

(c) the steps being taken to solve the impasse ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI RAM DULARI SINHA) : (a) and (b) Talks with Shri Laldenga are still continuing.

(c) The question does not arise.

Commercial Exploration and Processing of Polymetallic Nodules

3399. SHRI PRATAP BHANU SHARMA : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are working out the possibilities of commercial exploration and processing of polymetallic nodules from ocean;

(b) if so, the details of progress made during last three years; and

(c) whether Government have approached some foreign companies to obtain suitable know-how in this matter ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT, ATOMIC ENERGY, SPACE AND ELECTRONICS (SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL) : (a) Yes, Sir,

(b) The Department of Ocean Development has launched a programme on polymetallic nodules. India has been recognised as a Pioneer Investor and after detailed surveys and exploration of polymetallic nodules in the Central Indian Ocean covering more than 3 million sq. km. area, two mine sites, each of an area 150,000 sq. km. have been identified. India has already filed an application with the Preparatory Commission of the International Seabed Authority for the allotment of a pioneer area in the Indian Ocean for mining. Research and development work on mining nodules, including the related work on the collection of

environmental data, would be taken up after a mine site has been allocated to India by the Preparatory Commission. It has also been possible to extract the metals (copper, nickel and cobalt) from the polymetallic nodules on a laboratory scale and the process is being upgraded to semi-pilot scale of operation.

(c) No Sir, India has the requisite technological expertise which is being enhanced further.

District Level Planning Board in States

3400. SHRI PRATAP BHANU SHARMA : Will the MINISTER OF PLANNING be pleased to state :

(a) whether Central Government had given instructions to all the States to constitute District Level Planning Boards and District Level Manpower Planning Boards during the Sixth Five Year Plan period;

(b) if so, whether all the States have formed these boards at district level; and

(c) if so, details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI K. R. NARAYANAN) : (a) The State Governments were advised to set up District Planning Boards/Councils and District Manpower Planning and Employment Generation Councils.

(b) and (c) All the States except Haryana and Tripura have formed District Planning Boards known variously as District Planning Board/Council, District Development Board/Committee/Council, District Planning and Development Council, District Planning and Monitoring Committee, and District Coordination Committee.

As regards District Manpower Planning and Employment Generation Councils in different States, details are given in the statement laid on the table of the House [Placed in Library See No. LT—1085/85],