

Non-availability of Kerosene Oil in Assam and Other Places

2050. SHRI NOORUL HUDA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS be pleased to state:

(a) whether he is aware of the non-availability and high prices of kerosene oil in Assam and many other parts of the country; and

(b) what steps Government are taking to meet the shortage and prevent black marketing in kerosene oil?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS (SHRI C. P. MAJHI):

(a) Because of the limited availability of foreign exchange and the steep increase in prices of petroleum products it has not been possible to meet the demand of kerosene oil in the country during the current year in full. Quotas allocated to State Governments have been cut to reduce consumption. It is likely that this may have given rise to shortages of kerosene oil in Assam and in some other parts of the country.

(b) From the current month cuts applied on State quotas have been reduced to increase availability.

The extent of cuts which was increased upto 30 per cent in some months has now been reduced to achieve an overall saving in consumption of about 10 per cent only. It is proposed to maintain supplies on this basis for the rest of the current year. The State Governments have already been advised to have an effective system of kerosene distribution, particularly in the rural areas, and to take suitable action against black marketing of kerosene oil.

Hindustan Lever Limited and M/s. Sharpedge Limited

2051. SHRI S. M. BANERJEE: Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Hindustan Lever Limited has a substantial equity holding in M/s. Sharpedge Limited, makers of Erasmic Blades;

(b) whether the Management of Hindustan Lever Limited is holding a dominant position on the Board of Directors of Messrs. Sharpedge Limited;

(c) whether the International Brand name Erasmic has enabled its makers to hold an undue advantage over its Indian competitors; and

(d) whether the raw material quota out of which the ultimate product Erasmic Blade is made has been issued in the name of the third party who has passed on its rights to M/s. Escorts Limited who in turn is depending upon Hindustan Lever Limited for manufacture and marketing of Erasmic Blades and whether any enquiry has been made in the matter?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI BEDABRATA BARUA): (a) As per Annual Return of M/s. Sharpedge Limited made upto 14th June, 1974, out of a total of 23,625 equity shares of Rs. 100 each fully paid up of the company, 11,217 equity shares, accounting for 47.5 per cent of total are held by M/s. Hindustan Lever Ltd.

(b) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

(c) and (d). This information is not available with the Department of Company Affairs.

Communications from a Member of Parliament Regarding Raising of Viscosity of Furnace Oil

2052. SHRI MADHU LIMAYE: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS be pleased to state:

(a) whether in his communication to the Ministers of Petroleum and Defence and in his speeches in Lok Sabha

a Socialist MP has repeatedly drawn the attention of Government to a telex sent to Madras Refinery by Shri C. Y. V. Rao, IOC, directing that viscosity of Furnace Fuel oil be raised to 100 c.s. and sulphur content to 3-7;

(b) whether approval of the Indian Standards Institution was obtained for this before sending out this telex;

(c) if no approval had been obtained, whether the said officer has been suspended for his lapse; and

(d) if not, the reasons for the leniency shown by Government towards this officer?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS (SHRI C. P. MAJHI):

(a) Yes, Sir. The Hon'ble member had reported that Shri C. Y. V. Rao, then Supply and Distribution Manager of IOC had in his telex message of 5th April, 1971, addressed to the Managing Director of Madras Refineries, indicated the acceptable furnace oil viscosity as 100 c.s. at 50° C and the sulphur content of 3.7 per cent maximum. The detailed position in this regard was also separately intimated to the Hon'ble Member.

(b) I.S.I. specifications already provide 3 grades of fuel oil of viscosity 80 c.s., 125 c.s. and 370 c.s. Discussions were, however, held earlier in the I.S.I. in which technical experts of IIP, IOC and Navy considered the possibility of increasing the viscosity of low viscosity grade furnace oil from 80 c.s. to 100 c.s. at 50 C. Some trial production of furnace oil upto this viscosity was also arranged at Madras as it enabled the refinery to produce a larger quantity of kerosene, diesel oils etc.

(c) and (d). Action to increase the viscosity of furnace oil was taken at that time in the overall national interest. There has been no reason to doubt the bonafides of those who ordered production of higher viscosity

furnace oil or attribute any ill motives to their action. The question of taking action against any officer does not therefore arise.

Enquiry into the Working of F.C.I., New Delhi

2053. SHRI S. N. MISRA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have since inquired into the working of Fertilizer Corporation of India Limited, New Delhi, during the last three years;

(b) if so, the nature of irregularities found by Government; and

(c) steps taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS (SHRI K. R. GANESH):

(a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c). Do not arise.

Seats Vacant in Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, Vidhan Sabhas and Vidhan Parishads

2054. PROF. NARAIN CHAND PARASHAR: Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of seats lying vacant in the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, Vidhan Sabhas and Vidhan Parishads in the various States of India, State-wise; and

(b) the likely dates on which the by-elections to the vacant seats are likely to be held in each case?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (DR. SAROJINI MAHISHI): (a) and (b). Three statements containing the required information are laid on the Table of the House. It will be difficult to indicate