

Polymetallic Nodules

743. SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Department of Ocean Development has undertaken any project to survey the Indian Ocean basin for Polymetallic Nodules (PMN);

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) total budget outlay for the current year for the programme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRONICS AND DEPARTMENT OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The survey and exploration activity is mainly to demarcate the one grade nodule deposits in the Central Indian Ocean Basin (CIOB) and obtained exclusive right from International Authority (ISA) for the development of mine site.

The present activity profile consists of collection of bulk samples, free fall sampling with spot photography at a grid of 12.5 km, closer grid sampling 5 x 5 km, updating geo-statistical resources on the basis of closer grid (12.5 km sampling), oceanographic baseline data collection, collection of time series oceanographic data using deep sea mooring system, processing of back scatter data from hydrosweep system and planning and design of EIA study.

(c) Total budget provision is Rs. 5.02 crores for survey and exploration for the current year.

Railway Line

744. SHRI RAMAKRISHNA KONATHALA : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have any proposal to lay a Railway line from Nalgonda to Nagarjunasagar and from there to Machena; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SURESH KALMADI) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Purchase Scam in Western Railway

745. SHRI ANNA JOSHI : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether in the Western Railway Store Department Head Quarters-Bombay a massive fraud to the tune of Rs. 9 crores in purchase has been detected;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the number of persons arrested and proceeded against in the Court of Law; and

(d) the action taken by the Government to save such situation in the future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SURESH KALMADI) : (a) and (b). A case involving irregularities in purchase of materials worth approximately Rs. 1.9 crores has been detected. The irregularities relate mainly to excessive indenting, splitting of the demand, purchase at high rates without following due procedure and procurement of items with vague description/no specification.

(c) Nil. Based on preliminary investigations, 14 staff have been suspended. Further punitive/disciplinary action will be taken in consultation with Central Vigilance Commission on completion of detailed investigations.

(d) Preventive measures to check recurrence of such instances already initiated by Railway include random checks by higher officers of cases pertaining to lower officers, streamlining of file movement, checks on indents by Head of Units and random checks of purchase cases by Accounts Branch.

Payment of Compensation

746. SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that civilian victims of Pakistan firing along LOC are demanding higher compensation;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT