

OIL diversifies operations

By Our Correspondent

GAUHATI, January 12.

OIL India Ltd. is in the process of diversification with its liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) plant scheduled to go into production in April. It has already started supplying natural gas to the Assam state electricity board on a commercial basis and will begin construction of a small oil refinery at Kharsang in Arunachal Pradesh soon.

Since its inception on January 14, 1958, as a company owned jointly by the Central government and the Burmah Oil Company, till October 14, 1981, when the Burmah Oil Company of the U.K. gave up its 50 per cent interest to the government, OIL supplied 50 million tonnes of crude to the four refineries in the eastern sector at Barauni, Bongaigaon, Noonmati and Digboi. This resulted in a saving of foreign exchange of Rs. 12,000 crores. To date, it had produced 40 per cent of the on-shore crude produced in the country.

The company is on the threshold of expansion with new areas being granted to it in Rajasthan and in the Mahanadi off-shore basin. This is for the first time that OIL will start any kind of operation outside the north-eastern region.

OIL supplies three million tonnes of crude a year to the four refineries in the north-eastern region, whose total annual requirement is 4.8 million tonnes. The Oil and Natural Gas Commission supplies them the remaining 1.8 million tonnes of crude from its oil fields in Assam.

Maj. Gen. S. C. N. Jatar, chief resident executive of OIL told this correspondent at Dulliajan recently that the company's outlay for the sixth plan was about Rs. 500 crores. The break up of the outlay reflected the company's diversification process. The outlay for various projects was: Bay exploration project, Rs. 119 crores, Rajasthan on-shore exploration project Rs. 50 crores, LPG project Rs. 14 crores, Kharsang development project Rs. 29 crores and Rs. 48 crores to fulfil the company's crude oil commitments.

The LPG project will have a recovery plant, a bottling plant and facilities for bulk filling of tankers and wagons, besides providing other off-site facilities. The project will be able to serve five lakh domestic consumers.

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Maj. Gen. Jatar said in the Nigru petroleum exploration licence areas in Arunachal Pradesh, the company had demarcated a zone of interest in the 600-1500 metre range in Kharsang. Of the seven wells drilled in Kharsang, indications of oil were found in six.

Since then, a techno-economic feasibility report has been prepared envisaging a total capital outlay of Rs. 28.95 crores. OIL proposes to drill 43 additional wells in the Kharsang area in the next phase of drilling which started in November last year.

Production from the Kharsang oil wells is scheduled to begin in 1983 when 30,000 tonnes of crude is expected to be produced. The small refinery in Kharsang will go into stream in 1984 when the production in the area will go upto 80,000 tonnes. The production is likely to increase to 90,000 tonnes in 1985.

Referring to last year's oil discovery at Bogapani, east of Dulliajan, Maj. Gen. Jatar said after detailed production testing in the area, it had been established that Bogapani well number two was capable of producing 80 kilolitres of oil per day.

Jorajan to the east of Dulliajan is OIL's new oilfield where the recoverable reserves total 15 million tonnes. A project to develop the oilfield envisages the drilling of 64 development wells by 1986. Production from this oilfield is proposed to be raised to 1.22 million tonnes per annum from the existing 0.48 million tonnes.

During the sixth plan, Rs. 6.60 crores will be spent on increasing the production rate from the country's oldest oilfield at Digboi where the first well was drilled in 1888. Scientific reservoir engineering concepts and modern oil recovery techniques are being used to increase the recovery from the existing wells in Digboi which produced 42,800 tonnes of crude last year.

Maj. Gen. Jatar indicated that OIL would start accelerated programme for the development of oilfields to produce 32 to 37 million tonnes of crude apart from the already estimated recoverable reserves of 30 million tonnes. The programme would cost Rs. 365 crores and involve drilling of 70 exploratory wells and 300 development wells in four new belts — Duarmara-Bogapani area, Naga thrust, Margherita thrust and Moran area by 1992-93.

Regarding the abundant natural gas available in the Dulliajan area, Maj. Gen. Jatar said OIL produced two types of gas — associated gas found in oil wells and non-associated gas or free gas found in reservoirs. By developing the free gas reservoirs, OIL would be able to supply two million cubic metres of additional gas per day for 20 years.

Hindu immigrants are not foreigners: Deoras

CALCUTTA, January 12 (UNI): The RSS chief Mr. Balasaheb Deoras said that Hindus migrating from Bangladesh to Assam cannot be called foreigners.

Addressing a public meeting here, the RSS chief said that these Hindus were crossing over to India as they could not stay in Bangladesh.

He said that the Muslims, however, had no reason to cross over to India.

Mr. Deoras warned the government against largescale infiltration of foreigners into West Bengal and Bihar. Necessary steps should be taken to stop it, he added.

3 Cong. (I) MLAs defect in Assam

GAUHATI, January 12 (UNI & PTI).

ASSAM governor, Mr. Prakash Mehrotra, was approached today by the respective leaders of Congress (I) party and the "left and democratic alliance," in the 118-member state assembly to be called upon to form a ministry to replace President's rule.

At a meeting here with the governor at Raj Bhavan here this morning, the newly elected leader of the Congress (I) legislature party, Mr. Keshab Chandra Gogoi, told Mr. Mehrotra that he should be called upon to form a ministry as he was the leader of "the largest single party" in the state assembly.

However, the left alliance leader, Mr. Sarat Chandra Sinha, who met the governor separately with added strength to his group from three Congress (I) defectors, also claimed his right to be invited to form a ministry.

Mr. Sinha claimed the alliance strength to be 65 with the backing of the defectors, who had informed the governor that they were supporting the alliance.

The three Congress (I) defectors are: Mr. Golam Osmani, Mr. Afzalur Rahman and Mr. Abdus Souhan.

Mr. Sarat Chandra Sinha, requested the governor to accept the alliance's claim to form the ministry since it had absolute majority "beyond all reasonable doubts".

Mr. Sinha also said that the governor should not now go back on his

assurance that he would not impose a minority ministry in the state.

Except in the state secretariat and the North-East Frontier Railway headquarters at Maligaon, work in all government offices including banks, was virtually paralysed today almost all over the Brahmaputra valley of Assam as the employees abstained from duty.

Their one-day strike was in response to a call given by the co-ordination committee of six unions of employees to protest against alleged police atrocities on government staff and the people and the delay in finding a solution to the foreign nationals issue.

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