

In addition, a Memorandum of Understanding has also been signed between Oil & Natural Gas Corporation Ltd. and UNOCAL International Corporation of USA for detailed Geoscientific studies only, for areas in Tripura outside the bid blocks.

(c) Oil & Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) is continuing its exploration activities in Assam. It had to stop its activities in Nagaland due to certain problems. ONGC had drilled some wells in Meghalaya and Mizoram, but all went dry. No drillable prospect could be firmed up in Manipur, and the area is considered to have low prospectivity. However, part of Manipur covered under bid block (AA-ONJ/2) has been awarded to Tullow Oil Pic, Ireland for hydrocarbon exploration. Oil India Limited is also engaged in exploitation and exploration of crude oil in the State of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh in North-Eastern Region.

National Literacy Mission

*159. SHRI BRATIN SENGUPTA:
SHRI E. BALANANDAN:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have failed to spend Rs. 252 crore earmarked for the National Literacy Mission (NLM), during the Eighth Plan;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken to fix responsibility for the underspending?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI S.R. BOMMAI): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. During Eighth Plan, the allocation for various schemes of National Literacy Mission was Rs. 970.47 crores. The expenditure incurred under the schemes was Rs. 717.93 crores. The reasons for shortfall in expenditure were:

— The community and Voluntary agencies extended assistance in cash and

kind towards implementation of the programme. More than 10 million volunteers from different sections of society e.g. students, social workers, ex-servicemen, retired govt. officials served as volunteer-teachers and trainers to make literate the adult illiterate in the age group 15—35. The voluntary agencies voluntarily assisted in mass mobilisation and generating of environment conducive to literacy.

— Financial controls were tightened to ensure optimum release and utilisation of funds. Releases were made in instalments strictly as per the requirements of the literacy programme subject to submission of utilisation certificates, where due. The monitoring of the programme was made more effective by enjoining upon the State Directorates of Adult Education to hold monitoring meetings every month.

— Also, there was an economy cut of Rs. 62.95 crores in the budget allocation of the National Literacy Mission during the year 1995-96.

(c) Does not arise.

News item captioned "Watchdog body on plastic lets off big fish"

*160. SHRI GOVINDRAO ADIK: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of Government has been drawn to the news report, appearing in the Indian Express, dated 12th September, 1997, captioned, "Watchdog body on plastic lets off big fish";

(b) if so, the reaction of Government to the observations made therein and facts of the matter; and

(c) the details regarding the action taken/proposed in this regard for environmental protection?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ): (a) Yes, Sir.