

## **India to offer new coal fields for methane gas exploration**

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New Delhi, Jul 15: India will offer for bidding new coal fields for exploitation of methane gas lying before the coal seams (CBM) by the year-end even as it prepares to embark on an 'open acreage' system for oil and gas blocks.

"I think we may offer less than 10 coal bed methane (CBM) blocks in the fourth round of bidding by end of the calendar year," directorate general of Hydrocarbon (DGH) director general VK Sibal told reporters here.

India has so far held three international bid rounds for CBM blocks that attracted companies like world's third largest energy firm BP Plc and Santos of Australia. Gas lying below the coal seams is being looked as a means for bridging the huge energy deficit the country faces. The total availability of 910 lakh standard cubic meters a day of gas in the country barely meets half the demand. First gas production from a CBM block has already started but the big change will come when areas with Reliance Industries and ONGC come into production in a year's time.

Sibal said he was "excited" at the response to the just concluded seventh round of bidding for oil and gas areas under new exploration licensing policy (Nelp).

"We received four bids per block, which is very good compared to 1.5 bid per block Libya gets or three bids per block in Nelp-VI," he said, adding that DGH was preparing a

National Data Repository that will house geological information of all basins and fields in the country. Once NDR is in place, the country will move towards open acreage system where companies can themselves identify blocks or areas they want to drill instead of present system of DGH asking them to bid for pre-assigned blocks.

(Source: The Financial Express)