

**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 571**  
**TO BE ANSWERED ON 06 FEBRUARY, 2025**

**Hydrocarbon Exploratory Drilling Projects in Hollongapar Gibbon Sanctuary**

571: Shri Pradyut Bordoloi:

पेट्रोलियम और प्राकृतिक गैस मंत्री

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

- (a) the details of the guidelines governing the allocation and granting of hydrocarbon exploratory projects;
- (b) whether there is any confirmed data on hydrocarbon reserves that are yet unexploited and if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the reasons for greenlit the hydrocarbon exploratory drilling in the Eco-Sensitive Zone of the notified Hollongapar Gibbon Sanctuary along with the criteria for choosing the firm involved in it?

**ANSWER**

पेट्रोलियम और प्राकृतिक गैस मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री  
(श्री सुरेश गोपी)

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

(a) to (c): Licenses for exploratory projects in oil and gas are granted under the provisions of Oilfields (Regulations and Development) Act and under the policies notified from time to time by the Central Government. Under Open Acreages Licensing Policy (OALP), companies are allowed to bid for unexplored oil and gas blocks (acreages) in India through an open bidding process. The evaluation of bids is done based on a work program or financial terms as per the revenue-sharing model and blocks awarded. Production of hydrocarbons takes place from proven hydrocarbon reserves which are continuously accreted based on the discoveries made through exploratory efforts and also from continuous reassessment of underlying reservoirs. The total crude oil and natural gas reserves in country are currently estimated as under:

	<b>Crude Oil Reserves (MMT) (2P+2C)</b>	<b>Natural Gas Reserves (BCM) (2P+2C)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>671.4</b>	<b>1094.2</b>

[As per Petroleum Resource Management System (PRMS), as on 01.04.2024]

Source: Directorate General of Hydrocarbons

BCM: Billion Cubic Metre, MMT: Million Metric Tonne, 2P: Proven + Probable, 2C: Contingent

Exploratory activities can only be commenced by the Awardees subject to availing all statutory clearances as applicable, such as Environmental Clearances (EC), coastal zone clearances, etc. Grant of EC involves an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) study, including public hearing and proper assessment of exploration activities on environment. E&P activities are undertaken in synergy with steps to enhance the livelihood of the people and ensuring minimal impact on the environment. For activities within the Eco-Sensitive Zones (ESZ) of protected areas, wildlife clearance is also mandated. This clearance is issued by the Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife (NBWL), which serves as the apex body for granting approvals in such areas. Only upon obtaining this clearance can the operator proceed with drilling activities in ESZs.

Hollongapar Gibbon Sanctuary falls within the block boundary of block AA-ONHP-2017/4. This block is located in Assam Arakan Basin and was awarded to M/s Vedanta Limited (100% Participating Interest) under OALP round-I. The Revenue Sharing Contract (RSC) of the block was signed on 1st October 2018. The Environment Clearance for drilling of Exploratory wells in AA-ONHP-2017/4 block was granted by State Environment Impact Assessment Authority, Assam to M/s Vedanta Limited under the provisions of EIA notification after assessment by the State Level Expert Appraisal Committee including field visit undertaken by the Committee. Further, the Exploration operations are being carried out in accordance with decisions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court.

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