

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1324
TO BE ANSWERED ON 11.12.2025

Monitoring mechanism for mining critical minerals

1324. SHRI MANAN KUMAR MISHRA:
SHRI SUBHASH BARALA:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

- (a) the manner in which the Ministry is ensuring that the simplified approval process for mining critical minerals in forest areas is not misused and the details of third-party monitoring mechanisms in place to track compliance;
- (b) the reason behind further streamlining the forest clearances for critical mineral extraction and the details of studies conducted to assess the environmental impact on biodiversity in these areas;
- (c) whether the Ministry has finalised the agencies responsible for verifying compensatory afforestation; and
- (d) if so, the manner in which the ecological quality of replanted areas would be ensured?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

(a) & (b) Critical minerals are vital for clean-energy technologies, electronics, defence preparedness, and the nation's economic security. Mining of such minerals in forest areas follows the clearance processes as provided under the applicable statutes to strike a balance between nation's strategic needs with ecological safeguards. The process of forest clearance involves the same procedures as prescribed for non-critical minerals, which includes requirement of Compensatory Afforestation (CA), payment of Net Present Value (NPV), and implementation of site-specific mitigation measures. Likewise, provisions of Environmental Impact Assessment Notification, 2006, as amended, mandate comprehensive appraisal by the concerned sectoral Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC)/State Level Expert Appraisal Committee (SEAC) and preparation of corresponding Environment Management Plan involving environmental impact assessments, covering biodiversity, ecosystems, and other ecological parameters while granting environment clearance. The project proponents need to ensure that adequate financial and other resources are earmarked for the effective implementation of the Environment Management Plan.

(c) & (d) The monitoring of clearances granted by the Ministry for mining, including critical minerals in forest areas, is well-defined and undertaken by State/UT agencies and departments. The monitoring of such proposals is also assigned to Regional Offices of the Ministry. As per Ministry' notification dated 29.08.2025, compliance monitoring of conditions stipulated in the approvals or clearances granted by the Ministry may also be verified through registered environment auditors.

Further, for compensatory afforestation, monitoring of plantations is carried out as per the procedures laid down in the Compensatory Afforestation Fund (CAF) Act, 2016 and its Rules by the National and State CAMPA Authorities ensuring transparency, accountability, and effective oversight.
