

COL. SONA RAM CHOUDHARY : Through you, I want to draw the attention of the hon. Minister. This is regarding Jaisalmer town. The town is on the world map, especially the Fort, which can be called the Eighth Wonder of the World.

What is happening is, tourism is neglected there. There is no proper hotel, though now Mr. Jaswant Singh is constructing it, yet that is also only three-star hotel. What is happening is, because the people there are very poor, they cannot construct hotels. There is no flight also.

Through you, I want to draw the attention of the Minister of Tourism and the Minister of Civil Aviation ...*(Interruptions)* There was a question about four days back and he said that he would be considering it this Winter. But already time is running out and nothing is coming. For constructing hotels also, they are not doing anything.

As mentioned here, Gulf tourists come during April-June. During that time, the temperature shoots up to 52 to 55 degree Celsius. So, air-conditioned hotels should come. Galore of tourists, especially from the Gulf countries want to come to this place. But nothing has been done. As you know, this is a desert and underdeveloped district. But nothing has been done.

I want to know, through you, whether the Minister would like to give some assurance to the House for promoting tourism there.

SHRI SRIKANTA JENA : As you know, of late, Jaisalmer Fort is really coming up as one of the most important tourist attractions and the foreign tourists are more attracted to that particular location.

Recently, Taj Group, ITC Group and Oberoi Group have been allotted lands to construct hotels there. So far as the flight is concerned, Indian Airlines has agreed to give air connection to that site. I am sure, it will take another three to four years. But ultimately the private industries and private groups are coming up for five-star hotels around Jaisalmer Fort.

COL. SONA RAM CHOUDHARY : Sir, politics are being played about the flight going to Jaisalmer.

Will the hon. Minister give an assurance; because there are some people with vested interests who want the flights to go to Jodhpur so that occupancy rate in hotels at Jodhpur goes up?

MR. SPEAKER : The Minister has already given an assurance. Hon. Minister, do you want to give a second assurance?

SHRI SRIKANTA JENA : I will certainly pass it on to the hon. Minister of Civil Aviation.

SHRI P.S. GADHAVI : Sir, in reply to this question, the hon. Minister has given all the reason why the Gulf countries are traditionally fond of India. We have age-old trade, cultural and historical links with the Gulf countries.

In this respect, I would like to inform the hon. Minister that Gujarat, particularly the Kutch region, has age-old trade, historical and cultural relations with the Gulf countries.

In Gujarat, there are so many tourist spots, like Gir Forests, etc. and in Kutch, there are so many potentialities, like sea beaches etc. which can be exploited. Just recently, signs of 5000 year old Harappan culture have been found in Dhaula Veera. But to develop this area, there are no infrastructural facilities provided by the Government. There is no daily airlink to Kutch, though there is an airlink between Kutch and Mumbai for the last so many years, but that too is only four times a week. There should be a direct daily flight between Gulf countries and Ahmedabad and there should be a daily flight between Mumbai and Kutch.

I would like to know from the hon. Minister what steps he is going to take to develop that area and what infrastructural facilities he is going to provide in Gujarat. I would also like to know from the hon. Minister, in coordination with the Minister of Civil Aviation what he is proposing to do for development of infrastructural facilities at Dhaula Veera.

SHRI SRIKANTA JENA : Sir, so far as Gujarat, particularly the Kutch area of Gujarat, is concerned, the potentiality is there but it has not been so far exploited properly. To exploit it properly and to link it with the Gulf countries and other areas, the State Government's role is also equally very important.

Regarding air connectivity, though Ahmedabad has been declared as an international airport, I think, the Gulf airlines do come to Ahmedabad and I think the Civil Aviation Minister...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI P.S. GADHAVI : These flights are not coming daily.

SHRI SRIKANTA JENA : I will send that suggestion to the Civil Aviation Ministry.

But so far as development of infrastructural facilities, like hotels, etc., are concerned, the State Government has to come up with a different policy there.

Recently, I had a meeting with the hon. Chief Minister of Gujarat and I am told that he was taking keen interest to develop that particular area so that tourism can be developed.

[Translation]

L.P.G. Connections

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*162. DR. ARVIND SHARMA :

SHRI NARENDRA BUDANIA :

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

(a) whether the Government have taken a decision

to provide L.P.G. connection to all towns and cities with the population of twenty thousand and more and applications have been invited from the residents of such towns and cities;

(b) if so, the number of applications received by the Government. State-wise and the number out of them who have been issued L.P.G. connections and those which are pending;

(c) the time by which the applicants on the waiting list are likely to be provided L.P.G. connections;

(d) whether the Government are taking any action to provide L.P.G. connections to the large number of applicants on waiting list with a view to protect the environment depleting due to the use of the forest based fuel; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA) : (a) to (e) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) Yes, Sir. Presently towns/markets having a population of more than 20,000 as per 1990-91 census have been covered for LPG supply in the country. Prospective customers can register themselves for new LPG connection with the existing LPG distributorships or new distributorships being opened in those areas.

(b) and (c) Applications for release of LPG connections are not invited or received by the Government. The prospective customers have to register themselves with and are provided LPG connection by the LPG distributors.

(d) and (e) The existing LPG customer strength in the country as on 1.4.1997 is 293 lakhs and 141 lakhs persons are on waiting list. Subject to availability of product, LPG connections are released regularly through Annual Enrolment Plan. Apart from releasing connections to customers in accordance with the priorities fixed by the Government, it has been decided to release LPG connections to all eligible persons who are on the waiting list before 1.1.1991. In order to protect environment, LPG connections are released to hilly areas and Taj Trapezium on priority. Efforts are on to extend LPG facility to rural areas as well. It is planned to liquidate total waiting list and release connection on demand by the year 2001-2002.

DR. ARVIND SHARMA : Hon'ble Speaker, Sir, consumers are provided LPG connections by the Government through distributors and distributors are selected by Oil Selection Board but Oil Selection Board has not been reconstituted. Since February-March, 1996 due to which about three to four thousand applications have been pending for providing LPG Agencies. You can see that on the one hand, the Government talks about the upliftment of rural and backward classes, but on the other hand, three-four thousand applications have

been pending with the Oil Selection Board. Through you, I would like to know as to by when the Oil Selection Board would be reconstituted and what are the reasons for the delay occurring in this matter.

My second question in this regard is whether the said delay has been caused due to the scams in the previous Oil Selection Board. I want that the Government should tell the House the reasons for the delay in the constitution of the Board. If there have been complaints regarding the scams committed during the last Board, whether the House would be taken in confidence before the reconstitution of the Oil Selection Board because it is heard that now its criteria has been changed, now there would be two General Managers in that. I request that the Government should make it clear whether the House would be taken into confidence or not while reconstituting Oil Selection Board.

SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, there had been a lot of dispute regarding Oil Selection Board in the past. The case was even taken to the court. Therefore, the present Government issued some directions during the time of Deve Gowda ji. He was the Prime Minister at that time and also holding the charge of Petroleum Ministry. He issued direction that a commission would be constituted which would be headed by a retired judge of High Court and there would be Deputy General Managers of two Oil companies as its Members. When the new Government was formed, we requested the Prime Minister that there should also be a public representative in it because he understands the difficulties of the public. He told us that for the time being its implementation should be stopped. We would constitute the committee within a week which would consist of a retired High Court judge and two Deputy General Managers as decided, and when the Prime Minister would clear the proposal that a public representative should also be included in it, we would include that also, we put this proposal before the House.

DR. ARVIND SHARMA : Some changes are being made in the criteria. I request you that it should be discussed in the House. It is an important issue in which we also talk about rural and backward people. It should be discussed in the House as to how Oil Selection Board should be constituted and how these things should be included in it.

If we take LPG cylinder from the godown, we have to pay two and a half rupee less, but the consumer does not know that he is to pay two and a half rupee less. A blue card has been issued to LPG consumers. I want that a red card should be issued separately and because of it, the poor man, the unknown person would know that cylinder can be obtained by paying two and a half rupee less on Red card. It is an important issue and it should be discussed in the House. By when you would attain the target of clearing 3000 Gas applications? The Government says that LPG connections would be provided to all the villages having

population of 20,000 by the year 2000 A.D. How it is possible when Oil Selection Board has not been constituted for the last one and a half year. It is a very important issue. It should be discussed in the House.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : It is a suggestion. I think, the hon. Minister has noted it down.

SHRI N.S.V. CHITTHAN : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has given a statement that as on 1.4.1997, 141 lakh persons are on waiting list. The hon. Minister has also mentioned in his statement, which has been laid on the Table of the House, that it has been decided to release LPG connections to all eligible persons who are on waiting list before 1.1.1991. May I know from the hon. Minister as to when will this waiting list as on 1.1.1991 be cleared and how many are there in the waiting list?

Now I come to second part of my question. The hon. Minister has given a very rosy picture to this House and to the nation. He has said in his reply that it is planned to liquidate total waiting list and release connection on demand by the year 2001-2002. What are the concrete steps the Government has taken to liquidate all these wait-lists?

[Translation]

SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Oil Companies have been issued orders that waiting list before 1.9.91 should be cleared. If any applicant is left and he writes in this regard, it may be cleared immediately. We have said that LPG would be made available on demand by the year 2000. The Oil Companies have fixed this target that in the year 1997-98, 40 lac connections would be provided and accordingly new LPG agencies would be opened. It is not a rosy picture, but the decision taken by the Government is this that 40 lac connections would be provided in the year 1997-98. Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have been making preparation for providing 50 lac connections in the year 1998-99, 50 lac connections in the year 1999-2000 and 20 lac connections in the year 2001-2002. We understand that after that we would be able to supply LPG on demand.

SHRI BHERU LAL MEENA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is a long list of the applicants for new gas agencies. The hon'ble Member has told that large number of applications are under consideration of the Ministry. The Government has decided that gas connections would be provided through earlier gas agencies on payment of rupees four thousand. I want to say that in this way gas connections would never be provided in rural areas because new gas agencies would not be opened and there would not be any town in the rural area having 20 thousand or more population due to which the rural area would not get any benefit of this proposal.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have been repeatedly saying in this House that there should be a Gas Agency at Panchayat Samiti level because forests have been completely destroyed. The department of forest has banned cutting of wood. People are not getting fuel wood. Even otherwise also, the wood is not available. Then how the rural areas are going to get the benefit of LPG? The Minister has told that LPG would be made available to all by the year 2000 A.D.

I think that this facility would be provided only in the urban areas and rural areas would be deprived of it while 80 percent people of our country live in villages. These people are not being benefited by these gas agencies and the hon'ble Minister has stated that in future also only 20 percent people of urban areas in the country would get benefit of these gas agencies. Therefore, I would like to request hon'ble Minister through you that one L.P.G. agency be opened in each Panchayat of the country so as to provide L.P.G. facility to the rural people.

SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, we proposed to set up a gas agency within the radius of 15 kilometres of a town having the population of more than 20 thousand. Here I would like to make it clear that despite that, gas agency would be viable or not is not certain because it is difficult to predict that how many people would avail this facility. Hence the Government have decided that efforts would be made to open gas agency within the radius of 15 kilometres of the town or villages having the population of more than 10 thousands. Its radius is being increased because a village has much less population.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon'ble Member has stated that village people would not be benefited by this facility and the felling of trees has been stopped. It involves the question of environment. In this connection I would like to submit that the Government have decided that gas be provided immediately on demand in the hilly areas which are situated at the height of two thousand feet and waiting list should be cleared in these areas. I hope that waiting list would be cleared this year because, major problem there is, non-availability of wood. Mr. Speaker, Sir, second point is this that Taj Mahal is situated in a beautiful place. Government has issued order that L.P.G. be supplied to the residents residing around it on demand so as to maintain its beauty and save it from the smoke so L.P.G. is being supplied to this area.

SHRI BHAGWAN SHANKAR RAWAT : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am a Member of Parliament from Agra. Hence I raised hand to speak. Whatever hon'ble Minister has stated is not true. Despite the order of the Union Government and Supreme Court, L.P.G. is not being provided to the residents of trepazium area and nor these connections are being given to the rural areas. ... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : No, Rawatji, it is not proper. Please sit down.

SHRI VIRENDRA KUMAR : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to draw the attention of hon'ble Minister through you that L.P.G. agencies in the country are harassing the applicants who are on waiting list and their way of providing information to these applicants is improper and faulty due to which they do not get L.P.G. connection.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to draw the attention of hon'ble Minister through you towards the owners of L.P.G. agencies in Sagar. Many irregularities are being committed there. Applicants on waiting list are not informed in time and after passing due time when the applicants go to agency to collect information regarding their connection they are told that their serial number has lapsed. At present waiting list of L.P.G. has 17 thousand applicants in Sagar. L.P.G. connections are being provided through the agency ignoring this list. In the past applicants upto serial No. 12 thousand were given evasive reply that their number had lapsed. Such irregularities are being committed there. At the same time when they go for connection they are asked to pay Rs. 1500 to 2000 in black and no action is being taken against the owner of the L.P.G. agency despite the complaints made in this regard.

Therefore, I would like to know from hon'ble Minister that what action is being taken by him to remove these irregularities?

SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, department or concerned companies take action regarding the irregularity committed in the matter of L.P.G. connections. Hon'ble Member has made complaint about the distribution of L.P.G. in Sagar. If he makes his complaint in writing, it would be forwarded for necessary action.

SHRIMATI BHAGWATI DEVI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, jungle inhabitant be permitted to speak on jungle and I am jungle inhabitant. In the city, Harijans...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : On this occasion no need to deliver speech but you can ask question.

SHRIMATI BHAGWATI DEVI : Harijans and labourers can not live in the city because their jhuggies are demolished. The same thing is happening in jungle. Harijans, Adivasis and backwards are being driven out from the jungles. It does not matter if poor people are dumped in sea. If they cut wood from jungles, these lose their beauty. They have no source of income other than wood. Therefore, the poor are being asked to leave jungle. There is no cleanliness in the city rather there is filth and, therefore, jhuggies of poor are being demolished.

I would like to submit that dump all the poor people in sea. As a result of which they will not come into the contact of the rich. When the matter of construction of accommodation comes up, the services of poor are

required...*(Interruptions)* the same thing is happening in the matter of gas. When we people use wood as fuel, why should we talk about gas? Now they are not allowed to cut wood. Poor are being attacked from all sides. How can we save ourselves from this attack? We are very much worried about it...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : You ask your question.

SHRIMATI BHAGWATI DEVI : Poor bring wood from jungle and use as fuel. If gas is provided to the poor free of cost, only then jungle can be protected. If you don't give it free, we will indulge in theft. Thereafter you can say whatever you like...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : Well, sit down, you must give some reply.

SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA : The Government have decided to provide 10 lakhs L.P.G. connections every year in rural areas...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Q.No. 163, Dr. Asim Bala. I cannot allow everybody. There are so many other questions. Thirty-five minutes are already over and we have finished only two questions. Dr. Asim Bala.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : No, please. You cannot finish the whole one hour in one question. Other questions are also equally important.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Mr. Minister, please reply.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

VAIDYA DAU DAYAL JOSHI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, Members of Lok Sabha are not getting the facility of gas connection while the Members of Rajya Sabha are availing this facility...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Joshiji, you are an elderly man. Please take your seat.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : We are on the next questions.

(Interruptions)

Leakage of Question Papers

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*163. DR. ASIM BALA :

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO :

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether any enquiry has been ordered into the