

ANDAMAN OIL EXPLORATION

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Government is taking sustained measures towards exploring and identifying crude oil and hydrocarbon reserves in the Andaman-Nicobar basin so that they can contribute to the country's long term energy security and reduce import dependence. Following the introduction of the Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy (HELP), the Government has allocated four blocks for oil and gas exploration in the Andaman-Nicobar Basin, covering approximately 23,261 square kilometers (SKM). Exploratory efforts have resulted in the acquisition of 8,501-line kilometers of 2-Dimensional (2D) seismic data and 3,270 SKM of 3D seismic data in these blocks and three wells have been drilled in these blocks so far. Furthermore, under Open Acreage Licensing Policy (OALP) - X, four blocks with a total area of 47,058 sq. km have been offered in the Andaman Basin.

India's Hydrocarbon Resource Assessment Study (HRAS) estimates hydrocarbon resources of 371 million Metric Tons of Oil Equivalent (MMTOE) in the AN Basin. Subsequent to HRAS 2017, a 2D broadband seismic survey has been completed in 2024 covering approximately 80,000 line kilometers of India's Exclusive Economic Zone (including in Andaman offshore). This has helped acquiring the essential sub-surface data required for identifying prospective hydrocarbon reserves. Government through Oil India Limited (OIL) has also acquired a total of 22,555 Line Kilometer (LKM) of 2D seismic data in Deep Andaman Offshore Survey during 2021-22.

Geologically, the AN basin lies at the intersection of the Andaman and Nicobar Basins, part of the Bengal-Arakan sedimentary system. The tectonic setting at the boundary of the Indian and Burmese plates have created numerous stratigraphic traps conducive to hydrocarbon accumulation. The basin's geological promise is further amplified by its proximity to prove petroleum systems in Myanmar and North Sumatra. Global interest in the AN basin has been rekindled following significant gas discoveries in South Andaman offshore in Indonesia, highlighting geological continuity across this region.

Each sedimentary basin possesses distinct geological characteristics, hydrocarbon system dynamics, prospectivity, and development challenges, making direct comparison across basins inherently limited. Consequently, economic and strategic assessments are undertaken in the context of basin-specific parameters, rather than on a like-for-like comparative basis, to ensure realistic evaluation and policy decision-making.

This information was given by the MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS SHRI SURESH GOPI, in a written reply in Rajya Sabha today.

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