

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) and (d). A special train is being run once a week between Bangalore and Quilon with effect from 18.12.1990. This arrangement will last upto 16.1.1991. In addition, four special trains are being run per week from Madras.

Plans for Oil and Natural Gas Exploration

*72. DR. SUDHIR RAY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the future plans to explore oil and natural gas in the country; and

(b) whether the present level of exploration will be maintained in future also?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS AND MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALVIYA): (a) As a part of long term strategy both intensive and extensive exploratory efforts are planned which would enable both immediate gains in terms of crude oil production, as also establishing adequate reserves and future exploration leads. Intensive exploration in Category I basins have resulted in identification and delineation of nearly all the obvious and simple type of hydrocarbon traps. More advanced survey techniques will be used to identify subtle and geologically more complex kind of combination traps. Frontier technology inputs for drilling and production in deeper waters is also planned. To supplement the efforts of the national oil companies, ONGC and OIL, international companies have been invited in there previous rounds of bidding to explore in blocks offered in the country.

(b) The tempo of exploration activities has to be maintained, if not increased.

Privatisation of Catering on Railways

*73. SHRI B.N. REDDY:
SHRI DHARMANNA
MONDAYYA SADUL:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have decided to privatise catering at the Railway Stations and on the trains;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reasons therefor and the steps proposed to be taken to ensure reasonable prices as well as better and efficient services by private caterers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BHAKTA CHARAN DAS): (a) to (c). Most of the catering units on Indian Railways are managed by private contractors. Departmental catering exist only at selected stations and trains. With a view to reducing the financial losses in departmental catering, it has been decided to privatise a few such units that are incurring losses.

Adequate safe-guards such as fixation of tariff, inspections, imposition of fines, termination of contracts, etc. already exist to ensure good quality of catering services at reasonable prices and these will be continued.

Appointment of Clerks/Typists in Indian Airlines

*74. SHRI DILEEP SINGH
BHURIA:
SHRI RAMASHRAY PRASAD
SINGH:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state: