

**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO 3324**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 12.03.2026

**HYDROCARBON EXPLORATION IN THE ANDAMAN-NICOBAR REGION**

3324. SHRI M K RAGHAVAN:

**पेट्रोलियम और प्राकृतिक गैस मंत्री**

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

- (a) whether the Government has prepared any timeline or roadmap for the development of the hydrocarbon blocks in the Andaman-Nicobar region, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) the details of the total expenditure incurred so far on exploration activities in the Andaman- Nicobar Basin;
- (c) whether the Government has evaluated the environmental and ecological implications of extensive hydrocarbon exploration in the Andaman-Nicobar Islands, which are ecologically sensitive, if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) whether any foreign companies or joint ventures have shown interest in participating in exploration activities in the Andaman-Nicobar Basin, if so, the details thereof?

**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) to (c) : The government had launched Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy (HELP) in 2016. 4 blocks have been awarded under Open Acreages Licensing Policy (OALP) to Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC) and Oil India Limited (OIL) in Andaman-Nicobar region. These blocks are currently under exploration stage. Details of the blocks are as under:

OALP Bid Round	Block Name	Operator
OALP-II	AN-OSHP-2018/1	OIL
OALP-II	AN-OSHP-2018/2	OIL
OALP – VI	AN-UDWHP-2020/1	ONGC
OALP-VI	AN-UDWHP-2020/2	ONGC

The total expenditure incurred on exploration activities in the Andaman-Nicobar offshore basin since 2021 is Rs. 5,000.33 Crore.

To ensure environmental safeguards, exploration activities can only commence after due clearance under the EIA Notification, 2006 (as amended). The EIA process involves scientific assessment, stakeholder consultation (including with local communities and fisherfolk), and clearance from the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC). Only upon securing these clearances can companies begin operations, with all mandated safeguards in place. This operational framework reflects Government's commitment to maintain a balance between safeguarding ecosystem and advancing long-term energy security through responsible exploration activity.

(d): These 4 blocks in Andaman-Nicobar region have been awarded to two National Oil Companies viz. ONGC and OIL. However, in New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP) Bid Round –V, a deepwater block in the Andaman offshore was awarded to a consortium of M/s ENI, ONGC and GAIL, which was later relinquished in 2014.

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