

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 57**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 29.01.2026

**Environmentally sustainable mining of critical minerals**

57. SMT. SANGEETA YADAV:

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

- (a) the reforms undertaken by Government to ensure environmentally sustainable mining of critical minerals;
- (b) whether any policies have been introduced to mandate responsible mining practices and rehabilitation of mining-affected areas; and
- (c) if so, the details thereof, including any financial and regulatory support provided?

**ANSWER**

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

(a) to (c) Ministry of Mines has made provisions for Sustainable Mining Practices under Mineral Conservation and Development Rules (MCDR), 2017. As per the aforesaid Rules, every holder of a mining lease shall take all possible precautions for undertaking sustainable mining. The said Rules provides for star rating of the mining leases based on the sustainable mining practices. The star rating scheme is designed to have an inbuilt compliance mechanism for environment and forest safeguards and has been helpful in recognizing good performers in the sector while encouraging all mining lease holders to strive for excellence. Provisions have been incorporated in the rules for precaution against air pollution, prevention of discharge of toxic liquid, precaution against noise, control of surface subsidence etc. Further, as per Rule 12(1)(m) of the Minerals (Other than Atomic and Hydro Carbons Energy Minerals) Concession Rules, 2016, the lessee is mandated to restore, to the extent possible, the landform affected by mining operations.

Section 9B of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 (as amended) empowers the State Governments to establish District Mineral Foundation (DMF) to work for welfare and benefit of persons and areas affected by mining related operations. The funds accrued under DMF are utilized as per the Pradhan Mantri Khanij Kshetra Kalyan Yojana guidelines, which includes inter-alia Environment preservation and pollution control measures.

The Government has mandated the prior Environmental Clearance under Environment Impact Assessment Notification, 2006 (as amended) to regulate mining activities and ensure environmental safeguards. The projects/activities are given Terms of References based on scoping by the Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC)/State Level Expert Appraisal Committees (SEACs) to prepare Environment Impact Assessment Report (EIA)/ Environment Management

Plan (EMP). Based on the evaluation of EIA/EMP report, discussion/deliberations, EAC/SEAC recommends the mining projects subject to certain specific and standard conditions to ensure scientific, systematic mining and environmental protection, including rehabilitation/restoration of mined-out areas through backfilling, afforestation and re-grassing.

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