

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS  
**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 145**  
ANSWERED ON- 01/12/2025

**ANDAMAN BASIN OFFSHORE OIL DISCOVERY**

145. SMT. PRIYANKA CHATURVEDI:

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

- (a) given recent natural gas discoveries in Andaman Basin being described as potentially unlocking decades of energy potential for India;
- (b) the current estimates of total recoverable reserves in Andaman Sea region of natural gas, and manner in which these estimates compare to other domestic basins currently under exploration;
- (c) whether technical challenges are anticipated in undertaking deep-water drilling and production activities in region, given its complex geological and seismic conditions, and manner in which Ministry plans to address them through partnerships or technology transfers; and
- (d) whether Ministry has established environmental safeguards and regulatory protocols to ensure exploration and extraction activities in this region without harming its fragile marine ecosystems and biodiversity?

**ANSWER**

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS

(SHRI SURESH GOPI)

(a) & (b): Government is taking sustained measures towards exploring and identifying crude oil and hydrocarbon reserves in the Andaman-Nicobar (AN) basin so that they can contribute to the country's long term energy security and reduce import dependence. Following the introduction of the Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy (HELP), the Government had allocated four blocks for oil and gas exploration in the Andaman-Nicobar Basin, covering approximately 23,261 square kilometre (SKM). Exploratory efforts have resulted in the acquisition of 8,501 line kilometres of 2-Dimensional (2D) seismic data and 3,270 SKM of 3D seismic data in these blocks and three wells have been drilled in these blocks.

India's Hydrocarbon Resource Assessment Study (HRAS) 2017 estimates hydrocarbon resources of 371 Million Metric Tons of Oil Equivalent (MMTOE) in the AN Basin. Subsequent to HRAS 2017, a 2D broadband seismic survey has been completed in 2024

covering approximately 80,000 line kilometres of India's Exclusive Economic Zone (including in Andaman offshore)

Comparison with other domestic basins currently under exploration: 2P (Proven and Probable) EUR (Estimated Ultimate Recovery) (excluding contingent resources) in other domestic producing basins are provided below:

| SI No. | Basin                  | 2P EUR (MMTOE) |
|--------|------------------------|----------------|
| 1      | Krishna-Godavari       | 406.5          |
| 2      | Mumbai Basin           | 1825.6         |
| 3      | Rajasthan Basin        | 162.2          |
| 4      | Cauvery Basin          | 75.2           |
| 4      | Assam Shelf            | 631.8          |
| 5      | Assam Arakan Fold Belt | 81             |
| 6      | Cambay                 | 538.5          |
| 7      | Vindhyan               | 0.3            |
| 8      | Bengal-Purnea          | 5.0            |

(c): Deepwater drilling and production operations in offshore locations including Andaman Basin face significant technical challenges due to complex geology, distance from land, high seismicity, changing weather conditions and high cost of operations. For the Andaman Basin, infrastructure gaps and extreme remoteness further increase operational complexity.

To address these challenges, Government, through the National Oil Companies, are promoting collaborations with leading international deepwater operators and service providers, ensuring access to advanced seismic imaging, modern drilling technologies, and improved well-design and safety practices tailored for complex offshore environments. Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) has signed a strategic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with BP in July 2025, to collaborate on drilling wells, to enhance geological understanding and unlocking untapped hydrocarbon potential.

(d): To ensure environmental safeguards, exploration activities can only commence after due clearance under the EIA Notification, 2006 (as amended). The EIA process involves scientific assessment, stakeholder consultation (including with local communities and fisherfolk), and clearance from the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC). Only upon securing these clearances, can companies begin operations, with all mandated safeguards in place.

\*\*\*\*\*