

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF MINES
LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. *57
ANSWERED ON 23.07.2025

AUCTIONING OF OFFSHORE MINERAL BLOCKS

*57. SHRI HIBI EDEN:

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

- (a) whether any independent and impartial Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) were conducted before identifying and tendering the thirteen offshore mining blocks in the country, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (b) whether the Government has consulted coastal communities in Kerala before floating tenders for the auction of three offshore mineral blocks, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the Government is considering to cancel or revise the tender process until such consultation is held, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (d) whether the Government is aware of the unanimous opposition by political parties and fishing communities in Kerala to deep-sea mining activities proposed off its coast, if so, the details thereof and the action taken thereon?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (d): A statement is laid on the table of the House.

THE STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 57 REGARDING 'AUCTIONING OF OFFSHORE MINERAL BLOCKS ASKED BY SHRI HIBI EDEN, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR REPLY ON 23RD JULY, 2025.

(a) & (b): As per Rule 5(2) of the Offshore Areas Operating Right Rules, 2024, prior consultation with stakeholder Ministries/Departments, is mandatory before notifying any offshore area for grant of operating right. In the present case, the Ministry of Mines has consulted related Ministries/Departments including the Department of Fisheries and Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), before notification of blocks for auction and the no objection of all Ministries/Departments was received prior to notification for auction.

The successful bidder of composite licence is required to undertake exploration in the offshore area as per the Offshore Areas Existence of Mineral Resources Rules (OAEMRR), 2024. One of the requirements for exploration includes the requirement for preliminary environmental impact assessment (EIA) studies. Thereafter, grant of production lease to Composite License Holder may be considered by the Government.

Further, 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. The concerns of fishermen and local communities will be specifically addressed during the preparation of the production plan and Environmental Management Plan (EMP).

Earlier, a notification dated 07.06.2010 was issued for allocation of 62 offshore blocks including blocks off the coast of Kerala for the grant of exploration licences. At that time also, no prior Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) were conducted before issuing notification.

(c): No such proposal is under consideration.

(d): The issues raised regarding offshore mining are addressed through the provisions made in the Rules under the Offshore Areas Mineral (Development and Regulation) Act.
