Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas

HELP Reforms Modernise India’s Upstream Sector

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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 explorations 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.

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 Lok Sabha today.

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