

**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.3184**  
**TO BE ANSWERED ON 07<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2025**

**Boosting of Domestic Crude Oil and Natural Gas Production**

3184. Dr. D Ravi Kumar:

**पेट्रोलियम और प्राकृतिक गैस मंत्री**

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

- (a) the steps taken by the Government to boost domestic crude oil and natural gas production and reduce dependency on imports in line with the 2025 energy security goals;
- (b) the response of private players to bids under the Open Acreage Licensing Policy (OALP) through the latest bid rounds including Round-VIII concluded in 2023;
- (c) the current number of private oil companies engaged in exploration activities across the country and reasons for their limited participation despite policy reforms;
- (d) the current share of private companies in exploration output keeping in view that ONGC has drilled over hundred exploratory wells in 2023-24; and
- (e) the reasons for the Ministry's proposal to offer 60% stake and operatorship in producing fields like Mumbai High and Bassein & Satellite to international partners and its implications on domestic control and revenue?

**ANSWER**

**पेट्रोलियम और प्राकृतिक गैस मंत्रालय में राज्यमंत्री  
(श्री सुरेश गोपी)**

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

- (a) Government has taken various policy decisions and steps to boost domestic crude oil and natural gas production and reduce dependency on import of oil and gas which, *inter alia*, include:
- i. Policy under Production Sharing Contract (PSC) regime for early monetization of Hydrocarbon discoveries, 2014;
  - ii. Discovered Small Field Policy, 2015;
  - iii. Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy (HELP), 2016
  - iv. Policy for Extension of PSCs, 2016 and 2017;
  - v. Policy for early monetization of Coal Bed Methane, 2017;
  - vi. Setting up of National Data Repository, 2017;
  - vii. Approval of Un-appraised areas in Sedimentary Basins under National Seismic Programme, 2017;
  - viii. Policy frameworks for extension of Production Sharing Contracts (PSCs) for Discovered Fields and Exploration Blocks under Pre-New Exploration Licensing Policy (Pre-NELP) 2016 & 2017;

- ix. Policy to Promote/Incentivize Enhanced Recovery Methods of Oil/Gas 2018;
- x. Policy Framework for exploration and exploitation of Unconventional Hydrocarbons under Existing Production Sharing Contracts (PSCs), Coal Bed Methane (CBM) Contracts and Nomination Fields, 2018;
- xi. Natural Gas Marketing Reforms, 2020;
- xii. Lower Royalty Rates, Zero Revenue Share (till Windfall Gain) and no drilling commitment in Phase-I in OALP Blocks under Category II and III basins to attract bidders;
- xiii. Release of about 1 Million Sq. Km. (SKM) “No-Go” area in offshore which were earlier blocked for exploration for decades;
- xiv. Amendments in the Oilfields (Regulation and Development) Act, 1948 to promote ease of doing business, contractual stability, operational efficiency and faster dispute resolution.

(b)& (c) In OALP-VIII and OALP-IX rounds, total four (04) private sector companies participated in the bidding process. The details of Bids are tabulated below: -

S. No.	Company Name(s)	No. of bids submitted in OALP-VIII	No. of bids submitted in OALP-IX
1	Vedanta Ltd.	1	28
2	Sun Petrochemicals Private Limited	1	7
3	Reliance Industries Ltd + BP Exploration (Alpha) Ltd.	1	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>36</b>

More than 15 private oil companies are engaged in exploration activities in Exploration and Production (E&P) industry across the country. The E&P industry is capital-intensive, requiring significant upfront investment, which can be a deterrent for new entrants and smaller players. Further, inherent risks associated with exploration activities and fluctuating commodity prices make securing financing challenging. Apart from this, Global oil and gas price volatility can impact the economic viability of projects which make it difficult to predict returns on investment.

To address the issues, the Government have from time to time introduced Policy Reforms as per the feedback received from the investors and changing dynamics of hydrocarbon industry with the aim to enhance ease of doing business and attract private players to the E&P Sector.

(d) In 2023–24, ONGC drilled 103 exploratory wells whereas private companies collectively drilled 11 wells in the same period.

(e) No such proposal for sale of stake is currently under consideration of Government.

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