

India, US hit upon Indian Ocean natural gas discovery

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Scientists from India, the United States and Japan have struck upon a large natural gas deposit in the Bay of Bengal, the first potentially producible discovery of its kind in the Indian Ocean.

A research expedition carried out jointly by the three countries discovered the natural gas hydrate—an ice-like form of the fuel—off India's east coast, the United States Geological Survey (USGS) said in a statement Monday.

Energy-hungry India is heavily dependent on imports to meet its oil and gas needs and is hungry to secure more of its own supplies.

"The results from this expedition mark a critical step forward to understanding the energy resource potential of gas hydrates," said USGS Senior Scientist Tim Collett.

The discovery in the sand reservoirs of the Krishna-Godavari Basin contains "what we believe to be several of the largest and most concentrated gas hydrate accumulations yet found in the world," Collett said.

The amount of [natural gas](#) locked in hydrate form worldwide is believed to be far greater than the volume of all known conventional gas resources, USGS said.

Yet producing the fuel from hydrates is extremely technically

challenging.

"Advances like the Bay of Bengal discovery will help unlock the global energy resource potential of gas hydrates as well help define the technology needed to safely produce them," said Walter Guidroz, USGS Energy Resources Program coordinator.

The next steps will involve testing to determine if production of the deposits is practically and economically viable.

The expedition involved experts from India's Oil and Natural Gas Corporation and USGS as well as Japanese drilling and marine-earth specialists.

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