

technical opinion favours deep drilling for sustained explorations; and

(c) if so, the reasons for not carrying out sustained operations?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA):

(a) to (c). Geological and Geophysical surveys including detailed seismic surveys have been carried out in on-shore Cauvery Basin for more than 15 years now. 28 wells have so far been drilled but no commercial accumulation of Hydro-Carbons has been discovered. Though presently, there is no immediate programme for drilling in Cauvery On-shore, more sophisticated seismic surveys in the area are proposed to be undertaken in the current year's field season. Further drilling there would depend on the results of these surveys. In the Offshore Cauvery Basin, an exploratory well is currently under drilling in the Gulf of Mannar.

Shifting of Southern Region Office of O. & N.G.C.

347. SHRI A. BALA PAJANOR: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state the reasons for shifting of the office of the Southern Region of O. & N.G.C. from Karaikal beyond Hyderabad?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA): The Oil and Natural Gas Commission has no Southern Region but only a Project named Cauvery Project with Headquarters at Madras, and a base office at Karaikal for drilling operations at Karaikal. Both the Madras and Karaikal offices are still functioning. In order to undertake drilling operations in Krishna Godavari Basin of Andhra Pradesh, a base office at Rajamundri is proposed to be opened. The Project office at Madras will continue for the present, having

jurisdiction over both the Karaikal base office and Rajamundri base office.

Role of Multi-national Drug Companies

348. SHRI A. BALA PAJANOR: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) the role of the multi-national drug companies in the production and distribution of medical drugs in the country;

(b) whether Government have examined that the prices of drugs as charged by these firms are reasonable and within the reach of the common people; and

(c) if not, the concrete steps proposed to be taken against exploitation of a vital human need?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA): (a) Multi-national drug companies with foreign equity exceeding 40 per cent in India produce both bulk drugs and formulations and their contribution is about 28 per cent in the production of bulk drugs and 55 per cent in the production of formulations. Like other companies, Multi-National drug companies also distribute the medicines produced by them through the normal trade outlets.

(b) and (c). The prices of drugs are statutorily controlled under the provisions of Drug (Prices Control) Order, 1970. The Order provides for a mechanism for fixation of prices. Small-scale units having turnover not exceeding Rs. 50 lakhs are exempt from the purview of the said Order. Prices once notified by the Government cannot be revised by the manufacturers without the prior approval of the Government. Through the operation of this Order, it has been possible to maintain the

prices of drugs by and large at reasonable levels.

The Committee on Drugs and Pharmaceuticals have made comprehensive recommendations on the rationalisation of prices of drugs and medicines. Government is expected to take decision on the recommendations of the Committee shortly.

Fertilizer Undertakings and their Production Capacity

349. SHRI A. BALA PAJANOR: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS: be pleased to state:

(a) the number of fertilizer undertakings and capacity of production of each;

(b) the number and capacity classified according to use of coal and oil in manufacturing process;

(c) the extent to which shifts in manufacturing process are envisaged in view of dwindling availability of oil at reasonable price; and

(d) salient features of any time bound plan in this regard?

The Minister of PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA): (a) A statement indicating the names of nitrogenous fertilizer manufacturing units presently in operation, their capacity and the feedstock used is laid on the Table of the House. [Placed in library. See No. LT-339/77].

(b) While there is at present no plant based on coal or fuel oil in operation, two plants based on coal and six plants based on fuel oil as feedstock are under various stages of construction.

(c) and (d). Presently a variety of feedstock like naphtha, lignite, coke, coke-oven gas, electricity and natural gas are being used for the production of nitrogenous fertilizers. A majority of the operating units are, however, based on naphtha as feedstock. It is Government's policy to utilise to the maximum extent gas

that would be available from onshore and offshore sources. It is also Government's policy to permit only to the minimum extent petroleum products as the fertilizer feedstock. Additional plants using coal as feedstock will be considered only after experience is available of the operation of the two plants under construction.

Maruti Limited and its Sister-concerns

350. DR. VASANT KUMAR PANDIT: Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS: be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Company Law Board or any other Government Agency have enquired into the purchases of shares of Maruti Limited and its sister-concerns or loans given to it by (1) Non-nationalised Banks (2) Public Limited Companies; and

(b) if so, the findings thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION, SOCIAL WELFARE AND CULTURE (DR. PRATAP CHANDRA CHUNDER): (a) and (b). The Company Law Board has not ordered an enquiry under the Companies Act into the purchase of shares by non-nationalised Banks and public limited companies of Maruti Limited and its sister-concerns. It is, however, a fact that under section 372 of the Companies Act, public limited companies are required to obtain the approval of the Central Government in cases where any investment is made by them in the shares of other companies beyond the limits prescribed in the Section. So far the Central Government had been approached for such approval only by J. K. synthetics Limited for investment in shares of Maruti Limited, in which case the approval was granted.

O. & N.G.C. Agreement with a Company of France

351. DR. VASANT KUMAR PANDIT: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state: