

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EARTH SCIENCES
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4092
ANSWERED ON:05.09.2012
DEVELOPMENT OF VESSELS
Anandan Shri K.Murugesan

Will the Minister of EARTH SCIENCES be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the country has access to about 0.5 million sq. kms of the Indian ocean which could be worth about Rs. 5,000 crore in resources;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether India has decided to develop vessels to explore Ocean floors for resources like minerals, metals and gas hydrates;
- (d) if so, the details thereof;
- (e) whether Chennai based National Institute of Ocean Technology has developed a robotic crawler that can plunge to 5,000 m. and be remote controlled by ship to scour precious metal and minerals; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EARTH SCIENCES (DR. ASHWANI KUMAR)

(a & b) Yes, Sir. The Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) as a nodal ministry of Government of India, is engaged in the exploration and developmental activities pertaining to polymetallic nodules lying on deep seabed in an area of 75000 sq. km in the Central Indian Ocean Basin (CIOB). This area lies outside the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of India, located about 2000 km from her southern tip. India was initially allotted an Area of 1,50,000 sq.km. in CIOB by the then Preparatory Commission of United Nations on 17th August, 1987. As per obligations, India relinquished 50% of the Area in phases and retained 75,000 sq km.

(c & d) Yes, Sir. India undertakes exploration of ocean floors by using our own vessels. As Ocean Research Vessel Sagar Kanya is more than 25 years old, Ministry has initiated action for her replacement.

(e & f) Ministry of Earth Sciences is engaged in development of integrated deep sea mining system for operating upto 6000 m water depth in phases. In the initial phases, National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT), an autonomous Institute under the Ministry has designed, developed and demonstrated a prototype shallow bed mining system consisting of collector, crusher & crawler which is capable of working upto a depth of 500 m.