

12.57 hrs.

**CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF
URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE**

[English]

**Closure of Barauni, Guwahati and
Bongaigaon oil refineries as a result of
oil blockade agitation in Assam**

SHRI AJIT PANJA (Calcutta North East)
I call the attention of the Minister of Petroleum and Chemicals to the following matter of urgent public importance and request that he may make a statement thereon -

'Situation arising out of the closure of Barauni, Guwahati and Bongaigaon oil refineries as a result of oil blockade agitation by the All Assam Students Union and steps taken by the Government in regard thereto "

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS (SHRI GURUPADASWAMY)
Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, The All Assam Students Union (AASU) gave a call for an Oil Blockade in Assam for 7 days from 15th August, 1990. As a result of this the pumping of crude oil in the pipeline of Oil India Ltd from Duliajan to Barauni came to a halt. This blockade was further extended by three days till 24th August, 1990. As a result of efforts made by the Central Government the Chief Minister of Assam made an appeal to AASU to lift the blockade and AASU has lifted the blockade with effect from 27th August 1990.

The Sibsagar District Students Union (SDSU) which is a unit of AASU had also called for a total ONGC Bundh from 7th August, 1990 which has been extended from time to time and is still continuing. This has led to the closure of most of the production installations and drilling operations of ONGC in Assam. The agitators have not only been threatening and manhandling ONGC personnel but also preventing them from working and in some cases have been tampering with oil and gas producing wells, posing a safety hazard.

The total loss of crude production in August due to these agitations is estimated to be about 200,000 tonnes. The loss of pumping in the pipeline is estimated to be 210,000 tonnes. This has resulted in crude processing loss of about 140,000 tonnes in the Barauni Refinery, 60,000 tonnes in Bongaigaon Refinery and 10,000 tonnes in Guwahati Refinery. The Digboi Refinery has mercifully escaped any major loss of processing. These losses are estimated to be valued at about Rs 70 to 80 crores at current international prices.

There has been no dislocation of marketing operations by oil companies in Assam though the supplies of kerosene and LPG have been adversely affected.

In the background of the recent kidnapping of the General Manager of the Guwahati Refinery, his son and driver and the current threats to personnel of oil companies in Assam, there is considerable insecurity and demoralisation among officers and personnel of the oil companies working in Assam.

The Central Government has urged the Government of Assam to intercede to lift the Oil Blockade and ONGC Bundh and ensure the safety and security of the oil installations as well as the personnel of the oil companies. I had emphasised this personally to the Chief Minister during my recent visit to Assam on 25th August 1990. I am happy that the Oil Blockade has been lifted and crude oil has started flowing to the refineries. However it is essential that the ONGC Bundh also be called off immediately and the safety of ONGC personnel be ensured to normalise operations of the oil companies in the State.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER I think we will adjourn for Lunch now and meet at 2 o'clock for the questions.

13.00 hrs.

*The Lok Sabha then adjourned for Lunch
till Fourteen of the clock*