

and other marine living resources has been sent to Antarctica recently;

- (b) if so, the details and findings thereof;
- (c) the estimated expenditure being incurred thereon;
- (d) the nature and aims of this expedition; and
- (e) the time by which the proposed targets are likely to be achieved ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILISERS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRONICS AND DEPARTMENT OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO) : (a) to (e). With a view to undertake a comprehensive resource survey of Krill resources and conduct a techno-economic feasibility study for commercial exploitation, the Department of Ocean Development launched a scientific expedition in December 1995 to the Antarctic waters adjoining Indian Ocean with 22 scientists and technical personnel onboard the DOD Fishery Oceanographic Research Vessel, Sagar Sampada. The expedition after conducting the survey is scheduled to return to Cochin by the middle of March 1996. The inputs from the techno-economic feasibility study will be made available to the Indian fishing industry to facilitate them to further explore the possibility of exploiting this living resource from the Antarctic waters.

The Department has spent approximately Rs. 0.73 lakhs on the expedition. In addition, the equipment onboard the vessel Sagar Sampada was also augmented at a cost of about Rs. 1.35 crores for acquisition of Krill trawl nets and associated equipment and to increase the endurance of the vessel making it fit to undertake the long cruise to Antarctica.

Based on a Memorandum of Understanding entered into between India and Poland, three Polish experts are also participating in the cruise to help the Indian scientists in fishery resources assessment and conducting the techno-economic feasibility study. Two representatives of the Indian fishing industry also participated to get a first hand knowledge about the availability of the resource.

The results of the expedition including the resource assessment report would be available after the return of the expedition from Antarctic waters.

[Translation]

#### Pak Firing

\*23. SHRI B. L. SHARMA PREM :

SHRI BRAHMANAND MANDAL :

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether Pakistani forces opened fire on Indian troops many a time along the line of control (LoC) during the last six months including February 1996;

(b) if so, the details thereof including the number of casualties;

(c) the reasons therefor;

(d) the counter action taken by the defence forces in this regard;

(e) the impact of those firings on the fencing of the international border between Baharpur near Punjab to gam in Akhnoor Sector; and

(f) the measures taken to protect civilians along the LoC ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT) AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI MALLIKARJUN) : (a) to (f). From 1 August 1995 till 21 February 1996, Pakistani forces have fired without provocation periodically at our troops along the Line of Control (LoC) which have resulted in certain casualties to the Army and the BSF personnel as well as to civilians.

Pakistani troops have been resorting to firing to aid infiltration/exfiltration of terrorists under the cover of fire.

Our response has always been for effect, in a graduated manner to ensure that incidents remain localised and so that there is no unnecessary escalation of tension. Such incidents are discussed in Flag Meetings between corresponding Field Commanders of both the countries so as to de-escalate tension. Important incidents are also discussed during the weekly telephonic conversation between the DGsMO of India and Pakistan.

During the above period, there have been 22 incidents of firing from Pakistani side along the International Border in J&K resulting in the killing of one Indian civilian and injury to another. Due to these firings, work on fencing on the International Border in the Jammu Sector has been temporarily discontinued.

Our Armed Forces keep a close watch on all developments affecting the LoC and the security of the local populace. The villagers are forewarned as and when there is a likelihood of firing in the area. Other specific measures include enforcement of curfew within a 5 km belt of the LoC at night, which is the time when maximum firing normally takes place. During the day time, villagers are evacuated to safer places, if necessary, where the effect of firing is not felt.

[English]

#### Setting up Shelters

\*24. SHRI RATILAL VARMA :

DR. K.D. JESWANI :

Will the Minister of URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state :