

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF MINES
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1241
ANSWERED ON 10.03.2025

DEEP-SEA AND COASTAL SAND MINING IN KERALA

1241. DR. JOHN BRITTAS:

Will the Minister of Mines be pleased to state:

- (a) the details and status of projects approved /in-principle approved/ under consideration by Central Government for deep-sea/coastal sand mining/off shore mining in the State of Kerala and its off shores;
- (b) the details of the number of mining blocks allocated, private sector involvement, and projected extraction volumes;
- (c) whether Centre conducted any comprehensive environmental and socio-economic impact assessment, considering the concerns raised by Kerala Government, coastal communities and environmental groups;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the measures taken to address the concerns of State Government, fisher folk, coastal communities, etc., regarding potential livelihood losses and other concerns?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF COAL AND MINES
(SHRI G. KISHAN REDDY)

(a): The Central Government has launched the first tranche of auction of 13 offshore blocks on 28.11.2024 for grant of composite licence i.e. exploration licence-cum-production lease. This includes three offshore blocks of construction sand off the coast of Kerala beyond the territorial waters. As such the blocks are not on the coast of Kerala. The details of these blocks are as under:

Sl. No.	Block Name	Coast/ Sea	Area (in sq. km.)	Resources (in Million Tonnes)
1.	Kollam CS Block-1	West Coast, Arabian Sea	79.00	100.33
2.	Kollam CS Block-2	West Coast, Arabian Sea	78.00	100.64
3.	Kollam CS Block-2	West Coast, Arabian Sea	85.00	101.45

(b): So far, no allocation of offshore blocks has been done.

(c) & (d): In order to conserve marine species, Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change (MoEF & CC) has notified 130 Marine Protected Areas across the Coastal States and Islands and 106 coastal and marine sites have been identified and prioritized as Important Coastal and Marine Biodiversity Areas (ICMBAs) to take care of marine species conservation. The offshore blocks have been carved by excluding these areas.

(e): The three offshore blocks notified for auction off the coast of Kerala are beyond the territorial waters. There are adequate provisions in the Offshore Areas Mineral (Development and Regulation) Act, 2002 and the rules made thereunder to safeguard ecological balance, bio-diversity and protecting the interest of fishermen.

Section 16A of the Offshore Areas Mineral (Development and Regulation) Act, 2002 provides for establishment of Offshore Areas Mineral Trust as a non-profit autonomous body. Accordingly, the Offshore Areas Mineral Trust has been established vide S.O. 3246(E) dated 09.08.2024. The coastal States have been made members of the Governing Body and Executive Committee of the Trust.

The funds accruing to the Trust shall, *inter-alia*, be used for research, administration, studies and related expenditure with respect to offshore areas and mitigation of any adverse impact that may be caused to the ecology in the offshore area, due to operations undertaken, providing relief upon the occurrence of any disaster in the offshore area and for the interest and benefit of persons affected by exploration or production operations undertaken.
