

with earlier brands and conform to the stipulation regarding the total fatty matter content. Government is however keeping a watch in this regard. The production of Janata toilet soaps is now of the order of 900 tonnes per month.

Glut of bitumen in refineries

3856 SHRI VASANT SATHE Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS be pleased to state

(a) what are the reasons for the glut in bitumen, causing serious ullage problem and crisis in the refineries,

(b) whether there are proposals to convert the massive stocks of bitumen into furnace oil to ease the situation;

(c) what are the present export orders on hand, for this item and are there any prospects of securing further orders, and

(d) what is the present demand for internal consumption as compared to its production?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS (SHRI C P MAJHI):
(a) As a result of various economy measures there was a reduction in Bitumen sales by about 23.2 per cent in 1974 over 1973. This led to a marginal increase in the overall Bitumen inventories during the year. In some refineries increase in stocks created ullage problems which were overcome by reducing production.

(b) Whereas conversion into furnace oil of Bitumen already produced is, not normally possible, it is possible to reduce fresh production of Bitumen which leads to increase in the production of furnace oil.

(c) Export orders to the extent of 22,000 tonnes are already on hand. There is a possibility of export for another 2 lakh tonnes over a period of 2 years which is being pursued.

(d) During 1975, the demand for internal consumption is expected to be approximately 900,000 tonnes. Production will be regulated according to the actual offtakes for internal consumption and the actual materialisation of exports.

Plan to make available essential drugs at fixed prices

3857 SHRI VASANT SATHE
SHRI DHAMANKAR
SHRI K MALLANNA

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS be pleased to state:

(a) what effective steps are proposed to make available drugs to consumers at fixed prices so as to eliminate profiteering and hoarding at different levels, and

(b) whether Government propose to explore the possibility to attract fresh investment for manufacture of bulk drugs by introducing a system of different prices for the same bulk drugs produced by old and new units as well as small units by buying them through some Central agency and selling them to the formulation manufacturers at a uniform pooled price?

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

(a) The prices of drugs are statutorily controlled under the Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 1970, which, *inter alia*, provides that no retailer shall sell any formulation to a customer at a price exceeding the retail price of that formulation approved by the Central Government. The relevant provisions of the Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 1970 have been amended to provide that no retailer shall sell any formulation to a customer at a price exceeding the retail price of that formulation indicated