

# Science Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh Announces Historic Milestone: India Secures Exclusive Rights for Exploration of Polymetallic Sulphides in the Carlsberg Ridge in the Indian Ocean

## India Becomes First Country to Hold Two PMS Exploration Contracts with the International Seabed Authority; Recognised as Pioneer Investor

## Deep Ocean Mission launched by PM Narendra Modi, which focuses on seabed mineral exploration, mining technology development, and strengthening India's 'Blue Economy Initiatives'

## Reaffirms 30-Year Partnership with ISA; To Host 8th ISA Annual Contractors Meeting in Goa

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Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Earth Sciences; Science & Technology, MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr. Jitendra Singh announced the signing of a new 15-year contract between the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) and the International Seabed Authority (ISA) for exclusive rights to explore Polymetallic Sulphides (PMS) in the allotted 10,000 sq km area of the Carlsberg Ridge in the Indian Ocean.

With this, India has become the first country in the world to hold two contracts with ISA for PMS exploration, reaffirming its pioneering role in deep-sea resource exploration and its strategic presence in the Indian Ocean.

Dr. Jitendra Singh said that the new contract is a significant step towards realizing the vision of Deep Ocean Mission launched by PM Narendra Modi, which focuses on seabed mineral exploration, mining technology development, and strengthening India's 'Blue Economy Initiatives'. He added, "By formalising exclusive rights for PMS exploration in the Carlsberg Ridge, India has further consolidated its leadership in deep-sea research and exploration. This will enhance our maritime presence and build national capacity for future resource utilisation."

Polymetallic Sulphides contain valuable metals such as iron, copper, zinc, silver, gold, and platinum, and are precipitates formed by hot hydrothermal fluids from oceanic crust. Their strategic and commercial potential

has attracted global attention, placing India at the forefront of deep-sea resource exploration.

Highlighting India's longstanding partnership with ISA, Dr. Jitendra Singh recalled that India was the first country to receive an area for polymetallic nodule exploration in international waters and was designated as a "Pioneer Investor." With two PMS contracts now in place—one in the Central Indian Ridge & Southwest Indian Ridge and another in the Carlsberg Ridge—India also holds the largest exploration area allocated for PMS in the international seabed.

"India's 30-year association with the ISA has been a source of pride, and as ISA celebrates its 30th anniversary, India reaffirms its commitment to working closely with ISA to deliver on its mandate for the common heritage of humankind," Dr. Singh said. He also announced that India will be hosting the 8th ISA Annual Contractors Meeting from 18–20 September in Goa, marking another milestone in India's leadership role in seabed exploration.

Speaking on the occasion, Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences, Dr. M. Ravichandran, noted that it was a proud moment for MoES and its autonomous institute, the National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR), Goa, to sign the second PMS exploration contract. "This marks India as the first member state and government contractor of ISA to hold two PMS exploration contracts. It is also a matter of pride that India now has the largest area allocated globally in the International Seabed for PMS exploration," he said.

Dr. Ravichandran added that India looks forward to strengthening its cooperation with ISA to generate more scientific knowledge of unexplored seabed ecosystems and to ensure effective protection of the marine environment while harnessing mineral resources for the benefit of humankind.





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