

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3478  
ANSWERED ON:15.12.2005  
EXPLORATION OF GAS IN BENGAL BASIN  
Acharia Shri Basudeb

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

- (a) whether Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) is striking gas in Bengal Basin;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether ONGC has also signed a MoU with Department of Science & Technology and the Saha Institute of Nuclear Physics for launching a pilot project for production of Helium; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

**Answer**

MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR)

(a) & (b) Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd.(ONGC) is currently drilling an exploratory well in block WB-OSN-2000/1 awarded to a consortium of ONGC (85%) and Indian Oil Corporation Ltd.(IOC) (15%) under the New Exploration Licensing Policy-II in the Bay of Bengal off the West Bengal Coast. The results of the exploratory well will be known only after the completion of drilling and subsequent testing.

(c) & (d) Yes Sir, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between ONGC, Department of Science & Technology and Saha Institute of Nuclear Physics for launching a Pilot project for production of Helium.

It is a Research & Development project amounting to Rs. 5.2 crore for which ONGC`s contribution is Rs. 4.0 crore, the Department of Science & Technology contribution is Rs. 0.6 crore, and the Department of Atomic Energy`s contribution is Rs. 0.6 crore. The pilot plant is expected to be installed by April, 2006 at Kuthalam field in Tamil Nadu.