

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2431
ANSWERED ON:08.12.2005
ABOLITION OF ANTI- ADULTERATION CELL
Adsul Shri Anandrao Vithoba

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

- (a) whether the Government has abolished the anti-adulteration cell in the Ministry;
- (b) if so, the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the Government has asked the Public Sector Oil Companies to check malpractice under the marketing discipline guidelines;
- (d) if so, the details in this regard;
- (e) if so, whether the Government is aware that the oil mafia threatened the sales officers when they detected any malpractices;
- (f) if so, the number of incidents which have come to the notice of the Government regarding killing of sales officers during the recent past; and
- (g) the action taken by the Government to provide protection of the sales officers from the oil mafia to enable them to check malpractices?

Answer

MINISTER OF PETROLEUM & NATURAL GAS & PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR)

(a) to (d): Yes, Sir. The Anti-Adulteration Cell (AAC), was set up in March 2001 under the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas (MOP&NG). It was found to be ineffective in its functioning on account of the possible involvement of some of its officers who are under investigation by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) for undesirable activities. Therefore, a one-man committee under the chairmanship of Additional Secretary, Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas was set up in April, 2004 to conduct an extensive review of the working of the AAC. The report showed that the AAC, with its existing structure and functions, could not play a meaningful role in the Ministry's efforts to curb the menace of adulteration. Accordingly, the Cell was wound up in July 2004.

The Government/Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have taken the following steps to contain the menace of adulteration :

(i) Under the Control Orders issued by the Government to prevent fuel adulteration, under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955, State Governments are empowered to take action against those indulging in adulteration. Government have taken up this matter with all the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations to step up inspections/ surprise checks to ensure that adulteration-related activities are minimized and to exercise vigil/conduct inspections at various private firms, factories, processing units, etc., under their jurisdictions so as to identify the perpetrators of adulteration and take stringent action against them within the available legal framework.

(ii) OMCs undertake regular and surprise inspections of Retail Outlets and also take action under Marketing Discipline Guidelines (MDG) and Dealership Agreements against those indulging in adulteration and malpractices. MDG provide for penalty of termination of dealership in cases of adulteration being established.

(iii) As advised by the Government, Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have created a separate wing to report to a Director other than Director (Marketing), which will oversee and monitor all activities and operations to curb adulteration and specify norms and guidelines in this regard.

(iv) Keeping in view the misuse/diversion of SKO for adulteration, the import of SKO by private parties has been canalized through OMCs.

(v) OMCs have introduced new tamper proof tank-truck locking systems to prevent en route adulteration by transporters.

(vi) Information Technology (IT) solutions like monitoring movement of tank trucks through Global Positioning System (GPS) and monitoring level of fuel tanks in Retail Outlets through retail automation are being introduced.

(vi) Branding of Retail Outlets and third party certification of Retail Outlets have been initiated by the OMCs.

(vii) Effective 2nd October 2005, Government launched the Jan Kerosene Pariyojana as a pilot project in 417 blocks covering 23 States and one Union Territory for a period of six months with a view to strengthening and streamlining the infrastructure for kerosene distribution and involving the Gram Sabhas and Gram Panchayats and State Panchayati Raj Institutions in the supervision of PDS kerosene distribution, so as to ensure that entitled beneficiaries actually receive their entitlement and diversion to adulteration and black-marketing is capped, reversed and eventually eliminated. The pilot project is being concurrently evaluated by NCAER and, on the basis of the experience gained, Government will determine the possibility and desirability of extending the Pariyojana to cover all blocks in the country.

Measures to check adulteration are kept under continuous review of the Government.

(e) to (g): OMCs have reported that there have been certain instances when their inspection teams were threatened during the course of inspections. In a recent case, a sales officer of IOC was allegedly murdered in U.P. while conducting an inspection. The State Governments have been requested to provide adequate police protection/security to the OMCs officials as per the requirement, for carrying out inspections.