With this technology, details of the card holder and his photograph are digitalized and imprinted directly on the Identity Card. Each card is given a distinct computer identity based on a scientifically evolved phonetic numbering system which was also developed by BARC. This technology is time efficient and secure cards against forgery.

Based on this technology and with the approval of BARC, the Electronics Corporation of India Ltd. (ECIL) has started manufacturing and supplying the Computerised Laser Identity Card Printing (CLIP) System. State Governments of Rajasthan, Punjab, Assam Tripura and Mizoram have initiated steps for procurement of CLIP System from ECIL.

This scheme for issue of Identity Cards is aimed at covering infiltration prone border areas in phases.

SHRI R. SURENDER REDDY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Minister has stated that the State Government of Rajasthan Punjab, Assam, Tripura and Mizoram have initiated steps to issue Identity Cards. Sir, we all know that there is a large scale infiltration from Bangladesh into our Eastern border and from Sri Lanka into our Southern border and from Pakistan into Punjab and Kashmir.

Is the Central Government willing to