

Environmental Clearance by Reliance Industries Limited

*386. SHRI ABANI ROY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry has sought an explanation from Reliance Industries Limited on drilling for oil and gas in the East Coasts, without the mandatory environmental clearance, as reported in 'The Hindu' dated 18th July, 2002;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether the environmental norms has been flouted by the company in its drilling operation in the country?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (c) A complaint has been received alleging that M/s Reliance Industries, Limited (RIL) has already gone ahead with drilling operation in KG-DWN-98/3 (Block D6) off the coast of Andhra Pradesh without prior environmental clearance.

Information on the above was thereafter sought from Andhra Pradesh Pollution Control Boards and M/s Reliance Industries Limited. Replies have since been received from both these agencies and the same are being examined.

Damaged Railway Bridges

*387. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of rail bridges damaged in Western Railway during the recent floods;

(b) the total loss incurred due to the damage; and

(c) the steps taken to rebuild those bridges?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI NITISH KUMAR): (a) Following bridges and locations were damaged/ affected during recent rains/floods in Western Railway:

(i) Arch Bridge No. 144 between Palghar-Boisar stations.

(ii) Wing wall and sprandal wall of bridge on 203 & 223 respectively.

(iii) Minor breaches at two location between Kelve Road and Sanjan stations on Virar-Surat section.

(iv) Signalling equipment like point machine, track circuiting equipment and signalling cables were damaged in Mumbai area. Besides Optical Fibre Cable, associated equipment and Overhead Electrical Traction Equipments were damaged near Arch Bridge No. 144.

(b) As per preliminary estimate loss is approximately Rs. 2.5 crores.

(c) Traffic has been restored after bridging the affected location of Bridge No. 144 by temporary girders, and permanent bridge has been planned for construction at the location of Bridge No. 144 well before next monsoon. All other damage being minor, has been attended.

Optic Fibre Communication Project

*388. SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN:

SHRI MOOLCHAND MEENA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railway fibre optic communication project, RailTel, has failed to take-off, as the Railways have not been able to attract any telecom major as a JV partner, with a 49 per cent equity;

(b) whether talks with MTNL and power-grid have not succeeded; if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) whether, as a result, the Railways are off-loading parts of 49 per cent equity of their own PSUs; if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI NITISH KUMAR): (a) No, Sir. RailTel has started functioning. RailTel is presently executing works for providing optical fibre cable to connect the 4 major metros namely Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata and 4 mini metros namely Ahmedabad, Pune, Secunderabad and Bangalore. The Fibre Optic network connecting above cities is expected to be completed in the current financial year. RailTel has already taken Infrastructure Provider's-I (IP-I), Infrastructure Provider's—II (IP-II) and Internet service Provider (ISP) licenses. RailTel has started earning revenues by providing tower space for mounting antennae and bandwidth to Telecom Service Providers.