

Exploration

Top private operator begins hunt for 12 drilling rigs, as part of up to \$5 billion investment push

The operator is looking to deploy 10 onshore and two offshore high-quality rigs for a period of two to three years



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India's Cairn Oil & Gas has kicked off the bidding process to secure up to 12 onshore and offshore rigs for multiple drilling programmes in the South Asian country.

The company, a subsidiary of the privately owned Vedanta Group, in August announced its plan to [invest up to \\$5 billion in exploration and development projects](#) over the next three years.

The move to charter a dozen drilling rigs is specifically aimed at executing its ambitious exploration programme.

The operator is looking to deploy 10 onshore and two offshore high-quality rigs for a period of two to three years, the company said in an expression of interest (EoI) document, seen by Upstream.

The oil and gas player in August said it had initiated a "large exploration campaign to unlock hydrocarbons from Indian sedimentary basins and increase production to meet the country's growing energy requirements, and reduce its import

dependency".

The EoI floated by Cairn said that the company's growth projects will include large-scale drilling programmes across conventional oilfields, tight oil assets and gas reservoirs.

"In this regard, we are seeking to partner with leading global rig partners with a proven track record in delivering safe, efficient, and high-performance drilling operations," it said.

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The rig contractor will be responsible for complete rig operations, including

transportation, storage and upkeep, it said.

However, the Indian player did not provide further details on rig specifications or the key wells that will be targeted during the exploration campaign.



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Cairn did not respond to Upstream's request for comments on the company's rig chartering plans.

Exploration plans

Cairn in August said that it will be [carrying out exploration activities](#) onshore Rajasthan and North East India, and in promising shallow-water assets off the nation's west coast.

The operator said it is set to begin drilling exploratory wells at its offshore blocks in Ambe and Dwarka on India's west coast, and revealed it had [acquired three shallow-water blocks](#) in India's OALP-9 (open acreage and licensing policy) bid round, further strengthening its west coast portfolio.

Meanwhile, Cairn is also preparing to

launch an exploration campaign next year, off India's east coast.

Exploration drilling is set to begin in 2026 in the Krishna Godavari basin's 3600 square-kilometre deepwater exploration Block KG-DWHP-2017/1, which Cairn secured in 2019 as part of the OALP.

Cairn has indicated that its up to \$5 billion investment plan includes “both conventional and unconventional hydrocarbons — across deep and shallow waters offshore the east and west coast, and onshore Rajasthan and North East [India]”.

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