

LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. *163
TO BE ANSWERED ON 11th December, 2025

Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy

*163. Shri Sasikanth Senthil:

पेट्रोलियम और प्राकृतिक गैस मंत्री

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

- (a) the details of offshore areas in the South of Cape Comorin notified for bidding under the Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy (HELP), block-wise;
- (b) whether the Government has examined ecological or marine concerns raised regarding exploration activities near sensitive fishing grounds such as the Wadge Bank; and
- (c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

पेट्रोलियम और प्राकृतिक गैस मंत्री
(श्री हरदीप सिंह पुरी)

MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS
(SHRI HARDEEP SINGH PURI)

(a) to (c): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

**STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (c) OF LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. *163 TO BE ANSWERED ON 11.12.2025 REGARDING
“HYDROCARBON EXPLORATION AND LICENSING POLICY” ASKED BY SHRI
SASIKANTH SENTHIL**

(a) to (c): Exploration blocks are awarded by Government with a view to reduce import dependence in the Oil and Gas Sector and to promote domestic exploration. India has significant untapped potential in oil and gas resources, and realising this potential is essential for strengthening long-term energy security. Government is sensitive to ecological concerns associated with such activities and the need for a balance between resource development and environmental protection.

Government have put on offer an exploration block CY-DWHP-2024/1 (offshore area near the Cape Comorin) measuring an area of 9990.96 sq. Km for bidding under the Open Acreage Licensing Policy (OALP) Bid Round-X. This offshore deepwater block lies within India's Exclusive Economic Zone and within the territorial jurisdiction of Government of India. The block CY-DWHP-2024/1 is entirely outside the demarcated area of the Wadge Bank as well as the core zone of other Reserves. Three ultra-deepwater blocks (CY-UDWHP-2022/1, CY-UDWHP-2022/2 and CY-UDWHP-2022/3 with area 9514.63, 9844.72 and 7795.45 sq. km respectively) have earlier been awarded to ONGC through bidding round OALP-IX, which are located to the south of Cape Comorin.

Mere award of the blocks does not entitle the awardees to initiate drilling activities. To ensure environmental safeguards, drilling can commence only after due clearance under the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification, 2006 (as amended). The EIA process, which extends to offshore areas upto 12 nautical miles, involves scientific assessment, necessary coastal regulatory zone clearances (state authority) / clearance from Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC). Only upon securing these clearances / compliances under environmental guidelines, can companies begin drilling operations, with all mandated safeguards inplace.

This operational framework reflects Government's commitment to maintain a balance between safeguarding ecosystems and advancing long-term energy security through responsible exploration activity.
