

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF MINES
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.2346
ANSWERED ON 16.12.2024

MINERAL EXPLORATION IN THE NORTH-EASTERN REGION

2346 SHRI RWNGWRA NARZARY:

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is planning to step up exploration of mineral commodities including oil and Natural gas in the North Eastern States;
- (b) the critical mineral commodities explored in the North-Eastern States in the years 2022, 2023, 2024;
- (c) the quantum of fund sanctioned, released and spent for mineral exploration in the North-Eastern States, project-wise in the year 2022, 2023, 2024;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF COAL AND MINES
(SHRI G. KISHAN REDDY)

(a): Geological Survey of India (GSI), an attached office of Ministry of Mines, has taken up 29 mineral exploration projects during its current field season programme 2024-25 for various mineral commodities like limestone, graphite, vanadium, coal, rare earth element & rare metal, phosphorite, bauxite, gold, base metal, etc. in different parts of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Manipur & Nagaland, Tripura, Sikkim with an aim to augment mineral resources. Further, to enhance oil and natural gas exploration activities in North Eastern States, Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has awarded 35 blocks under different Open Acreage Licensing Programme (OALP) rounds in Assam Shelf and Assam-Arakan Fold Belt Basin in North Eastern States. A total of 9 wells have been drilled so far during 2024-25.

(b): GSI has taken up 43 critical mineral exploration projects in the North Eastern States of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland and Tripura in the field seasons 2022-23 2023-24 and 2024-25. The details are given in Annexure. Further, 7 critical mineral exploration projects have also been taken up by other agencies in North Eastern States during 2021-22 to 2024-25 through funding by National Mineral Exploration Trust. The details are as follows:

Year	Commodities	State	No. of projects & Agency
2021-22	Rare Earth Elements (REE) and Basemetal	Sikkim	1 project by Mineral Exploration and Consultancy Limited (MECL).
2023-24	REE	Meghalaya	1 project by Directorate of Mineral Resources (DMR), Meghalaya.

2024-25	Nickel-Cobalt, Platinum Group of Elements and Chromium	Manipur	1 project by United Exploration India Pvt. Ltd.
	Nickel	Manipur	1 project by United Exploration India Pvt. Ltd.
	Tungsten, REE and Associated Minerals	Assam	2 projects by MECL.
	Graphite	Arunachal Pradesh	1 project by Kartikay Exploration & Mining Services Pvt. Ltd.

(c) & (d): The project-wise details of funds sanctioned and expenditure incurred during field seasons 2022-23 to 2024-25 by GSI for mineral exploration in North Eastern States are as follows:

(Rs. in Lakhs)

Field Season	No. of projects & States	Sanctioned Amount	Field expenditure incurred upto 30.11.2024
2022-23	(5) Arunachal Pradesh, (6) Assam, (1) Manipur, (4) Nagaland, (6) Meghalaya	78.36	78.36
2023-24	(6) Arunachal Pradesh, (5) Assam, (1) Sikkim, (4) Nagaland, (9) Meghalaya	93.13	93.13
2024-25	(8) Arunachal Pradesh, (6) Assam, (1) Sikkim, (1) Nagaland, (10) Meghalaya, (1) Tripura, (2) Manipur	41.48	41.48
Total	76 projects	212.97	212.97

Further, the details of funds sanctioned by the National Mineral Exploration Trust and payments made from 2021-22 to 2024-25 for mineral exploration projects in North Eastern States are as follows:

(Rs. in Crores)

Year	No. of projects & States	Sanctioned Amount	Payments made upto 30.11.2024
2021-22	(4) Assam, (1) Sikkim	18.65	7.46
2023-24	(1) Meghalaya, (1) Arunachal Pradesh, (1) Assam	7.88	3.15
2024-25	(6) Assam, (1) Arunachal Pradesh, (2) Manipur	31.57	5.63
Total	17 projects	58.10	16.24

(e): In view of (c) & (d) above, question does not arise.

List of critical mineral exploration projects taken up by GSI in North Eastern States during field seasons 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25

Field Season 2022-2023			
Sl. No.	State	UNFC Stage	Mineral Commodity
1	Arunachal Pradesh	G4	Lithium
2	Arunachal Pradesh	G4	Phosphorite
3	Assam	G4	Molybdenum, REE
4	Assam	G3	REE
5	Nagaland	G4	Lithium
6	Nagaland	G4	REE
7	Meghalaya	G4	REE, Lithium
8	Meghalaya	G4	REE
9	Meghalaya	G4	Tungsten
10	Meghalaya	G4	Lithium
11	Meghalaya	G4	Molybdenum, Tungsten, REE, Lithium
12	Arunachal Pradesh	G3	Vanadium
13	Arunachal Pradesh	G3	Vanadium, Graphite
14	Assam	G4	REE
15	Assam	G4	REE
16	Arunachal Pradesh	G4	Vanadium, Graphite
Field Season 2023-2024			
1	Arunachal Pradesh	G3	Vanadium, Graphite
2	Arunachal Pradesh	G4	REE
3	Arunachal Pradesh	G4	Phosphorite
4	Assam	G4	REE
5	Assam	G4	REE
6	Nagaland	G3	Nickel
7	Meghalaya	G4	REE, Lithium
8	Meghalaya	G4	REE, Tin, Lithium
9	Meghalaya	G4	REE, Lithium
10	Meghalaya	G4	REE, Basemetal
11	Meghalaya	G4	Lithium
12	Arunachal Pradesh	G3	Vanadium, Graphite, basemetal
13	Assam	G3	REE
Field Season 2024-2025			
1	Arunachal Pradesh	G3	Vanadium, Graphite
2	Arunachal Pradesh	G3	Vanadium, Graphite
3	Arunachal Pradesh	G4	Phosphorite
4	Assam	G4	REE
5	Assam	G4	REE
6	Assam	G2	REE, RM
7	Assam	G4	REE, RM

8	Meghalaya	G4	Titanium, Vanadium, REE
9	Meghalaya	G4	REE, Lithium
10	Meghalaya	G4	REE
11	Nagaland	G4	Phosphorite
12	Tripura	G4	REE
13	Meghalaya	G4	REE, Tungsten
14	Arunachal Pradesh	G3	Vanadium, Graphite, Limestone