

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:344  
ANSWERED ON:02.12.2004  
EXPLORATION OF OIL  
Munshiram Shri ;Saroj Shri Tufani

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

- (a) whether the foreign companies have been invited for the exploration of oil in the country;
- (b) if so, the areas of the country where exploration activities would be undertaken;
- (c) whether the Government have assigned this work to other countries in the catchment areas of Brahmaputra river also; and
- (d) if so, the total amount planned to be spent on this project

**Answer**

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

(a) & (b):- With a view to attract larger investments for accelerating efforts for exploration and exploitation of Hydrocarbon reserves in the 26 sedimentary basins of the country covering onland and offshore areas, the Government has been inviting bids from private companies including foreign companies on a regular basis since-1991. To give further impetus to exploration efforts, Government have formulated in 1997 a New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP) which provides equal opportunity to foreign companies and Indian companies, (both Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) and private companies) to bid for exploration acreages, situated onland, offshore and deep water areas of the country. Exploration activities, including identification and offer of blocks through NELP, is a continuous and ongoing process. Since 1991 until now, Government have signed Production Sharing Contracts (PSCs) for 117 exploration blocks for the Exploration and Production (E&P) of oil & gas.

(c) No foreign company has yet been granted a Petroleum Exploration Licence (PEL) for the exploration of oil and gas in the catchment areas of Brahmaputra river.

(d) Does not arise.