

National Institute of Oceanography, a multi disciplinary oceanographic research institute of the Government of India, has two state of art research vessels- R. V. Sindhu Sadhna and R. V. Sindhu Sankalp. which carry out multi disciplinary oceanographic studies including geological and geophysical surveys for mineral exploration. NIO has been exploring Indian Ocean, Arabian Sea and bay of Bengal for non Biving resources.

The relative percentage of individual minerals varies from place to place depending on the hinterland geology and hydrodynamic conditions of the depositional area.

Processing of iron ore for value addition

115. SHRI K. J. ALPHONS: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

- (a) the quantity of iron ore required in India during the last three years;
- (b) amount of iron ore processed out of total ore mined in India for value addition; and
- (c) whether there is any plan to increase the percentage that will be processed in India?

THE MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI PRALHAD JOSHI): (a) to (c) As per available information, the consumption of iron ore was 166 million tonnes, 175 million tonnes and 189 million tonnes during 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19 respectively. Since 2015, 24 iron ore blocks have been auctioned. Notice inviting tenders for 26 more iron blocks have been issued.

GST on Haj pilgrimage

†116. SHRI P.L. PUNIA: Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) the percentage of Goods and Services Tax (GST) charged on Haj pilgrimage;
- (b) the net revenue earned by Government per year from the GST charged on Haj pilgrimage;
- (c) whether Government intends to remove GST applicable on Haj pilgrimage; and
- (d) if not, the reasons therefor?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.