

Crash Programme for Oil exploration to meet Shortage

5481. SHRI DHAMAKAR: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS be pleased to state:

(a) whether in view of acute shortage of oil and crude, Government have drawn up any crash programme for the exploration of oil not only on land but from one-shore and continental shelf-areas;

(b) if so, whether any seismic survey ships are proposed to be acquired to undertake independent geological survey in the Shelf-area and at what cost;

(c) when the seismic survey is likely to be completed and whether any foreign collaborators would also assist in the survey; and

(d) whether Government would go in for another custom-built drilling platform with a view to stepping up drilling operations in shelf areas and what would be the basis of the design for the platform and with whom the orders would be placed and when?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS (SHRI SHAHNAWAZ KHAN): (a) Yes, Sir. The crash programme envisage stepping up of production of crude oil from the present level of approximately 7 million tonnes per annum to 12 million tonnes per annum by 1978-79.

(b) Yes, Sir. The ONGC have placed orders for a fully equipped seismic survey ship at a cost of U.S. \$4.10 million approximately.

(c) Survey is a continuous process and completion is likely to take a number of years. At present negotiations are going on with some foreign Companies being allowed to explore for oil in certain continental shelf areas which have been thrown open for bidding. In case they are permit-

ted to take up the work, they are likely to conduct seismic surveys of their areas through their own agencies. The result of such surveys will be available to the ONGC.

(d) No decision in this regard has yet been taken.

Saving of Petroleum from Coal-based Fertilizer Plants

5482. SHRI TRIDIB CHAUDHURI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of coal-based fertiliser plants finally sanctioned, their location and estimated cost;

(b) the saving in petroleum, both in terms of quantity and foreign exchange thus secured; and

(c) the total petroleum requirements for naphtha-based fertiliser projects now in operation and in all fertiliser plants?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS (SHRI SHAHNAWAZ KHAN): (a) So far three coal-based fertilizer plants have been approved and are under implementation, one each at Talcher (Orissa), Ramagudam (A.P.) and Korba (M.P.). According to the present estimates, each of these projects is expected to cost about Rs. 118 crores.

(b) These three plants, had they been based on petroleum feedstock, would have required about 687,000 tonnes of petroleum products every year. At an import price of about \$80 per tonne of petroleum product, the foreign exchange outflow would have been about \$55 million per year for the combined capacity of the three projects.

(c) About 4.1 million tonnes of naphtha were required for the manufacture of fertilisers during the Fourth Plan; the total consumption during Fifth Plan is estimated at about 10.7 million tonnes.