

**Title:** Regarding leakage and fire at the platform in Gas field B-121 Mumbai offshore on 12.03.1999.

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI VAZHAPADYK. RAMAMURTHY): Mr. Speaker Sir, I would like to make a suo motu statement as promised by me on Saturday with regard to the leakage and fire at the platform in Gas Field B-121 in Mumbai Offshore.

This refers to the fire in B-121 gas field in Mumbai offshore.

I have personally proceeded to Mumbai on 13.3.1999 and convened a meeting of ONGC Directors to take stock of the situation and ensure that all possible action is immediately taken to restore normalcy. I returned on 14.3.1999 satisfied that adequate action is being taken.

Platform B-121 comprises of a cluster of four free gas producing wells (unassociated with oil). The platform is located 140 kilometres west of Mumbai city in Mumbai offshore. The wells are named as B,C,D and F.

On 10th March, 1999, repair operations were in progress by ONGC with its own Rig Sagar Ratna in Well B of the platform in order to control the excess pressure that had been noticed in the well and to rectify the sub surface valves which were malfunctioning. These repair works had commenced even on 16.2.99 after anomalies were noticed. While these works were in progress, heavy build up of pressures was observed in another Well C. Prompt action to control pressure Well C was immediately taken up by pumping sea water even during the night of 10.03.99/11.03.99. However, in the meantime, at around 0915 hours in the morning of 11.03.99, similar build up of high gas pressure accompanied by gushing of high intensity mud and gas was observed in another well, Well D. Immediately, apprehending a threat, all contingent action was promptly taken in accordance with established international practice of handling offshore emergency. Multipurpose Supply Vessels with fire fighting capability were positioned at site. All safety measures were forthwith taken. All the 85 personnel on board platform/Rig were evacuated.

The uncontrolled flow of gas from the well caught fire on 12.03.1999 at 1220 hours. Action for fire fighting operations that could be immediately taken up were taken up thanks to the contingency plans already drawn up. To personally supervise on site actions, all Functional Directors of ONGC immediately rushed to Mumbai.

Four Multipurpose Support Vessels are presently positioned at the site and dousing the fire by spraying about 18,000 cubic meters of water per hour. As of now, there is no apparent damage to ONGC Rig Sagar Ratna, the crew having been earlier evacuated safely. As this platform produces only sweet gas not containing sulphur, no risk to environment and marine life is apprehended. M/s Cudd Pressure Control, USA were selected and contacted immediately to depute their experts urgently to assist ONGC in extinguishing the fire and restore normalcy. The company is a world reputed firm that has specialised in handling such emergencies arising out of malfunctioning of wells. Two experts from the company have already arrived in Mumbai on 14.03.1999 and have visited the site. Action plan for controlling the fire and the flow of gas from the well, is being worked out.

B-121 is a satellite free gas field, located 35 kilometres south-east of Mumbai High Field, having about 2.1 billion cubic meters of recoverable reserves. Platform B-121 is a four-legged structure with six well slots and was commissioned in May, 1997. Five wells have been drilled on this platform out of which four are gas producers and one is dry well.

The gas production from this platform commenced in January 1998 and is evacuated through a twelve inch sub-sea pipeline to a processing platform of Bombay High and for onward transmission to Uran. At Uran, the processed gas is delivered to the Gas Authority of India Limited for distribution to consumers. The field produces about 1.6 million cubic metres of gas per day. Gas production has been shut off even on 27.2.99 while repair works were progressing. The current level of gas sales ex-Uran is about 11.2 million cubic metres per day as against the normal supply of 12.5 million cubic metres per day. Efforts are being made to make up part of the shortfall from free gas wells in Bombay High.

The cost of platform is Rs.44 crore and of the pipeline for evacuation of gas is Rs.46 crore. The cost of the wells is Rs.80 crore approximately. The jack up rig - Sagar Ratna - owned by the ONGC was procured in the year 1984 at a cost of around Rs.40 crore. Its current replacement cost would be about Rs.120 to Rs.150 crore.

The platform and the Rig - Sagar Ratna - are covered under the Package Insurance Policy with M/s. United India Insurance Company Limited with whom the ONGC has lodged a report about the incident. Insurance surveyors visited the site on 14.03.99 to make an assessment.

There have been similar incidents of uncontrolled flow of oil/gas and fire in the past at Bombay High in 1982, in Mandapeta and Pasarlapudi fields in Krishna Godavari onland in 1992 and 1995 and in Ankleshwar field in Gujarat in 1998.

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MR. SPEAKER: The House will now take up further consideration of the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address.

Hon. Prime Minister to reply.

... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Please take your seat. Today, we do not have any 'Zero Hour'.

... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: What is this? Today, you cannot raise it. You can raise it tomorrow. Please take your seat.

... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: You cannot discuss all the matters.

... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Somnath Chatterjee, what do you want to say?