

## Natural gas output up in 5 years

TCA Sharad Raghavan

**NEW DELHI:** Natural gas production in August rose 3.7 per cent, the first increase in almost five years, according to Oil Ministry data released on Monday. Crude oil production also grew 5.6 per cent last month, the highest monthly growth since June 2011.

Natural gas production was 2,836.5 million cubic metres (mcm) in August compared with 2,736.4 mcm in the year-earlier period, and 2,619 mcm in July 2015 – the first time output has grown year-on-year since November 2010. Most of the increase in natural gas production can be attributed to state-owned ONGC's onshore production, which grew 17 per cent.

The increase in ONGC's onshore gas production is due

to its fields in Andhra Pradesh – where production jumped almost sevenfold – and Tripura, where output increased by 1.5 times.

### Surge in production

ONGC's eastern offshore fields also saw a tremendous surge in production, from 1.3 mcm in August 2014 to 21.3 mcm last month. Oil India increased its natural gas production in August by 3.7 per cent, also contributing to the surplus in total production compared to last year.

Private sector producers saw a marginal dip in production levels, with output falling to 737.9 mcm in August 2015 compared to 739.4 mcm the previous year.

Domestic crude oil production in August was at 3.2 million tonnes up from 3 mil-

lion tonnes the previous year. Here, again, ONGC led the charge, with its western offshore fields increasing production by 7 per cent in August to 1.3 million tonnes. Cairn India's Rajasthan oil fields also increased their output substantially, by 18.4 per cent, to 735,700 tonnes. Overall, the private sector increased its oil production by 14 per cent in August.

Refinery throughput grew 5.8 per cent to 19.6 million tonnes from 18.5 million tonnes in August last year.

Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Monday chaired a meeting of the Consultative Committee of Parliament for the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas to discuss the marketing of petroleum products in a competitive environment.