

Exploration

Asian operator secures approval for multi-well drilling campaign

Cairn plans to drill 20 onshore wells in Krishna, a coastal district in Andhra Pradesh





Vedanta chairman Anil Agarwal.

Photo: Vedanta

Sharon Foo and Nishant Ugal

Singapore/New Delhi

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Cairn Oil & Gas, a subsidiary of privately owned Vedanta Group, has secured a crucial approval for drilling multiple onshore wells in the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh.

The private sector player has earlier announced its plan to invest up to \$5 billion in exploration and development projects in India over the next three years.

[The company 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 Government of Andhra Pradesh has granted Cairn a “No Objection Certificate” (NOC) for drilling 20 onshore wells in Krishna, a coastal district in Andhra Pradesh, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported on Friday.

The state government of Andhra Pradesh issued the NOC to Cairn after receiving an

application from the operator, which was earlier awarded development rights for the onshore oil and gas field in the area, PTI said, referring to a recent government order.

In its submission to the Andhra Pradesh government, the privately owned company requested an NOC to drill wells at 35 locations within the block, which spans multiple villages, for onshore oil and gas development and production.

Cairn had sought approval from the state's Water Resources Department, as the proposed block intersects the Bandar Canal, a key irrigation canal in the district.

The government order noted that after a careful examination of the matter, it has decided to issue the NOC certificate to Cairn for drilling 20 wells at multiple locations, subject to certain terms and conditions, including a prohibition on drawing water from irrigation canal sources, the report claimed.



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The state government said that the operator should secure all required permissions from the concerned departments, ahead of commencing operations.

It added that the state's Engineer-in-Chief (Irrigation) of the Water Resources Department, the Chief Engineer of the Krishna Delta System of the Vijayawada city, and the Collector of Krishna District should take necessary actions accordingly.

The state government stressed that the NOC is purely temporary in nature and can only be issued from the irrigation point of view.

Upstream has reached out to Cairn for comment.

Hiring multiple rigs

[The operator said earlier this month](#) that it has started the bidding process to secure up to 12 onshore and offshore rigs for multiple drilling programmes in India.

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.



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The company earlier 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.”

Cairn noted 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.

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