

### Discovery of Gas in Andaman And Nicobar Islands

\*122. SHRI K.T.KOSALRAM: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) Whether gas has been struck on the off-shore in Andaman and Nicobar Islands; and

(b) if so, the details of the same ?

The Minister of State in the MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI DALBIR SINGH)

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Off shore in the Andaman Islands, the ONGC has drilled four wells in two structures. The first well struck gas but the second and third wells in the same structure proved dry.

The first well drilled in the second structure has proved dry.

SHRI K.T.KOSALRAM : I want to know whether the Hon Minister is aware that our hon Prime Minister was at port Blair sometime ago and she assured the people of Andamansnd that the Government of India would do everything for their economic uplift. Following that, now you have said that the first well struck gas and very good gas is available. Now, unless the ONGC takes energetic steps by giving top priority to the oil exploration in the offshore Andamans there is no redemption for the Union Territory where people are living on assurances and hopes.

In this background I want to raise the following:

What further efforts are being made by the ONGC in the case of the first well ? on the first well where gas has been struck how much money has been allocated for this purpose? When will its commercial exploitation begin?

ONGC has ended its efforts as soon as the other wells proved dry. I want to know if any other structures has been taken up for oil exploration and has any plan been formulated by the ONGC in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS  
SHRI (P.C.SETHI) : Sir, the Geological mapping of Andaman and Nicobar Islands has been completed by the O.N.G.C. After

that as far as the off-shore areas are concerned, the seismic and magnetic surveys of 35,000 Sq.kms during the period January 1977 to May 1977 was done by a contract ship named Dresser Explorer—this is a U.S ship—and an amount of \$, 72,272 has been paid. After that, another survey of 1898 line K.M.s. conducted during April and May 1979 by engaging a foreign survey vessel on contract. The data obtained by the surveys been interpreted. As a result of this interpretation two structures, Gamma and Beta were delineated for exploratory drilling. The drill ship 'Fredricksburg' was charter-hired for taking up exploratory drilling in the first structure the first structure is situated about 19 Kms. north east of Port Blair. We have also taken up another ship 'Gettysburg' which was charter-hired. 4,085 metres of drilling has been completed in the second structure situated 160 k.m. north-west of Port Blair. So, all possible steps to find more as and, if possible, oil, are being taken in the Andaman and Nicobar islands.

SHRI K.T. KOSALRAM : My next supplementary is this. The hon. Minister himself had been telling the press that in the Cauvery basin a lot of Gas is available. I want to know how much of gas is possible to get there, what are the steps taken for exploration and what action has been taken for compulsory exploitation.

MR. SPEAKER: You have now gone to Cauvery basin. Quite a long big leap.

SHRI P.C. SETHI : As far as Cauvery basin is concerned, in the Palk Strait, we have struck oil and gas. Only one well has produced oil. Now we will have to make more exploratory drilling. There are about 4 or 5 wells to be dug in order to prove the commercial viability of the wells.

DR. SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY : Sir, I am afraid Government does not realise the importance of what they have found.

MR. SPEAKER : It is your hope or knowledge.

DR. SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY  
Well, that is my expectation. Oil and gas have been located and they are working hard on it. The question is that Andaman and Nicobar Islands are traditionally being neglected as Kalapani by the Centre. I want to know whether they have integrated programmes to use this gas and oil to produce things of use for the people of Andaman and Nicobar Islands like putting up a

fertiliser plant and so on. If these programmes are not taken up, what is the use of this gas and oil. Are you going to transport it all the way from the island the mainland at all, or are you going to utilise them for producing the by-products for use in Andaman and Nicobar Islands ?

**SHRI P.C. SETHI :** Sir, gas has been struck in Andaman and Nicobar islands. But, it cannot be said that it is commercially viable. Therefore, a few more wells will have to be dug in order to find out the commercial viability of this gas. Certainly, if the commercial viability is established, we will take steps to see that this gas is properly utilised and not flared. As far as oil is concerned, it is not struck in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. We are aware of what we have found.

**MR. SPEAKER :** You would like to put a supplementary. Go ahead.

**SHRI K. MAYATHEVAR :** Regarding oil and gas, I shall confine myself to Andaman and Nicobar Islands, the Minister has been telling this House that in 1977-1979, exploratory works had been done.

I want to know from you what was the work done by this Government after January 1980 although I am a supporter of your Government. (*Interruptions*) I know the previous Government had been thrown out by the people of India and you have now been installed. What further steps do you take in oil exploration and further development of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands?

**MR. SPEAKER :** Is it your suggestion or question ?

**SHRI K. MAYATHEVAR :** That is because most of the people there are Tamilians. Therefore, I want to know whether you have taken serious steps following at least the footsteps of the Janata Government on this point, neglecting all the other things.

**SHRI P.C. SETHI :** As I have said before, there is continuity of the work, in respect of whatever work was done between January 1977 and May, 1977. We have now got the Magnetic and Seismic Survey Report. The findings of the Report are being interpreted. On that basis we will be digging more wells there, in order to assess what the position really is. The volume of the identified area is about 8,000 to 10,000 km. Naturally, it will take some time to commence the work. However, in 1981 December, in this very month, we will be starting further drillings.

### Radio and T.V. programmes on Dowry System

\*123. **SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE :** Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to lay a statement showing :

(a) how many Radio and Television programmes on the evil of the dowry system were broadcast and televised in the year 1981; and

(b) what was the nature of such programmes and who were invited to participate ?

**THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (KUMARI KUMUD-BEN M. JOSHI) :** (a) and (b) 291 programmes were telecast on this subject by the different Doordarshan Kendras in 1981. The number in All India Radio would be about 2,500.

These programmes were presented in various formats like documentaries, plays, TV films, interviews, discussions, etc., in Doordarshan and in special audience programmes, Women/Youth Programmes, educational broadcasts, rural programmes/features etc., in All India Radio.

People from the different cross sections of society like social workers, writers, artists, public figures, officials, etc., were invited to participate in these programmes.

**SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE :** May I know....

**MR. SPEAKER :** Lady Minister replying to the Lady Member..

**SHRI K. MAYATHEVAR :** The subject is also dowry.

**DR. SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY :** TV is also being given in dowry.

**SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE :** Dr. Subramaniam Swamy I hope will also prevent it.

**DR. SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY :** I have not taken a penny in dowry. I have only given.

**SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE :** Given ! That is also an offence.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Sir, in answer to part (b) of my question, where I asked, who were invited to participate in such programmes, the Hon. Minister has given