

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF MINES
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1710
ANSWERED ON 03.08.2026

**CRITICAL MINERALS AUCTIONS, OVERSEAS ACQUISITION AND IMPORT
DEPENDENCE**

1710. SHRI PRAVEEN CHAKRAVARTHY:

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of critical mineral blocks auctioned tranche-wise to date, separately indicating blocks successfully allotted, blocks annulled for want of adequate response and blocks where mining or exploration has actually commenced;
- (b) the acquisitions made and expenditure incurred by Khanij Bidesh India Ltd (KABIL) abroad, including the expected timeline for production from the lithium blocks in Catamarca, Argentina;
- (c) the import dependence ratio for lithium, cobalt, nickel and rare earth elements for the latest available year, in value and volume; and
- (d) the amount released and utilised so far against the ₹34,300 crore outlay of the National Critical Mineral Mission, component-wise?

ANSWER

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

(a): The Ministry of Mines has put up 88 unique critical mineral blocks for auction across seven tranches, of which 56 blocks have been successfully auctioned, comprising 48 Composite Licence & 08 Mining Lease and 22 blocks were annulled. Out of the 48 Composite Licence (CL) blocks auctioned by the Ministry of Mines, exploration activities have commenced in 21 blocks. The tranche-wise details of auctioned and annulled blocks are provided in Annexure-I.

(b): 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 15,703 hectares, against a payment of USD 0.8 million.

Further, the KABIL Board approved a five-year budget of USD 25.71 million in August 2023 for exploration, feasibility studies, and establishing a branch office in Catamarca. Till date, about 10% of the budget has been spent for completion of studies taken up for obtaining

statutory approvals, non-invasive exploration, statutory fees, and expenditure for setting up and maintaining the branch office of KABIL at Catamarca. As per the current project timeline, lithium production is envisaged to commence on the basis of completion of exploration in the blocks.

(c): India is largely import-dependent for meeting the domestic requirements of several critical minerals, such as lithium, cobalt and nickel. IREL (India) Limited, under Atomic Mineral Directorate for Exploration & Research, reported some production of rare earth compounds in FY 2025-26 and accordingly, the import reliance for REE is around 60 percent.

(d): For FY 2026-27, ₹ 440 crore has been provisioned under NCMM for expenditure under various mission components, such as incentive scheme for mineral recycling, skill development and critical mineral processing park.

Annexure I

Annexure referred to in reply to part (a) of RS US PQ no. 1710 for answer on 03.08.2026 regarding ‘Critical minerals auctions, overseas acquisition and import dependence’

Tranche	Successfully auctioned blocks	Annulled blocks [#]
1st	06	14
2nd	04	14
3rd	04	03
4th	10	11
5th	10	05
6th	12	11
7th	10	09

[#]: The list includes tranche-wise annulled blocks. However, the annulled blocks of tranches are taken as second-attempt blocks in subsequent tranches, and some of which are successfully auctioned included in the list of 56 blocks. The net number of blocks annulled so far is 22.