

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF MINES  
**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 282**  
ANSWERED ON 05.02.2024

**AUCTION PROCESS FOR BLOCKS OF CRITICAL MINERALS**

282. SHRI RAGHAV CHADHA:

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

- (a) the details and status of the ongoing auction process for blocks of critical minerals, including lithium, nickel, copper, molybdenum, and rare earth elements, across various States in the country;
- (b) the expected outcomes and strategic significance of these auctions in reducing the country's reliance on imports for critical minerals;
- (c) the plans and initiatives for enhancing domestic exploration and production of critical minerals; and
- (d) the progress of the Geological Survey of India's ongoing projects for exploring critical mineral reserves and the anticipated timeline for future?

**ANSWER**

THE MINISTER OF MINES, COAL AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS  
(SHRI PRALHAD JOSHI)

- (a): The Notice Inviting Tender for the first tranche of the e-Auction of 20 Critical and Strategic Mineral blocks was launched on 29th November 2023, for which the bid due date is 20.02.2024. The details of such blocks is given at Annexure I.
- (b): The auction of Critical and Strategic Mineral Blocks aims to create a steady supply of these minerals, thus reducing our reliance on imports and ensuring a more secure and resilient supply chain. This will bring several key benefits including bolstering domestic production, reducing import dependency, promoting sustainable resource management, attracting investments in the mining sector, and developing key industries crucial for India's industrial and technological advancement. This is a step towards creating a reliable supply chain of these Critical and Strategic minerals and a step towards making an 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' and contribute towards increased economic growth.
- (c): In order to boost the exploration of critical minerals, a new mineral concession namely, Exploration Licence has been introduced in the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 (MMDR Act) through an amendment with effect from 17.08.2023 for 29 critical and deep-seated minerals. The Exploration Licence granted through auction shall permit the licensee to undertake reconnaissance and prospecting operations for critical and deep-seated minerals mentioned in the newly inserted Seventh Schedule to the MMDR Act. Further, to implement the provisions of Exploration License introduced in the Act, the Mineral (Auction) Rules, 2015; the Minerals (Other than Atomic and Hydro Carbons Energy Minerals) Concession Rules, 2016 and Mineral Conservation and Development Rules, 2017 have been amended w.e.f. 21.01.2024.

Exploration License is foreseen to create an enabling mechanism for the Junior Mining Companies from across the world to bring in expertise in the field of exploration and

mining sector as well as leverage the risk-taking ability in the discovery of critical and deep-seated mineral deposits through adoption of advanced technologies.

(d): Since Field Season (F.S.) 2015-16 to 2022-23, Geological Survey of India (GSI) has taken up 616 mineral exploration projects on various critical and strategic minerals. Further, during the current F.S. of 2023-24, GSI has taken up 127 mineral exploration projects to assess the mineral potential of various strategic and critical minerals across the country and for the next F.S. 2024-25, GSI has 188 more exploration projects. Apart from this, GSI has also taken up 16 Critical Mineral Assessment programme (CMAP) for assessing critical mineral potentiality in laterites.

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LIST OF CRITICAL MINERAL BLOCKS FOR 1<sup>st</sup> PHASE OF AUCTION

Sl No	Block Name	State	Commodity	ML/CL
1	Chutia-Nauhatta Glauconite Block	Bihar	Potash	CL
2	PipradihBhurwa Glauconite Block	Bihar	Potash	CL
3	Genjana Ni, Cr & PGE Block	Bihar	Nickel, Platinum Group of Elements and Chromium	CL
4	Kundol Nickel and Chromium Block	Gujarat	Nickel and Chromium	CL
5	Muskaniya-Gareriatola-Barwari Potash Block	Jharkhand	Potash	CL
6	Dudhiasol East Nickel and Copper Block	Odisha	Nickel and Copper	ML
7	Babja Graphite and Manganese Block	Odisha	Graphite and Manganese	ML
8	Biarapalli Graphite and Manganese Block	Odisha	Graphite and Manganese	ML
9	Akharkata Graphite Block	Odisha	Graphite	CL
10	Vellakal Central (Segment-A) Molybdenum Block	Tamil Nadu	Molybdenum	CL
11	Nochchipatti Molybednum Block	Tamil Nadu	Molybdenum	CL
12	Velampatti North A & B Molybdenum Block	Tamil Nadu	Molybdenum	CL
13	Kurunjakulam Graphite Block	Tamil Nadu	Graphite	CL
14	Iluppakudi Graphite Block	Tamil Nadu	Graphite	CL
15	Mannadipatti (Central) Molybdenum Block	Tamil Nadu	Molybdenum	CL
16	Marudipatti (Central) Molybdenum Block	Tamil Nadu	Molybdenum	ML
17	Kurchha Glauconite Block	Uttar Pradesh	Potash	CL
18	PahadiKalan - Gora Kalan Phosphorite Block	Uttar Pradesh	Phosphorite	CL
19	Salal-Haimna Lithium, Titanium and Bauxite (Aluminous Laterite) Block	UT: Jammu and Kashmir	Lithium, Titanium, Bauxite (Aluminous Laterite)	CL
20	Katghora Lithium and REE Block	Chhattisgarh	Lithium and Rare Earth Elements	CL

(ML- Mining Lease; CL- Composite Licence)

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