

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF MINES
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3475
ANSWERED ON 23.03.2026

**EXPLORATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF SAPPHIRE RESOURCES IN
PADDAR VALLEY**

3475. SHRI SAT PAUL SHARMA

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

- (a) the key findings of the sapphire reserve survey conducted in 2021 in Paddar Valley, including the estimated reserves and their significance in the global gemstone market;
- (b) the measures taken or proposed to improve all-weather road connectivity to mining locations to ensure year-round access;
- (c) the steps being taken to prevent illegal mining and to promote regulated, transparent exploration with community participation; and
- (d) the potential employment generation and socio-economic benefits envisaged for Kishtwar district through scientific mining operations?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR COAL AND MINES
(SHRI SATISH CHANDRA DUBEY)

(a) to (d): Exploration of the Neelam Khan Block located in Paddar Valley, Kishtwar District, Jammu and Kashmir was undertaken by Mineral Exploration and Consultancy Limited (MECL). The key findings include estimation of resource of 87.2 kg Corundum (Sapphire) and the geological report was handed over to the Government of J&K in April, 2024. Highway development programme targets providing all-weather Road connectivity to link manufacturing and industrial hubs, including mining locations to ensure year-round access.

Under the provisions of Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 (MMDR Act), regulation of mining activities, including prevention of illegal mining and promotion of transparent exploration, fall within the purview of the State Government. States have been empowered under Section 23C of MMDR Act to frame rules to curb illegal mining, set up task forces and enforce preventive actions. To improve detection of illegal mining, the Mining Surveillance System (MSS) was launched using satellite technology, generating triggers for verification and necessary action thereafter by the State Governments. Scientific mining operations in Kishtwar district have potential to generate employment and promote socio-economic development.
