

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1897
ANSWERED ON 09/03/2026

EXPLORATION PROGRESS AND DOMESTIC HYDROCARBON PRODUCTION

1897 SMT. KIRAN CHOUDHRY:
SHRI MITHLESH KUMAR:
SHRI CHUNNILAL GARASIYA:

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

- (a) impact of the Oilfields (Regulation and Development) Amendment Act, 2025 and the Petroleum and Natural Gas Rules, 2025, on simplifying approval processes and enhancing investor participation in oil exploration and production activities;
- (b) extent to which blocks awarded under the Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy (HELP) have progressed to seismic survey completion, exploratory drilling and commercial production stages;
- (c) whether any assessment has been undertaken regarding the extent to which recent upstream regulatory reforms are expected to enhance domestic crude oil and natural gas production and reduce import dependency over the medium term; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS
(SHRI SURESH GOPI)

(a) to (d): The Oilfield (Regulation and Development) Amendment Act, 2025 was enacted and came into effect on 15th April, 2025. The amended ORD Act aims to foster an investor-friendly environment that enhances Ease of Doing Business (EoDB). The Petroleum and Natural Gas Rules, notified on 09.12.2025, accordingly reflect the provisions of the amended ORD Act. These major regulatory reforms are aimed at incentivizing exploration in previously under-explored and frontier areas, enhance recovery from existing producing fields, and attract domestic and global investment in the upstream sector and thereby increasing production of domestic Crude Oil and Natural Gas.

The Salient Features of the Oilfield (Regulation and Development) Amendment Act, 2025 which *inter-alia* include removing difficulties and boosting investors' confidence, are as under:

- i. Delinking of petroleum operations from mining operations;

- ii. Broadening of the scope of the expression “mineral oils”;
- iii. Introducing the concept of “petroleum lease”;
- iv. Granting lease on stable terms;
- v. Strengthening petroleum operations through rules framed for governing various functional aspects, such as, grants of leases or licences, their extension or renewal, sharing of production and processing facilities including infrastructure and safety at oilfields;
- vi. Providing for efficacious dispute resolution;
- vii. Decriminalising the provisions of the Act.
- viii. Introduction of penalties, adjudication by an adjudicating authority and appeal as against the order of adjudicating authority;
- ix. Creating an environment for facilitating energy transition by enabling development of comprehensive energy projects for harnessing wind and solar energy along with mineral oil at oilfields.

The government had launched Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy (HELP) in 2016. A total of 172 exploration blocks covering the area of 3,78,652 Square Kilometre have been awarded to successful bidders under 9 bidding rounds. The details of work undertaken till date are as under:

2D seismic survey (in Line Kilometre)	3D Seismic Survey (in Square Kilometre)	Exploratory wells
35,667	48,120	129

Further, 18 discoveries have been notified in OALP blocks and one discovery out of these discoveries is currently under production.
