

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF MINES
RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION No. *88
ANSWERED ON 08.12.2025

CRITICAL MINERAL EXPLORATION

*88. SHRI R. GIRIRAJAN:

Will the Minister of Mines be pleased to state:

- (a) the steps taken to boost critical mineral exploration in the country especially in the State of Tamil Nadu;
- (b) the measures to ensure sustainable mining practices and make it profitable; and
- (c) whether Government plans to revise royalty rates for minerals and mining products?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (c): A Statement is laid on the table of the House.

THE STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO RAJYA SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.88 REGARDING 'CRITICAL MINERAL EXPLORATION' ASKED BY SHRI R. GIRIRAJAN, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR REPLY ON 08TH DECEMBER 2025.

(a): In order to boost critical mineral exploration in the country including in the State of Tamil Nadu, from 2020-21 to 2024-25 the Geological Survey of India (GSI), an attached office of the Ministry of Mines, took up 628 mineral exploration projects on various critical and strategic minerals in the country. These include 21 projects for molybdenum, graphite, Rare Earth Elements-Rare Metals (REE-RM) in the State of Tamil Nadu. During field season 2025-26, GSI took up 230 mineral exploration projects for critical and strategic minerals in the country which include 9 projects in Tamil Nadu.

The National Mineral Exploration and Development Trust (NMEDT) has approved 177 mineral exploration projects for critical minerals in the country. Out of these, 10 projects have been approved in the State of Tamil Nadu.

(b): The Ministry of Mines has instituted Sustainable Development Framework (SDF) for taking up mining activity, encompassing inclusive growth, without adversely affecting the social, economic and environmental well-being, at present and also in future generations. Adequate provisions have been incorporated under Mineral Conservation and Development Rules, 2017 mandating every lease holder for implementation of sustainable mining.

Further, Star Rating of mines has been implemented through Indian Bureau of Mines (IBM), a Subordinate office of the Ministry of Mines, which has a two-tier system providing self-evaluation templates to be filled in by the mine operator followed by validation by Indian Bureau of Mines through field inspection. A star rating from 0 to 5 is awarded every year to each lessee based on their performance during the previous year.

(c): The Central Government has amended the Second Schedule of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 with effect from 20.11.2025 whereby royalty rates of minerals Caesium, Graphite, Rubidium, and Zirconium have been specified. The details are given below:

| Sl. No. | Minerals | Rates of Royalty |
|----------------|--|--|
| 1 | Caesium | 2% of the average sale price of Caesium metal chargeable on the Caesium metal contained in the ore produced. |
| 2 | Graphite: (i) With 80% or more fixed carbon (ii) With less than 80% fixed carbon | 2% of average sale price on <i>ad valorem</i> basis. 4% of average sale price on <i>ad valorem</i> basis. |
| 3 | Rubidium | 2% of the average sale price of Rubidium metal chargeable on the Rubidium metal contained in the ore produced. |
| 4 | Zirconium | 1% of the average sale price of Zirconium metal chargeable on the Zirconium metal contained in the ore produced. |