

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF MINES  
**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 5091**  
ANSWERED ON 02.04.2025

**LICENSES FOR OFFSHORE MINING**

5091. PROF. SOUGATA RAY:

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has started the process to grant licenses for production leases and composite licenses for offshore mining among seashore of the country;
- (b) if so, the details of the seashore mineral blocks proposed for offshore mining across the country, State-wise;
- (c) whether the Government has conducted any scientific study on the impacts in the fragile marine eco system and bringing an end to the livelihood of lakhs of fishermen of the country;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the steps being taken by the Government to ensure the livelihood of fishermen of such areas?

**ANSWER**

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

(a) & (b): 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, in accordance with the Offshore Areas Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 2002. These blocks include three blocks of construction sand off Kerala Coast, 3 blocks of Lime Mud off Gujarat Coast & 7 blocks of Polymetallic Nodules and Crust off Great Nicobar Island.

(c) to (e): As per Rule 5(2) of the Offshore Areas Operating Right Rules, 2024, prior consultation with stakeholder Ministries/Departments including Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF & CC) and Department of Fisheries is mandatory before notifying any offshore area for grant of operating right.

In the present case, the Ministry of Mines has consulted the MoEF&CC, Department of Fisheries and other related Ministries/Departments before notification of above

blocks for auction and the no objection of all Ministries/Departments was received prior to notification for auction.

In order to conserve marine species, 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.

As per the provisions of the Offshore Areas Mineral (Auction) Rules, 2024, before execution of an operating right, the bidders are required to obtain all consents, approvals, permits, no-objections and the like as may be required under applicable laws for commencement of production operations.

As per the provisions of the Offshore Areas Mineral Conservation and Development Rules, 2024, no production operations shall be undertaken except in accordance with a production plan. The production plan, *inter-alia*, includes environment management plan indicating baseline information, impact assessment and mitigation measures.

Further, Section 16A of the Act 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 aforesaid 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.

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