

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF MINES
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1080
ANSWERED ON 09.02.2026

**INDIA'S CRITICAL MINERAL MISSION AND PROMOTION OF SELF-
RELIANCE**

1080. SHRI BHUBANESWAR KALITA:

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

- (a) the key objectives and components of the National Critical Mineral Mission;
- (b) the role of Center of Excellence and industry and academia partnerships in advancing research and development in critical mineral processing;
- (c) the initiatives undertaken to encourage private sector participation and investment in exploration and refining of critical minerals; and
- (d) the measures adopted by Government to strengthen domestic capacity, reduce import dependence and align the sector with national clean energy and strategic goals?

ANSWER

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

(a): The key objectives of the National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM) are:

- (i) To secure India's critical mineral supply chain by ensuring mineral availability from domestic and foreign sources.
- (ii) Strengthening the value chains by enhancing technological, regulatory, and financial ecosystems to foster innovation, skill development, and global competitiveness in mineral exploration, mining, beneficiation, processing, and recycling.

The components of the NCMM are:

- i. Increasing Domestic Critical Minerals Production
- ii. Acquisition of Critical Mineral Assets Abroad
- iii. Recycling of Critical Minerals
- iv. Trade and Markets
- v. Scientific Research & Technological Advancement for Critical Minerals
- vi. Human Resource Development
- vii. Developing Effective Funding, Financing and Fiscal Incentives

(b): Ministry of Mines has recognised nine premier institutes as Centres of Excellence (CoEs) under the NCMM to carry out Research & Development (R&D) and strengthen domestic capabilities in critical mineral processing. Each CoE operates as a consortium, on a Hub & Spoke model, to leverage the core competence of constituent industry and academic spokes.

CoE plays a key role in advancing R&D in critical mineral processing by:

- undertaking focused research to raise Technology Readiness Levels (TRLs) up-to 7/8 in critical raw materials;
- developing beneficiation, separation, extraction and recycling technologies for a wide range of primary, secondary and tertiary feedstocks;
- designing and fabricating innovative process equipment, speciality chemicals and reductants essential for mineral processing; and
- applying data analytics for optimisation of beneficiation and extraction processes.

(c): Ministry of Mines has taken several initiatives to boost private-sector participation and investment, as under:

- i. Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act (MMDR Act), 1957, was amended in 2023 to introduce the Exploration Licenses (E.L.) regime for deep-seated and critical minerals, under which a share of auction premium will be payable to the EL holder.
- ii. Forty-one Private Exploration Agencies have been notified for taking up exploration projects with 100% funding support from National Mineral Exploration and Development Trust (NMEDT).
- iii. The Ministry provides funding for Research and Development (R&D) projects to various Institutions/Laboratories/Start-ups/ MSMEs etc.
- iv. To encourage, and incentivize private-sector participation in mineral exploration, scheme for partial reimbursement of exploration expenses has been introduced for holders of Composite Licences (CL) (reimbursement of up to 50%, subject to a ceiling of ₹8 crore) and holders of Exploration Licence (EL) (up to 50% of expenses, with a maximum limit of ₹20 crore).

(d): To strengthen the critical mineral sector, the Ministry has undertaken several measures, which inter alia include:

- Geological Survey of India (GSI) intensified exploration of critical and strategic minerals. GSI carried out 195 critical mineral exploration projects in 2024–25, and 230 projects in 2025–26 across the country. Additionally, NMEDT has sanctioned 62 projects for exploration of critical minerals during 2024-25 and 60 during 2025-26 to Notified Private Exploration Agencies (NPEAs)/Notified Exploration Agencies (NEAs).
- Since the amendment to the MMDR Act in 2023, Central Government has successfully auctioned 46 blocks (as on 03.02.2026) of Critical and Strategic Mineral. In addition, 7 blocks have been auctioned under the Exploration Licence regime, out of which 3 are critical mineral blocks.

- MMDR Act, 1957 has been amended in 2025, whereby the scope of NMEDT has been expanded to support critical mineral exploration and mining overseas.
- The Union Cabinet has approved a ₹1,500 crore Incentive Scheme to promote critical mineral recycling. The Scheme Guidelines were issued and the Scheme was launched on 02.10.2025.
- Guidelines for funding pilot projects for the recovery of critical minerals from overburden/ tailings/ fly ash/ red mud, etc., were issued on 14.11.2025.
- Khanij Bidesh India Limited (KABIL), under Ministry of Mines, has signed an Exploration and Development Agreement with CAMYEN, a state-owned enterprise of Catamarca province of Argentina, for exploration and mining of five Lithium Brine Blocks in Argentina covering an area of 15703 Ha.
