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Title: The Minister of State (Independent Charge) of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas made a statement regarding certain important decisions taken by the Government in different fields.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DHARMENDRA PRADHAN): Hon. Speaker Madam, the Government today took certain important decisions with far-reaching implications in hydrocarbon sector. These include Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, a new Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy, a policy for extension of Production Sharing Contracts of 28 pre-NELP discovered fields and marketing and pricing freedom for the gas to be produced from the deep, ultra-deep, high pressure and high temperature areas. These cabinet decisions will cover the entire spectrum of oil and gas sector right from enhancing exploration and production activities to distribution to the LPG to women from BPL families.

In a historic decision, the Government decided to allocate Rs 8,000 crore to provide free LPG connection to five crore women from BPL families. The scheme will be implemented over a period of three years and will be a significant intervention in the lives of poor women as it will free them from adverse health impact of cooking, based on unclean fuels. This will also provide significant ecological dividend for the country.

The oil and gas sector was opened up for private and foreign investment since early 1990s. We have moved from nomination regime till 1990s to pre-NELP and NELP rounds in last 25 years. In a paradigm shift, we have not introduced in what we can term as Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy. Similarly, the Government approved a common non-discretionary policy for extension of contract of 28 pre-NELP discovered fields. To incentivize production of gas from difficult areas like deep, ultra-deep, high pressure and high temperature areas, the Government has decided to allow them pricing and marketing freedom with a reasonable ceiling on price.

These decisions will enhance domestic oil and gas production and reduce import dependency, bring substantial investment in the sector, promote Make In India and generate sizeable employment. These decisions are also in tune with the Government's commitment of enhancing transparency and reducing administrative discretion under policy of Minimum Government, Maximum Governance. Resources with Rs 2.61 lakh crore will be brought to production as a result of today's decision.