

entirely ascertained in the future.

## ONGC to drill 17 exploratory wells for shale gas, oil

**HYDERABAD:** State-owned ONGC Limited is planning to explore as many as 17 shale gas and oil wells in both east and west coasts with an investment of around Rs.700 crore.

According to the minutes of a recent meeting of the Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) of Ministry of Environment and Forests, the PSU sought the ministry's nod to prepare Terms of Reference for exploring the wells.

A senior official of the PSU said this is the first time that the oil and gas company has taken up shale gas exploration in such a big scale. Also, it is the first time that it has taken up shale gas exploration in the Krishna-Godavari basin.

According to the minutes, ONGC sought permission for

drilling 11 exploratory wells for shale oil and shale gas in Cambay basin at Mehsana, Ahmedabad and Bharuch districts of Gujarat, one well in Cauvery basin at Nagapattinam in Tamil Nadu and five wells in KG Basin at East and West Godavari districts of Andhra Pradesh.

Shale gas is the natural gas that is trapped within shale formations. "ONGC Ltd has proposed for exploratory drilling of 11 wells for shale oil/shale gas in Cambay basin at Mehsana, Ahmedabad, Bharuch in Gujarat. Total cost of project is Rs.366 crore," according to the minutes of the meeting.

The costs of the projects at KG-Basin and Cauvery are Rs.217 crore and Rs.45 crore, respectively, it added.

"ONGC was given a mandate to identify a minimum of 50 nomination blocks where it will take up shale gas and oil exploration in Phase-I.

"ONGC will have to drill at least one (two in blocks having area more than 200 sq km) well for assessment of shale gas and oil in each of these blocks by 2017," the official told PTI. Realising the importance of shale gas and oil for meeting the energy demands of the country and the need to expedite exploration and assessment of domestic reserves, the Centre had announced policy guidelines on October 14, 2013, whereby national oil companies ONGC and OIL were to take up shale gas and oil exploration activities in their nomination blocks. — PTI