

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF MINES
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1084
ANSWERED ON 09.02.2026

ADVANCING CRITICAL MINERALS SECURITY AND SELF-RELIANCE

1084. DR. K. LAXMAN:

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

- (a) the steps taken by Government to strengthen India's critical minerals ecosystem through identification of priority minerals, domestic exploration, auctioning of mineral blocks and promotion of recycling and processing capabilities;
- (b) the progress made by Khanij Bidesh India Limited (KABIL) in securing overseas mineral assets to diversify supply sources and enhance resource security; and
- (c) the manner in which these initiatives are expected to reduce import dependence, support clean energy and high-technology sectors, and advance the objectives of Atmanirbhar Bharat and sustainable industrial growth?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (c): The Union Cabinet approved the National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM) on 29.01.2025 with the objectives of securing India's critical mineral supply chain and strengthening the critical mineral value chains. The progress made under the mission, inter-alia, includes the following:

- Geological Survey of India (GSI) has intensified exploration of critical minerals. GSI carried out 195 critical mineral exploration projects in 2024-25, and took up 230 projects in 2025-26 across the country. In addition, the National Mineral Exploration and Development Trust (NMEDT) sanctioned 62 projects for critical mineral exploration during 2024-25 and 60 projects during 2025-26 to Notified Private Exploration Agencies (NPEAs)/Notified Exploration Agencies (NEAs).
- The Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act (MMDR Act), 1957 has been amended in 2025 whereby the scope of NMEDT has been expanded to support critical mineral exploration and mining overseas.
- Since the amendment to the MMDR Act in 2023, Central Government has successfully auctioned 46 (as on 3.02. 2026) blocks 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.

- 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.
- Under NCMM, ₹500 crore has been earmarked to support domestic critical mineral processing capabilities by developing mineral processing parks using existing infrastructure.
- The Government has recognised nine premier institutes as Centres of Excellence (CoEs) under the NCMM to carry out Research & Development (R&D) for strengthening domestic capabilities in the critical mineral value chain.
- 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. First phase of exploration (non-invasive) has been completed. Further, to strengthen the critical mineral sector and cooperation with mineral resource rich countries, the Ministry has entered into bilateral Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with a number of countries such as Australia, Argentina, Zambia, Peru, Germany.
- Government has eliminated customs duties on 25 minerals and reduced Basic Customs Duties (BCD) on two minerals during Budget 2024-25. During Budget 2025-26, Government of India exempted cobalt powder and waste, scrap of lithium-ion batteries, lead, zinc, and 12 other critical minerals from Basic Customs Duty.
