

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2571
ANSWERED ON:10.12.2012
ERRATIC GAS SUPPLY TO TEA PRODUCERS
Ponnam Shri Prabhakar

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the erratic gas supply has adversely hit the production of tea in several States;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons for the erratic supply of gas to these States; and
- (c) the corrective measures being taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY(DR. D. PURANDESWARI)

(a) & (b): Natural gas is being used only by tea factories located in the upper Assam Districts of Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, Sibsagar, Jorhat and Golaghat. Although these factories have been using the gas for the past several years, the erratic and inadequate supply had been reported only in mid August of this year. One of the reasons attributed for the erratic supply was the agitation of some local students union, forcibly closing down the gas pipeline. Such disruption has resulted in loss of quality production of tea, wastage of plucked green leaf and compelled some of the factories to resort to suspension of processing which had forced small growers to agitate over the factories not accepting green leaf for processing or offering very low price.

(c): The matter has been taken up with the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas and the State Government of Assam, for issuing suitable directions to the main gas supplier in the affected areas, viz., M/s Oil India Ltd, and distributor M/s Assam Gas Company Ltd for ensuring assured and uninterrupted supply of natural gas to the tea factories. As of date, the situation is well under control and all the stakeholders are working for a permanent solution so that no repetition of such problem occurs in future.