

SHRISATYA PRAKASH MALVIYA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is an open category and the consumers' cooperatives which fall under this category, are given priority but at present there is no provision for the cooperatives in this regard.

[English]

SHRI SYED MASUDAL HOSSAIN: There are so many wholesale consumer cooperatives which are waiting for distributorship. At least 12 of them are waiting but they are not going to be allotted the distributorship. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI K. S. RAO: The policy of the Government to allot its petrol pumps and gas agencies to unemployed youth is excellent. As matters stand today, the petrol pumps and the gas agencies are at a distance of 20 to 40 kms. in some areas particularly in the delta and coastal areas of Andhra Pradesh. The need for these things is too high because the farmers are using tractors in a good number and the people are using gas because no other form of fuel like wood is available. So it is both for serving the purpose of giving employment to more and more youth as well as to help the consumers who are not able to carry the cylinders which causes danger to the life. It causes even danger to the life if they carry cylinders in cycles for long distances. Transport buses are not permitting them to carry cylinders in buses. I wish to know from the hon. Minister as to whether he would think in terms of bifurcating or trifurcating even the existing agencies—which is necessary—and install more, in the semi-urban and urban places in the villages which are developing into new centres so that more youth can be employed and it will also be within the reach of the farming community as well as the consumers.

SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALVIYA: Sir, I will get this proposal examined by my Ministry.

[Translation]

SHRI MITRA SEN YADAV: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the policy of the Government regarding allotment of petrol pumps, diesel pumps and gas agencies includes the disabled and others belonging to the category of handicapped. Sir, Diesel pumps are in great demand in rural areas now a days. As such, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether any rule has been framed or not with regard to allotment of diesel pumps at Development Block level.

SHRISATYA PRAKASH MALVIYA: Sir, 7.5% reservation is being provided for the physically handicapped persons and as far as part (b) is concerned, this right rests with the State Governments.

Delay in supply of LPG Refills

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*166. **SHRI R. N. RAKESH:**
DR. CHINTA MOHAN:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to a newsitem captioned "Endless wait for LPG Refill", appearing in the Tribune dated 29 November, 1990;

(b) if so, whether the supply of LPG in the country falls far short of the demand;

(c) if so, the position in regard to its demand and supply;

(d) whether any time limit has been fixed by the Government for supplying LPG refills to consumers; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and the arrangements made for initiating action against distributors for not supplying refills within the prescribed time limit and the number of such distributors against whom

action has been taken so far during the last one year?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS AND MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRISATYA PRAKASH MALVIYA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c). The demand for LPG outstrips indigenous availability which is being augmented through imports.

(d) and (e). The distributors are under instructions from the LPG marketing oil companies to supply refills promptly on demand on a first come first serve basis. Regular and surprise inspections are carried out by the field staff of oil companies. All complaints received regarding delay in the delivery of refills are investigated and appropriate action taken against the erring distributors in accordance with the Marketing Discipline Guidelines and distributorship agreement.

The information regarding the number of such distributors against whom action has been taken during the last one year for delay in supply of refills is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

[*Translation*]

SHRI R. N. RAKESH (Chail): Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has stated that gas cylinders are being imported from abroad in order to meet the growing demand. I would like to ask the hon. Minister as to how many cylinders are in short supply in the country which are being imported from abroad.

SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALVIYA: At this juncture, we are facing shortage of gas itself and there is no shortage of cylinders.

SHRI R. N. RAKESH: It does figure in part four of the question.

MR. SPEAKER: You may ask.

SHRI R. N. RAKESH: I would like to

know from the hon. Minister as to how much time the Ministry would take to redress the grievances of the consumers from all parts of the country who are making complaints regularly regarding refilling and supply of gas cylinders.

SHRISATYA PRAKASH MALVIYA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, all the complaints received in this regard are looked into but if the hon. Member has any specific complaint in this connection, he may scented the same to us. It will be investigated and in the course of the investigation if any distributor is found guilty, stringent action will be taken against him.

SHRI M. S. PAL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the entire House is aware of the fact that the whole of Northern India is in the grip of severe cold and gas connections are not being sanctioned in this region for quite some time and in addition to that the people are not getting electric supply as the supply and communication lines have been damaged due to snowfall keeping it in view is the Government considering to respect grant of new gas connections.

SHRISATYA PRAKASH MALVIYA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, we are certainly maintaining the refilling facility to the existing consumers but the supply of new gas connections are banned for the time being.

SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN: We are already in the midst of many difficulties and the Ministry of Petroleum too has added to our difficulties. The prices of food items in the markets are soaring sky high and there are other commodities which are not available in the market but the non availability of cooking gas is making even the coking of the available items more difficult. As the hon. Minister told right now that there was no scarcity of gas cylinders but there was a crisis to cooking gas. I want to highlight the situation in my region, where the people who registered their names in 1982, have not been provided gas connections. Owing to this the markets are full of duplicate cylinders and numerous accident cases are reported frequently and we have to face the conse-

quences of these mishaps. Is the Government aware of these duplicate cylinders that are in circulation in the markets? If yes, what are the concrete steps that have been taken or proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard.

SHRISATYA PRAKASH MALVIYA: Mr. Speaker, sir, as far as the question of duplicate cylinder is concerned, we will certainly investigate the matter and take appropriate action if in case any complaint is received either from any hon. Member or from the public, but our efforts are to make sure that the duplicate cylinders are not supplied to anyone.

.....(*Interruptions*).....

[*English*]

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV: The Hon. Minister has said that there is a shortage of gas. But in certain parts of the country, for example, in Tripura and Assam, the gas is being wasted. The Governments there are requesting the Central Government to give them a reasonable rate so that the gas can be utilised best for household as well as for commercial purposes. What is the stand of the Government of India on this? What decision are they going to take to ease the gas situation in the country?

SHRISATYA PRAKASH MALVIYA: We have received proposals from the concerned State Governments. We are examining them and we will take a decision soon.

[*Translation*]

SHRI ATINDER PAL SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in Rajpura division of Patiala district a tanker of Hindustan Petroleum while going from Gujarat to Jalandhar, met with an accident near Ghanori Kalan due to leakage of gas from it. The cause of the mishap was that it was carrying gas in duplicate cylinders. When there was a leakage, fire broke out. The driver of the said tanker abandoned the tanker and fled. As a result of this accident sixty houses were totally gutted, their roof

were blown off, fifteen people were killed, 250 cattle died and seventy people, who received more than fifty percent burns, are still battling for their lives in Rajendra Hospital located in Patiala. I want to ask the hon. Minister through you as to what steps do you propose to take to check the pilferage of gas which causes heavy loss to the people and the action taken in respect of Ghanari Kalan accident.

SHRISATYA PRAKASH MALVIYA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the question put by the hon. Member is not linked with the main question. I need a separate notice for it.

S. ATINDER PAL SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, if the hon. Minister is not in a position to reply to my question right now, he may be directed to lay it on the Table of the House later. Fifteen lives have been lost in this incident.

MR. SPEAKER: All right, the hon. Minister will lay the reply to your question on the Table of the House. Please take your seat.

[*English*]

SHRI ANIL BASU: Mr. Speaker, the country is passing through a domestic fuel crisis. The traditional fuel, i.e., cutting the trees and utilising them for the purpose of domestic fuel, is not available in the country side now as deforestation had taken place on a mass scale. And the LPG gas is also not available. So, in view of the non-availability of domestic fuel and LPG gas, will the Ministry of Petroleum, in consultation with the Ministry of Energy, evolve a National Domestic Fuel Policy so that the whole country can know the policy of the Government regarding domestic fuel?

SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALVIYA: Sir, I have taken note to his suggestion.

SHRISRIKANTA JENA: Sir, the Minister has said that there is non-availability of gas in the country and as Mr. Sontosh Mohan Dev has said, there is wastage of gas in Assam and Bombay High. What exactly are

the steps which the Government is going to take to get the gas which is going waste and distribute it? What are the steps to be taken by the Government in this respect in the following Eighth Five Year Plan?

SHRISATYAPRAKASH MALVIYA: Sir, this is a new question.

[*Translation*]

SHRI GANGA CHARAN LODHI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, so far, the facility of L.P.G. connection is available in cities only on the basis of ration card, but this facility has not been extended to 70 lakh villages of the country where crores of people live. Therefore, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether there is any proposal to extend L.P.G. connection facility to the people living in villages too?

SHRISATYAPRAKASH MALVIYA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, as per the existing provisions, L.P.G. is supplied to the areas having population of 20,000 or more. So far as the question of villages is concerned, there are a number of difficulties involved in it. The agents in town areas face a variety of difficulties in supplying L.P.G. to villages. However, I shall consider the suggestion given by the hon. Member.

SHRI JAG PAL SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has just now said that L.P.G. is supplied to the areas having population of 20,000 or more. All hon. Members know it pretty well that the people from rural areas have to transport L.P.G. from town areas, where gas agencies are located, to the villages through buses and other modes of transport. With a view to checking accidents which take place during the course of transportation of L.P.G. from town areas to the villages, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether there is any proposal to open LPG agencies at the block level through-out the country in order to extend the facility of LPG supply to the villages?

SHRISATYAPRAKASH MALVIYA: Sir, I had said in the beginning itself that LPG agencies are opened in the areas where population is 20 thousand or more. So far as the question of opening agencies at the block level is concerned, there is no such proposal for the present.

PROF. RAM GANESH KAPSE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, The hon. Minister said a shortwhile ago that there was shortage of LPG. In this connection, I would like to know from him whether there is any fixed period say 15 or 20 days, within which the refill cylinder is supplied, because in my constituency, refill is not supplied even after 20-30 days?

SHRISATYAPRAKASH MALVIYA: Sir, a period of 21 days has been fixed for this purpose. Refill of LPG is supplied 21 days after the supply of first cylinder.

PROF. RAM GANESH KAPSE: Refill is not supplied for as long as 20 days. My question is as to how long does it take to supply the refill?

SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALVIYA: Refill will be supplied after 21 days.

[*English*]

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: In the light of fuel prices in our country, particularly in the eastern part - West Bengal, Orissa and Bihar, I would like to know whether there is any proposal for the expansion of the capacity of the LPG bottling plant in Haldia refinery of the IOC?

[*Translation*]

SHRISATYAPRAKASH MALVIYA: The hon. Member's question is different from what has been asked in the main question. However, I shall look into it if he gives it in writing.

[*English*]

SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKATA: In Andaman and Nicobar Islands, the waiting time for getting a refill is more than a month. This is because all the refills are transported by ship and the ship does not run every day. I would, therefore, like to know from the Minister whether Government would consider to stock sufficient number of refills in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands which will help to ease the situation.

SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALVIYA: We will take steps to adequately improve the situation in Andaman and Nicobar Islands.