

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1882
TO BE ANSWERED ON 31st July, 2025

Hydrocarbon Exploration and Mining in Gulf of Mannar Region

1882. SHRI K E PRAKASH:

पेट्रोलियम और प्राकृतिक गैस मंत्री

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

- (a) whether the Union Government has received any request/representation from the State Government of Tamil Nadu urging to drop the proposal for offshore hydrocarbon exploration and mining in the Gulf of Mannar region due to its ecological sensitivity and impact on the livelihoods of coastal communities;
- (b) if so, the details thereof along with the current status of the proposed project; and
- (c) whether the Union Government has considered the concerns raised by the State Government of Tamil Nadu regarding environmental protection, marine biodiversity and the socio-economic impact on shing communities before proceeding with any approvals, clearances or public consultations and 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): Government have put on offer an exploration block CY-DWHP-2024/1 measuring an area of 9990.96 sq. Km falling in Gulf of Mannar for bidding under the Open Acreage Licensing Policy (OALP) Bid Round X, which has been launched on 11.02.2025. Government have subsequently received a communication dated 04.03.2025 from Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu raising concerns regarding proposal for offshore mining activities in Gulf of Mannar, off the coast of Tamil Nadu.

(b) & (c): This block is as an offshore deep-water block and hence is outside the jurisdiction of the State Government. Permission from State Government for exploration license or production lease for such offshore blocks is not required. Further, the block, CY-DWHP-2024/1, does not fall within the Gulf of Mannar Biosphere core zone.

Mere award of the blocks does not entitle awardees to initiate exploration activities. All statutory and regulatory approvals are non-negotiable and essential, which include Environmental Clearance (EC), Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) clearance, and Wildlife Clearance, as mandated under the EIA Notification, CRZ Notification and the Wildlife Protection Act. These approvals typically involve an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) to evaluate potential environmental impacts, public consultations with local communities, including fisherfolk and the resolution of concerns raised during the process. These clearances are intended to ensure that exploration and production activities are undertaken in a manner that safeguards the marine ecosystem and the socio-economic interests of the affected communities.
