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ONGC wins 18 out of 21 oil, gas blocks in OALP-VI bid round

NEW DELHI, May 6: State-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) has won 18 out of the 21 areas offered for finding and producing oil and gas in the sixth bid round under Open Acreage Licensing Policy, according to the upstream regulator DGH.

Oil India Ltd (OIL) walked away with two blocks and Sun Petrochemicals Pvt Ltd got one block, the Directorate General of Hydrocarbons said announcing the winners of the OALP-VI round.

The 21 blocks or areas offered for exploration and production of oil and gas in Open Acreage Licensing Policy (OALP) Bid Round-VI attracted just 3 bidders at the close of bidding on October 6, 2021. Of the 21 blocks on offer, 18 got a single bid and the remaining 3 blocks had two bidders.

ONGC, India's largest oil producer, had bid for 19 blocks while OIL bid for two. ONGC was the sole bidder in 16 blocks and OIL was the

only bidder in the two areas it sought for. Sun Petrochemicals bid for three blocks, where it is locked in competition with ONGC.

Vedanta Ltd and Reliance-BP combine, which had bid in previous rounds of OALP, did not bid in the current round.

The government has been hoping that opening up of more acreage for exploration will help boost India's oil and gas production, helping cut down the USD 119 billion oil import bill.

In 2016, it brought in an open acreage policy which moved away from the previous practice of government identifying and bidding out blocks to one where explorers were allowed the freedom to identify any area outside of the ones that are already with some company or other, for prospecting of oil and gas.

The areas identified are to be clubbed twice a year and offered for bidding. The firm identifying the area gets a 5-point advantage. – PTI

New Exploration and Licensing Policy (NELP)

New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP) is a policy adopted by the government between 1997 and 2016 with Directorate General of Hydrocarbons (DGH) as the nodal agency, to provide a level playing field for both the public and private sector companies in exploration and production (E&P) of hydrocarbons.

Open Acreage Licensing Policy (OALP)

- It is the most crucial part of the **Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy (HELP)**.
- It provides a **single, uniform Licence** for exploration and production of **conventional as well as unconventional hydrocarbon resources**.
- **Features:**
 - The Freedom to **carve out acreages of choice** under **OALP bid rounds has been given to contractors**.
 - The **revenue-sharing model** is used for **offering fields**.
 - Producers have **complete marketing and pricing freedom** for crude oil and natural gas produced.
- **Benefits of OALP:**
- It has reduced **multiple licences and procedures** for extracting different hydrocarbons even from the same well.
- Brought in a quantum jump in the Exploration & Production sector:



The successful roll-out of the **HELP regime**, followed by OALP Bid Rounds, has led to an increase in exploration acreages in India.

Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy (HELP)

- HELP was brought in **March 2016 replacing the erstwhile New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP)**
- It had 2 key drivers
 - The Open Acreage Licensing Programme (OALP)
 - The National Data Repository (NDR)
 - Both were launched in June 2017
- **Aim:** To accelerate the Exploration and Production (E&P) activities in India.
- The main features of HELP are
 - Revenue Sharing Contract.
 - Single, uniform Licence for exploration and production of all Hydrocarbon resources.
 - Choice with Bidder to carve acreage.
 - Marketing & pricing freedom

Govt identifies 1,537 Sagarmala projects worth Rs 6.5 lakh crore



NEW DELHI, May 6: With focus on port-led development, over 1,500 projects worth around Rs 6.5 lakh crore have been identified for implementation as part of the Sagarmala programme, Union minister Sarbananda Sonowal said on Friday.

Sonowal further said that for the holistic development of coastal districts, 567 projects have been identified under convergence mode with an estimated cost of Rs 58,700 crore.

"As many as 1,537 projects at an estimated cost of around Rs 6.5 lakh crore have been identified for implementation as part of the Sagarmala programme," the Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways said at a press conference after chairing the meeting of the National Sagarmala Apex Committee (NSAC).

Sagarmala programme is aimed at

accelerating economic development in the country by harnessing the potential of India's 7,500-km-long coastline and 14,500 km of potentially navigable waterways announced by the Prime Minister in 2014 and approved by the Union Cabinet on March 25, 2015.

The minister said that the committee reviewed the progress of the Sagarmala programme and deliberated on various agendas.

He said there are 802 projects worth Rs 5.5 lakh crore under the Sagarmala programme targeted to be executed by 2035. "202 of these projects worth Rs 99,281 crore have been completed," Sonowal said, adding that a total of 29 projects worth Rs 45,000 crore have been successfully implemented under public-private partnership (PPP) model, thus, reducing the financial

burden on the exchequer.

According to the minister, additional 32 PPP projects worth Rs 51,000 crore are currently being implemented. Further, more than 200 projects worth Rs 2.12 lakh crore are under construction and are expected to be completed in two years' time, he added.

Sonowal said the average container turnaround time at major ports in the country has come down to 27.22 hours in 2021-22, as against 35.21-odd hours in 2014-15.

According to an official statement, the ministry has till date funded 140 projects to the tune of Rs 8,748 crore and is reviewing additional proposals sent by various State governments.

The statement said that more than 200 locations have been identified for development of floating jetties and

50 locations form part of the Phase 1 implementation.

It also pointed out that traffic handled at major ports witnessed a rise of 6.94 per cent during FY22 over the preceding year.

The meeting was attended by Minister of Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari, Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal, Minister of Civil Aviation Jyotiraditya Scindia and Minister of Railways Ashwini Vaishnav, among others.

Speaking at the meeting, Gadkari said India's logistic cost is around 14-16 per cent, while the logistic cost in China is around 8 per cent, and in case of European countries, it is 12 per cent. "If we reduce our logistic cost to 8 per cent then it will help in accelerating our economic growth," Gadkari added. – PTI

Sagarmala: Objectives

- To reduce the domestic transportation cost by using an optimum mix of operations.
- To set up the industrial capacities near the coast and for such the cost of bulk, commodities are reduced.
- To minimize the cost of investment in the infrastructural area.
- To optimize the time for EXIM container movement.
- To modernize the existing ports of India.

Sagarmala: Components

Port Modernization and New Port Development

- Capacity expansion of existing ports.
- Development of New Greenfield Ports.
- Debottlenecking of existing ports.

Port Connectivity Enhancement

- Enhancing the link between ports and inland.
- Cost and time optimization through multi-modal logistics solutions.
- Development of Domestic Waterways.

Port-linked Industrialization

- Developing industries in close proximity of ports.
- Creating Coastal Economic Zones with ports and industries closely spaced.
- Reducing cost of logistics and time for Domestic and EXIM Cargo Operations.

Coastal Community Development

- Focusing on improving the lifestyle of people and providing people with proper training and skills.
- The fire-safety training projects for workers are also funded by the project.
- For Coastal Community Development value additions are also done in fisheries and cold chain development.

Coastal Shipping and Inland waterways Transport

- The motto was to move the cargo in a friendly manner which will also not be harmful to the environment and also through Inland waterways.
- This component is to promote sustainability and a friendly environment along with industrialization.

CEA report flags flaws in Subansiri power project



SIVASISH THAKUR

GUWAHATI, May 6: In what assumes significance ahead of the commissioning of the controversial Lower Subansiri Hydroelectric Project, the Central Electricity Authority (CEA) has called for a thorough examination of the power house protection wall's strength by a specialized agency before the monsoons.

The CEA also suggested a reassessment of the impact of river diversion through the diversion tunnels (DTs), as continuous

water flowing through such temporary tunnels could erode the tunnel walls.

A team of the CEA, Hydro Project Planning and Investigation Division, visited the dam site at Gerukamukh in Lakhimpur district on April 21 and submitted its findings.

"Significantly, higher flow predicted during the monsoons would result in higher pressure on the protection wall. It is advised that the adequacy of the power house protection wall's strength to be able to bear maximum water pressure during the monsoons may be

got vetted by a specialised agency before the coming monsoons," the CEA report recommended to the National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC) Ltd, the implementing agency.

One may recall that heavy rainfall in Assam had resulted in the collapse of the guard walls of the Subansiri dam twice in the past two years, raising questions about the dam's safety aspects and triggering fear of floods among the people living in the surrounding areas.

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The 2,000MW Lower Subansiri hydroelectric power project (LSHEP) is located on Subansiri River, which is on the border of India's two north-eastern states, Arunachal Pradesh and Assam.

The project is being developed by the state-run National Hydro Power Corporation (NHPC).

The Lower Subansiri HEP is designed as a run-of-the-river power project on the lower reach of Subansiri River, a tributary of River Brahmaputra. River Subansiri flows from Arunachal Pradesh into Assam where it joins the Brahmaputra.

The LHSEP consists of a concrete gravity dam, which will be 116m high from the river bed level and 130m from the foundation.

Work on the 2000 MW Subansiri Lower Hydroelectric Project at Gerukamukh was started in 2006 but halted in 2011 following protests amid fears of ecological damage and loss of livelihoods. Construction had resumed more than a year ago during the COVID-19 lockdown.

C D Thatte and M S Reddy, authored a report in 2013, in which they state that the present planning of the project ignores the flood control aspect of the dam besides compromising the dam's design and safety. The report was prepared after the former minister of environment Jairam Ramesh visited Assam in September 2010 following consultations with various civil society groups.

The present CEA report suggested a reassessment of river diversion



Neobank 'Open' is India's 100th Unicorn

- India got its **100th unicorn** when **neobanking fintech portal, "Open"**, raised fresh capital to push up its value to over a billion dollars.
- India is the world's third-largest according to Economic Survey, 2021-22.
- India overtook the UK to reach the spot after the US and China, which added 487 and 301 unicorns respectively, according to the survey.



Maip Macrothorax

- The **remains of the largest dinosaur** ever recorded belonging to the **raptor family**, have been found in **Patagonia**.
- The discovery was made by a team of Argentine paleontologists
- **“Maip macrothorax”** is the scientific name given to this dinosaur.
- The Maip Macrothorax lived on earth 70 million years ago and is the largest megaraptor unearthed to date.
- **This** dinosaur measured about 33 ft in length.

Daily MCQ for APSC CCE

Recently discovered species *Litoria mira* is a

- A. Amphibian
- B. Mammal
- C. Reptiles
- D. None of the Above

Correct Answer is: A. Amphibian

Litoria Mira is a species of frog that lives in the rainforests of New Guinea that appears to be made from chocolate. Except the skin colour, it has prominent similarities with Australian green tree frog as Australia and New Guinea used to be linked by land for much of the late Tertiary period (2.6 million years ago), and share many biotic elements.