

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF MINES
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1560
ANSWERED ON 05.08.2024

SELF-RELIANT INDIA IN CRITICAL MINERALS

1560. SHRI BRIJ LAL:
DR. ANIL SUKHDEORAO BONDE:
MS. KAVITA PATIDAR:
SHRI DHANANJAY BHIMRAO MAHADIK:
SHRI GHANSHYAM TIWARI:
DR. KALPANA SAINI:

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has undertaken steps to make India self-reliant in critical minerals;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether Government has introduced any legislation or amendments to streamline the self-reliant aim; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF COAL AND MINES

(SHRI G. KISHAN REDDY)

(a) to (d) Yes Sir. The Central Government has undertaken several initiatives for making India self-reliant in critical minerals. The Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957, has been amended in 2023 with the aim to enhance exploration and mining of critical and strategic minerals, ensuring self-sufficiency in sectors like high-tech electronics and renewable energy. Through this amendment, the Central Government has been empowered to auction blocks for 24 critical and strategic minerals. So far 14 blocks have been successfully auctioned. In order to promote exploration of critical and deep-seated minerals, a new mineral concession namely, Exploration Licence has been introduced for 29 critical and deep-seated minerals, which will permit the licensee to undertake reconnaissance and prospecting operations for these minerals.

Ministry has given thrust on the enhancement of the exploration program for the critical minerals. Geological Survey of India is a nodal agency of the Government of India for exploration of mineral across the country. Accordingly, during the last three years (2021-22 to 2023-24), GSI had taken up 368 mineral exploration projects on various critical and strategic

minerals. During the current FS 2024-25, GSI has taken up 196 mineral exploration projects of critical and strategic minerals.

To facilitate, encourage and incentivize private sector participation in all sphere of mineral exploration with focus on Critical and strategic minerals and deep seated minerals, National Mineral Exploration Trust (NMET) has issued two schemes for partial reimbursement of exploration expenses for holders of Composite Licences and Exploration licences. Under these Schemes, up to 50% of the exploration expenditure incurred by the licence holders are reimbursed.

Further, to encourage private participation in exploration, Ministry of Mines has notified 23 private exploration agencies (NPEAs). These agencies are taking up exploration projects through funding from National Mineral Exploration Trust (NMET).

In 2023, the Ministry of Mines enlarged the scope of the S&T program by launching S&T-PRISM (Promotion of Research and Innovation in Start-ups and MSMEs) to fund research and innovation in Start-ups and MSMEs working in the field of mining and mineral sector in order to bridge up the gap between R&D and commercialisation.
