

PARLIAMENT QUESTION: DEEP OCEAN MISSION

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Deep Ocean Mission (DOM), a pilot initiative comprises of six verticals was launched in 2021 to unlock the blue economy and sustainably managing ocean resources. These six verticals focus on a) Development of Technologies for Deep Sea Mining, Manned Submersible and Underwater Robotics, b) Development of Ocean Climate Change Advisory Services, c) Technological Innovations for Exploration and Conservation of Deep-Sea Biodiversity, d) Deep Ocean Survey and Exploration, e) Energy and Fresh water from the Ocean, and f) Advanced Marine Station for Ocean Biology. The mission envisages expanding the country's scientific research and technological capabilities, with immediate spin-offs in underwater engineering innovations, asset inspection and the promotion of ocean literacy and human resource development.

DOM helps expand scientific knowledge of deep-sea biodiversity and its ecosystems. Under the Mission, surveys of nearly 25 seamounts (biodiversity hotspots) in the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal have been conducted. These surveys help understand species' distribution, population connectivity, and habitat associations, which can be utilised to improve efforts in sustainable fisheries and strengthen biodiversity conservation.

Around 39 potentially new-to-science species have been discovered. The geophysical surveys have identified sites of two active and two inactive hydrothermal vents (which are potential sites of multi-mineral deposits).

A total of 138 research projects to various national institutions across the country have been sanctioned under the Deep Ocean Mission as of date, at a total projected cost of Rs. 358.56 Cr.

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