

By **Mail Today Bureau**  
in New Delhi

**M**INISTER of Petroleum and Natural Gas Dharmendra Pradhan on Monday exhorted the ONGC field teams to step up gas production during the next two quarters of the financial year.

The minister visited ONGC's drilling installation and Ankleshwar asset in Gujarat, flagging off a new well into production. There, witnessing the operations, he complimented the ONGC field crew for working in the challenging environment.

"Today is really an auspicious occasion being Krishna Janmashtami and also giving first production of gas from the well being drilled by ONGC," he remarked.

His first halt was at Rig EV 2000-2 near Dahej, Gujarat. He took a keen interest in meeting the rig crew and understanding the technicalities of drilling operations.

The minister was accompanied by ONGC chairman and MD Shashi Shanker, director (Onshore), Mr SK Moitra and ED-Asset manager (Ankleshwar Asset), Mr SA Ravi, besides senior executives of the Asset.



Pradhan inspects and approves ONGC drilling teams' field work in Gujarat.

# Pradhan tells ONGC to step on the gas

Mr Pradhan took a review meeting at CPF Gandhar where he was given a brief overview of the production from the four assets of western sector. He evinced keen interest in the new technologies like "low frequency seismic" (LFS) adopted for enhancing production from the existing fields.

He also asked the asset team to make concerted efforts to draw up strategies to further increase production in the remaining two quarters of this financial year.

Commenting on the CSR and skill development efforts of the asset he said that the employment of apprentices is commendable

but more budget allocations may be made for undertaking CSR programmes in the area.

This field visit comes at a time when oil and gas prices are shooting up in the international market and India's import bill is soaring.

This has led to an increase in the country's current account deficit and a weakening of the rupee.

Depreciation in the rupee has further increased the cost of crude imports which have to be paid in dollars.

Oil prices rose on Monday, supported by concerns that falling Iranian output will tighten markets once U.S. sanctions bite from Novem-

ber, but gains were limited by higher supply from OPEC and the United States. Brent crude oil touched the \$78.14 a barrel on Monday. 90.

The benchmark crude has risen strongly over the last two weeks with gaining more than 10 percent on expectations that global supply will tighten later this year.

U.S. sanctions are already curbing exports from Iran. Gas prices have been moving in tandem with oil prices and the retail price of natural gas has also been increased last week.

On Saturday, Indraprastha Gas Limited hiked the price of compressed natural gas used to fuel vehicles and piped natural gas for household kitchens in Delhi NCR. Earlier national oil companies had hiked the price of LPG as well.

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