

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO- 145
ANSWERED ON- 21/07/2025

EXPLORATION OF UNDISCOVERED OIL AND GAS RESERVES IN THE COUNTRY

145. SHRI SANA SATHISH BABU:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:-

- (a) whether Government has undertaken any studies or research into undiscovered oil and gas reserves during the last five years;
- (b) if so, the total number of exploration projects undertaken, State- wise and particularly in the state of Andhra Pradesh over last five years;
- (c) the region- wise volume of reserves discovered and the steps taken for their utilisation;
- (d) the total fund allocated and utilised for such projects, State-wise including Andhra Pradesh;
- (e) the criteria followed for basin selection, evaluation of commercial viability, and environmental assessments; and
- (f) the status of Mission Anveshan and the steps taken to attract investment, promote technology transfer, and expand strategic petroleum reserves?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROELUM & NATURAL GAS
(SHRI SURESH GOPI)

(a), (b) & (c): Studies, Research, Surveys etc. for assessment of potential oil and gas reserves in the country, including the state of Andhra Pradesh, have been undertaken on ongoing basis which inter- alia include the National Seismic Programme (NSP), Airborne Gravity Gradiometry and Gravity Magnetic Survey (AGG & GM), Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) Survey and Mission Anveshan etc. Government under Open Acreage Licensing Policy (OALP) and Discovered Small Field (DSF) Policy has awarded a total of 112 blocks and the operators who have been awarded these blocks have drilled a total of 101 Exploratory Wells during the last five years.

(d) As mentioned in above response, the surveys/studies were conducted for sedimentary basins and were not restricted to specific states or limited by state boundaries. The total cost of these activities was Rs. 4448 Crores.

e) The selection of sedimentary basins for exploration is guided by their hydrocarbon prospectivity, categorized into:

- **Category I** – Commercially producing basins
- **Category II** – Basins with discovered but undeveloped resources
- **Category III** – Geologically prospective but largely unexplored frontier basins

Basins in Categories II and III are prioritised for geoscientific studies.

All exploration and development activities are subject to environmental clearances in accordance with the regulations of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) and the applicable Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) notifications and guidelines.

f) Government has approved Mission Anveshan in 2024 at an estimated cost of Rs.792 cr. 7,392.42 Line Kilometre seismic data has been acquired till date under Mission Anveshan. To attract investment, promote technology transfer and expand strategic petroleum reserves, the Government has taken the following steps:

- i. Policy under PSC regime for early monetization of hydrocarbon discoveries, 2014.
- ii. Discovered Small Field Policy, 2015.
- iii. Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy (HELP), 2016 providing for, *inter-alia*, Lower Royalty Rates, Zero Revenue Share (till Windfall Gain) and no drilling commitment in Phase-I in OALP Blocks under Category II and III basins to attract bidders.
- iv. Policy for Extension of PSCs, 2016 and 2017.
- v. Policy for early monetization of Coal Bed Methane, 2017.
- vi. Setting up of National Data Repository, 2017.
- vii. Appraisal of Un-appraised areas in Sedimentary Basins under National Seismic Programme, 2017.
- viii. Policy framework for extension of PSCs for Discovered Fields and Exploration Blocks under Pre-New Exploration Licensing Policy (Pre-NELP), 2016 and 2017.
- ix. Policy to Promote and Incentivize Enhanced Recovery Methods for Oil and Gas, 2018.
- x. Policy Framework for exploration and exploitation of Unconventional Hydrocarbons under Existing Production Sharing Contracts (PSCs), Coal Bed Methane (CBM) Contracts and Nomination Fields, 2018.
- xi. Natural Gas Marketing Reforms, 2020.
- xii. With coordinated efforts of Government, about 1 Million Sq. Km. (SKM) 'No-Go' area in offshore, which were blocked for exploration for decades, were released for E&P activities in September, 2022.
