

One hundred districts have been earmarked and in these hundred districts, as I have already said, a special project has been started which is doing its work for quite some time now. Adopting more Districts for extending this programme, as the hon. Member has suggested, would be considered. The hon. Member is concerned about the causes of malaria and that malaria has become immune to the old drugs. We have to go in for new researches into this field. We will use the technology to contain this disease. But I am at a loss of words when he says that the Government started programmes after Independence and they are not being continued now. They have been continuing and they are there even now.

SHRI AJIT JOGI: Malaria has come back with a bang.

[*Translation*]

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, The figures put forth by the Government in respect of deaths are not correct, but the Government has accepted that people are killed. I would like to know from hon'ble Minister that whether any central team for conducting the survey has been sent by the Government in Bihar or not after the death of people so that Malaria could be eradicated by conducting survey in Bihar. If the survey team is sent there, what is its report and what steps Government has taken to implement the recommendation of the report.

[*English*]

SHRI DALIT EZHILMALAI: Sir, I do not dispute with the hon. Member when he says that the figures are not correct or are not given as they should have been given.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mostly, you know about statistics. There are lies, damn lies and statistics.

SHRI DALIT EZHILMALAI: The cases that have been reported come to our notice and those details have been given here. People die, particularly in the tribal-dominated areas, and it is not even reported to the administration at Taluk or District level. It is happening. I do not dispute on the statement made by the hon. Member.

I would request the hon. Member to repeat his second question.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: He asked whether any survey team was sent, and if so, what is the finding of that team and whether any action has been taken on it.

SHRI DALIT EZHILMALAI: Sir, there is a Committee constituted the details of which are given here.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: So, a Committee has been sent, survey has been done, the findings are yet to come.

SHRI DALIT EZHILMALAI: Yes, Sir.

34-40

**Setting up of Regulatory Bodies
in Petroleum Industry**

+

*163. SHRI MOHAN RAWALE:
SHRI K.S. RAO:

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

(a) whether the Government propose to set up regulatory bodies to monitor the entire spectrum of the petroleum industry in the country; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI VAZHAPADY K. RAMAMURTHY): (a) and (b) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) and (b) It is proposed to consider the setting up of regulatory bodies for Upstream & Downstream sectors of the petroleum sector including for Gas. The scope of the regulatory body could include promotion of investment, removal of entry barriers, prevention of cartelisation, regulation of supply and prices, supervision of transmission and distribution networks, ensuring quality and security, compliance with appropriate standards, dispute resolution, protection consumer interest and long-term optimal development of sectors of the hydrocarbon industry.

[*Translation*]

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, hon. Minister has replied that.

[*English*]

"The scope of the regulatory body could include promotion of investment and regulation of supply and prices." I would like to say to hon. Minister that ...(*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr. Rawale, ask the question.

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE: Sir, I am asking the question only. competition will increase in regulatory mechanism after the investment. After increasing the competition, whether Petrol Diesel Kerosene..(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN: Sir, you are not calling me.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have taken note of it.

[Translation]

Mr. Rawale, ask the question, time is lapsing.

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE: I would like to know whether the prices would go down after the competition? Whether the Government will have control over it. If the prices of Petrol, Diesel, Kerosine go up to a certain level in regulatory mechanism what action will be taken by the Government and who would have monopoly therein.

[English]

SHRI VAZHAPADY K. RAMAMURTHY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member has asked whether the Government has any proposal to set up regulatory authorities for the petroleum industry as well as for gas.

Sir, with regard to regulatory authority, in order to contain unfair competition, to settle any dispute which may arise between the parties to whom works have been awarded under the New Exploration Licencing Policy, and to regulate this kind of disputes, the Government has proposed to bring about certain regulatory authorities. The Government of India, by a Cabinet decision, has already initiated the process for setting up a regulatory authority for the upstream. But the Committee on Subordinate Legislation of the other House has suggested that this authority should be in tune with that of America, Canada and Britain.

So, our Ministry is studying all these things. Even though the Bill has been drafted, the suggestions of the Committee on Subordinate Legislation of the Rajya Sabha will be taken into account. Then we will bring forth the Bill before this House.

[Translation]

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE: You did not answer the question, I asked can you control their prices? It is very important question to all customers..(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You ask the second supplementary.

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE: He has not answer that. Can you control the prices?..(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI VAZHAPADY K. RAMAMURTHY: Sir, I will answer to his question.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Shri Rawale, you have asked whether the Government propose to set up regulatory bodies.

[Translation]

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE: I have asked the same whether can control the prices due to that? ... (Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: He has answered in this regard.

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE: He has not given answer to my question. You said that "Regulation of supply and prices"..(Interruptions)

[English]

Sir, he has not given me the answer properly.

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: He is still replying. He has not completed his reply. You do listen.

[English]

SHRI VAZHAPADY K. RAMAMURTHY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I want to convey to the hon. Member that the regulation scenario for controlling prices are only for the five petroleum products and they are upto 1.4.2002. Now, we are already in the middle of 1999. So, there is only two and a half years time left. After that, everything

will be decided on the reaction of the market. So, there is no point saying that I am controlling the prices or the prices will be controlled by anybody else. Or that there is no necessity of this authority.

[*Translation*]

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE: I have not got the proper answer that whether Government will have control over it or not?

My second question is, as he has said,

[*English*]

The regulatory body could include ensuring facility and security.

[*Translation*]

I would like to know from him that whether will you have the control over it through the new body which you wish to set up or not? You want to protect all the consumers but how they would be protected? Now a days kerosene is being mixed in petrol.

[*English*]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Shri Rawale, the question is about the entire spectrum of the petroleum industry in the country.

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE: Sir, in his written reply, he has said that 'the scope of the regulatory body could include "ensuring quality and security" and "protection of consumer interest".'

SHRI VAZHAPADY K. RAMAMURTHY: That is already there. I have said that the Bill has not been brought before this House. I have already narrated what kinds of difficulties we were facing..(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Shri Rawale, please listen to him.

..(*Interruptions*)

SHRI VAZHAPADY K. RAMAMURTHY: Please listen to me. Why are you making a running commentary?..(*Interruptions*)

About the regulatory body, I have said that yes, we wanted to bring it. What I have narrated in my reply is true. These are all proposals. We will take into account

the suggestions of the association representatives also for being incorporated in the Bill. We will be the last persons to say 'no' if it is in the consumers interests.

[*Translation*]

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE: Accept the suggestion given by me.

[*English*]

SHRI K.S. RAO (Machillpatnam): Now there is a change over in the policy of the Government from Licence Raj to Regulatory Raj. The Power Minister has brought the Regulatory Authority Bill. The Finance Minister is bringing the Insurance Regulatory Authority Bill and now the Petroleum Minister is bringing the Oil Regulatory Bill. If all this is going to do good to the nation, it is good. I just want to say that so far all the trade or exploration of oil and natural gas in this country is said to be the monopoly of only a few companies which are dealing in this business. Now the hon. Minister has promised to make it open and liberal by the year, 2002. It is very good. I just wish to know whether before bringing this Regulatory Authority Bill into Parliament, the Ministry or the Standing Committee of the Ministry or the other Consultative Committee has consulted the various public sector undertakings, private companies, individuals, experts, consumers and all those connected with petroleum to find out the advisability of the various clauses of the Bills by taking into account the interest of the consumers in the country and whether the hon. Minister would include in that, apart from those five Members, any Member from the Consumers Forum or any Member from experts.

SHRI VAZHAPADY K. RAMAMURTHY: The suggestion will be considered.

SHRI K.S. RAO: I would like to know whether consultation has been done or not.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Minister will take your suggestion into account when the Bill is moved. Is that correct?

SHRI VAZHAPADY K. RAMAMURTHY: The Bill is not yet conceived at all. At present, consultation is going on.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Minister says that your suggestion will be taken into account when the Bill to regulate the whole spectrum of petroleum industry is moved in Parliament.

[Translation]

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE: Adulteration is increasing in Diesel and Petrol. The main reason for it is that less commission is paid to the dealers of Petrol and Diesel. I would like to ask hon. Minister whether the Government propose to increase the commission to the dealers of Petrol and Diesel.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is of Regulatory authority and you are talking of commission.

[English]

SHRI VAZHAPADY K. RAMAMURTHY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the adulteration of diesel and petrol will be definitely taken very serious note of. We are periodically checking. Some three or four months back also, we have sent a special squad from the Ministry itself throughout the metropolitan cities. We conducted surprise checks and raids. Unfortunately, the Dealers Association have gone on to the different courts and obtained a stay against our action proposed to be taken on the basis of the raids conducted by us.

The other point which I would like to share with the hon. Member is that adulteration at all levels will be definitely checked.

Another point is about the dealers commission. After this Government has been sworn in, we have also paid back all the arrears and the Ministry has negotiated with the Association. A favourable settlement was arrived at. It will be periodically reviewed.

SHRI LAKSHMAN CHANDRA SETH: Sir, in his statement, the hon. Minister has said that there is a proposal for setting up a regulatory authority. But we have been told just now that it is not yet conceived. So, it is very confusing. However, I want to know from the hon. Minister whether such a regulatory body will overlap the functioning of the various public sector oil companies. There are many public sector oil companies in our country which are functioning very efficiently. So, I want to know from the hon. Minister whether this sort of a regulatory body will intervene or interfere with those oil companies and whether it will be overlapping.

SHRI VAZHAPADY K. RAMAMURTHY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the scenario in the petroleum industry is changing: from monopoly to joint venture and now from joint venture to privatisation.

What I have mentioned about the regulatory body is that a regulatory body will be set up in the upstream and downstream and also in the field of gas. Already, the Cabinet has decided upon a proposal regarding upstream and the Bill is pending because the Committee on Subordinate Legislation of the Rajya Sabha has made some recommendations.

I have said that even though the Bill has been drafted it has not been placed before the House. I want to completely wipe out one impression. There is no doubt that our public sector undertakings in the oil sector are working efficiently. It is just in order to have a coordination between the public sector and the joint ventures and also the private entrepreneurs, who are now entering into this field, and to avoid duplication and competition that a regulatory body is necessary.

[Translation]

DR. BIZAY SONKAR SHASTRI: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask through you a simple, explicit and brief question as to how many petroleum regulatory bodies have been set up and as to where petroleum reservoirs are there in the country and number thereof. At the same time I would like to know whether the Government intend to set up a petroleum company in the country especially in Uttar Pradesh on the basis of survey which has been conducted. I would like to say even petroleum sector that with setting up of the company in Poorvanchal and eastern Uttar Pradesh people will be considerably benefitted and some opportunities for jobs will also be benefitted by them.

[English]

SHRI VAZHAPADY K. RAMAMURTHY: Sir, throughout the Country during the Ninth Tenth Fire Plans, we are going to have a lot of Petroleum Industries. As far the particular question about UP, I need a separate notice.

[Translation]

SHRI RAJVEER SINGH: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask a simple question that there is a great dearth of fuel in the rural areas and cow dung is burn there and on account of this a problem of fertilizer has arisen there. Whether the Minister would like to tell as to how many years the Govt. will take in allotting the cooking gas agency in the rural areas and providing gas connection to the farmers in the every village.

[English]

SHRI VAZHAPADY K. RAMAMURTHY: Sir, in the market plan for 1995-97, the companies have identified about three thousand and odd LPG dealerships. Out of this, about 2,400 are earmarked only for the rural areas. At present, the pending list in the country is for 1.34 crores. I think, it is certain that we will wipe out the waiting list by the year 2000. After that, I think, for the metropolitan cities and other urban areas, it will be an demand. For the rural areas, our Ministry is drafting a plan for extending the LPG dealership at the block level also.

12.00 hrs.

[Translation]

SHRI MOHAN SINGH: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the Minister to the practical problem. We have been given rights to allot gas connection but a rule has been made therein that name should be there in waiting list and no gas agency dealer is need to put the name or any rural fellow in the waiting list. He says that it is meant for urban areas. I would like to know from the Minister whether he will make any arrangement in giving some slackness in the provision made unless arrangement for one L.P.G. dealer at every village level, block level is made.

[English]

SHRI VAZHAPADY K. RAMAMURTHY: Sir, there is a direction from the hon. Speaker. In no way, I am connected with this particular condition. But I can convey to all the dealers that whenever such requests from hon. MPs come, they would immediately register the names.
..(Interruptions)

SHRI PRITHVIRAJ D. CHAVAN: Sir, this is an important matter. We have to review and see whether we can change that direction. ..(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, we will review it.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[English]

Pollution by Coal Mines

*164. DR. SANJAY SINH:
SHRI VILAS MUTTEMWAR:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether large number of coal mines are causing air pollution and successfully avoiding the norms proscribed in this regard;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reaction of the Government in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) and (b) Coal mining activities like blasting, drilling, crushing, handling and transfer of material cause air pollution. In some places the values of suspended particulate matter has exceeded the prescribed limits.

(c) The State Pollution Control Boards and the Regional Offices of the Ministry, monitor the compliance status/environmental conditions for the projects. In case of non-compliance/unsatisfactory compliance of stipulated conditions, appropriate action is taken against the project proponents.

Criteria for Allotment of LPG Agencies

*165. SHRI MADAN PATIL:
SHRI MADHAV RAO PATIL:

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

(a) the criteria for the allotment of LPG agencies;

(b) whether there is any comprehensive plan to cover the rural areas by LPG;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the supply position of LPG is monitored periodically;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and