

**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2040**  
**TO BE ANSWERED ON 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2025**  
**Modernisation of Upstream Operations under HELP**

2040. Dr. Pradeep Kumar Panigrahy:

**पेट्रोलियम और प्राकृतिक गैस मंत्री**

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

- (a) the draft of Petroleum and Natural Gas Rules, 2025 notified in July to modernise upstream operations under the Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy (HELP);
- (b) the measures to streamline investor approvals amid a 3.1 per cent year-on-year decline in domestic crude oil production to 595 BBL/D/1K in July, 2025 coupled with the eleven percent increase provided in the Union Budget 2025-26 to 19, 327 crore rupees for the Ministry;
- (c) the targeted incentives and the procedural reforms being introduced to expedite the 15<sup>th</sup> Round of the Open Acreage Licensing Programme (OALP) bidding; and
- (d) the manner in which these measures are expected to reverse production shortfalls and bolster India's energy security?

**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 (d): The Oilfield (Regulation and Development) Amendment Act, 2025 (ORD Act) was enacted and came into effect in 2025. The Amended ORD Act aims to foster an investor-friendly environment that enhances Ease of Doing Business (EoDB). The Petroleum and Natural Gas Rules, accordingly reflect the provisions of the Amended ORD Act.

Government had constituted a Joint Working Group (JWG), comprising representatives from key Exploration & Production (E&P) operators and Government, to assess and address issues affecting the EoDB in the upstream Oil and Gas sector. Pursuant to that, Government approved a set of reforms which *inter alia* include delivery point(s) within and outside the contract area, transfer of Participating Interest (PI) among existing PI holders under a contract and field handover process in DSF contracts etc.

Government have launched Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy (HELP) in 2016. Under this policy, Open Acreage Licensing Policy (OALP) was started. A total of 172 exploration blocks covering 3,78,652 Square Kilometer have been awarded to successful bidders under 9 bidding rounds. Further, OALP bid Round X offering 25 exploration

blocks covering 1,91,986.21 sq. km has been launched. It is the largest bid round so far in terms of acreage offered in a single OALP bid round under the HELP regime.

The salient features of HELP regime are as under:

- i. Reduced Royalty Rates,
- ii. No Oil Cess,
- iii. Uniform licensing system,
- iv. Revenue Sharing Model,
- v. Exploration rights on all retained area for full contract life,
- vi. Concessional Royalty Rates in case of early commercial production,
- vii. No Revenue Share based bidding in Blocks falling in Category–II and III Basins except in case of Wind fall gain etc.
- viii. Extended and phased exploration, bidding only 2D and 3D seismic and swapping of CWP with other surveys are key additional features for blocks falling in category II & III basins.
- ix. Originator Incentive Increased to 10 marks for Category-II & Category-III Basins

The measures for increasing the domestic exploration and production of hydrocarbon resources vis-à-vis the expansion of refining capacity and to reduce dependency on import of oil and gas *inter-alia* include:

- i. Policy for Relaxations, Extensions and Clarifications 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 (CBM), 2017;
- vi. Policy to Promote/Incentivize Enhanced Recovery Methods of Oil/Gas, 2018;
- vii. Policy Framework for exploration and exploitation of Unconventional Hydrocarbons including CBM, Shale Oil and Gas etc under Existing Contracts and Nomination Fields, 2018;
- viii. Release of about 1 Million Sq. Km. (SKM) “No-Go” area in offshore in 2022 which were earlier blocked for exploration for decades.
- ix. The Oilfields (Regulation and Development) Amendment Act, 2025;

The policy reforms and incentives offered under HELP regime enhance the capability of the E&P industry to sustain and augment domestic production, thereby contributing to the strengthening of India’s long-term energy security.

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