

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF MINES
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 286
ANSWERED ON THE 05.02.2024

POLICY INTERVENTION TO BOOST COPPER PRODUCTIONS

286 SHRI NARANBHAI J. RATHWA:

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government outlines the policy interventions or initiatives it intends to implement to boost domestic copper production, incentivize local manufacturing, or impose tariffs to protect domestic industries aiming to revive operations like, Sterlite Copper and ensure self-sufficiency in this critical resource; and
- (b) if so, the steps taken or proposed to be taken by Government to navigate the global market influence on copper prices considering supply-demand dynamics and geopolitical factors and to ensure the affordability and accessibility of copper resources and domestic industries and the revival or operations of Sterlite Copper?

ANSWER

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

(a) & (b): Copper has been identified as one of the 30 critical minerals identified by the Central Government. A new mineral concession namely, exploration licence, for 29 deep-seated and critical minerals including copper has been introduced through the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) (MMDR) Amendment Act, 2023. Under this, the licensee is permitted to undertake reconnaissance and prospecting operations for critical and deep-seated minerals, which are otherwise difficult to explore and mine. Exploration license is aimed at encouraging the participation of private agencies so as to bring advanced technology, finance and expertise in exploration of critical minerals. Further, accredited private exploration agencies notified under the MMDR Act have been allowed to carry out exploration without prospecting licence and are made eligible for funding under the National Mineral Exploration Trust. The above measures are intended to boost domestic availability of copper mineral and self-sufficiency.

Regarding Smelter plant of M/s Vedanta in Tuticorin, Tamil Nadu, it is informed that this plant having annual capacity of 2.34 lakh tonnes of refined copper, is closed since May, 2018 on order of Govt. of Tamil Nadu. The matter is presently sub-judice in Hon'ble Supreme Court and the judgement is awaited."
