

(a) whether a large quantity of Oil and Gas have been found in Rajasthan during exploration by Oil India Ltd. and Oil and Natural Gas Commission.

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government have offered some blocks/areas for exploration/development under joint venture;

(d) if so, the details thereof indicating the parties to whom the offer has been extended and the terms and conditions agree to;

(e) the names of the companies whose proposals for pre-exploration survey for Mineral Oil and Natural Gas are pending with the Government; and

(f) if so, the time by which these proposals are likely to be cleared ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR) : (a) and (b) ONGC has found substantial quantity of gas in six prospects namely Manhera Tibba, Ghotaru, Khartar, Bakhri Tibba, Bankia and Sadewala structures. Similarly, OIL has discovered commercial quantity of gas in three prospects namely Dandewala, Tanot & Bagitibba and observed minor indications of presence of gas in other prospects namely Ramgarh, Jalalwala and Gamnewala in Jaisalmer Basin. OIL have also established presence of heavy oil/Bitumen in Bikaner-Nagpur basin.

(c) and (d) Production Sharing contracts have already been signed for the block RJ-ON-90/1 between Government of India, ONGC and Shell India Production Development B.V., and for blocks RJ-ON-90/4 and RJ-ON-90/5 between Government of India, OIL and Essar Oil Ltd. Salient terms and conditions of the contracts are as under :-

The contracts of exploration blocks are Production Sharing Contracts with a contract period in case of crude oil and associated gas, of upto 25 years. Companies are exempted from payment of bonuses and statutory levies. The Government of India would have the first right of refusal in respect of the oil produced under these contracts, with companies being paid for their share of oil at international prices. Provision for participation by ONGC/OIL in the venture at the exploration and/or the development stage has been made and ONGC/OIL can take a participating interest of 30% to 40% in the venture. Provisions have also been made for the development of commercially exploitable natural gas resources.

(e) and (f) There is no such proposal pending with the Government.

Fire in Vishakhapatnam Refinery

1062. SHRI D.S. AHIRE :

SHRI G. GANGA REDDY :

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE :

SHRI MANIKRAO HODLYA GAVIT :

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether a devastating fire broke out in the refinery of Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd., situated at Visakhapatnam in September, 1997;

(b) if so, the main causes of the fire;

(c) the number of persons killed/injured therein;

(d) whether any inquiry has been conducted in this regard;

(e) if so, the outcome thereof and the action taken against the persons found guilty;

(f) the estimated loss suffered by the refinery as a result thereof;

(g) the effective steps taken by the Government to stop such incidents in future; and

(h) the amount of compensation and other facilities provided so far to the affected families ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR) : (a) to (h) A major fire accident occurred in HPCL, Vizag Refinery/Marketing terminal on 14th September, 1997 resulting in the death of 60 persons, including 14 of HPCL, injuries to 10 besides financial loss of about Rs. 80 crores.

2. The ex-gratia payment has been made by the HPCL, in coordination with District Administration as under :

(i) Ex-gratia payment per deceased :	Rs. 2 lakhs
(ii) Immediate expenses per deceased :	Rs. 10,000/-
(iii) Injured :	Rs. 10,000/-
(iv) Seriously injured :	Rs. 25,000/-

The State Government also made ex-gratia payment of Rs. 50,000/- to the dependents of the deceased. The above payments were in addition to the other payments admissible under the relevant Act and the rules of the Corporation.

3. The Government had set up a Commission of Inquiry on 11.10.1997 under the Commissions of Inquiry Act 1952 to investigate into the above fire accident etc. The Commission was to submit its report within a period of 3 months which period was extended by 2 months. But despite extensions, the Commission could not complete its work and had been allowed to cease to function from March 1998. A fresh Commission of Inquiry is being set up to complete the investigations.

4. Further action will depend upon the report of the Inquiry Commission.

[Translation]

Inclusion of Rajbhar Caste in the List of Scheduled Castes

1063. SHRI HARI KEWAL PRASAD : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government of Uttar Pradesh has forwarded a proposal to Union Government for inclusion of 'Rajbhar' caste in the list of Scheduled Castes;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Proposal from the Government of Uttar Pradesh has been received for inclusion of Rajbhar community in the list of Scheduled Castes.

(c) The proposal is being considered alongwith all such cases in the context of the proposed comprehensive revision of the list of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

[English]

World Bank Assistance for Opening of Hospitals/Dispensaries

1064. SHRI ASHOK NAMDEORAO MOHOL :
SHRI MADHAV RAO PATIL :

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether some hospitals/dispensaries have been opened in Maharashtra with the World Bank assistance during the Eighth Five Year Plan;

(b) if so, the details thereof, location-wise;

(c) whether the Government have received any request from the State Government to open some more hospitals/dispensaries with World Bank assistance in Maharashtra;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the action taken by the Government in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI DALIT EZHILMALAI) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) to (e) A project proposal received from the Government of Maharashtra under the State Health System Development Project has been posed to the World Bank for assistance. Such State Projects are formulated through detailed discussions with the World Bank. Past experience shows that they take 12 to 24 months to fructify, depending on the time taken on the Design and Formulation of the Project by the State. The State Authorities are kept fully involved in the discussions with the Representatives of the World Bank, at each stage. Hence, it is not possible to comment on the final dimension of the Project at this juncture.

[Translation]

Blackmarketing of Food-Items

1065. SHRI RAVINDRA KUMAR PANDEY : Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have taken any steps to check the blackmarketing of food items;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the number of cases of blackmarketing reported in the country during each of the last three years and upto May, 1998, State wise;

(d) the number of persons punished and the number of cases lying pending so far ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI SATYA PAL SINGH YADAV) : (a) and (b) The Prevention of Blackmarketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act, 1980 (P.B. Act) is in force which provides for detention in certain cases for the purpose of prevention of blackmarketing in respect of all essential commodities including food items.