

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY  
**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2879**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 10.07.2019

**ILLEGAL MINING OF SAND MINERALS**

2879.SHRI N. K. PREMACHANDRAN:

Will the Prime Minister be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has prohibited the illegal mining and export of beach sand minerals and proposes to constitute separate mechanism for its prohibition and regulation;
- (b) If so, the details thereof and the action taken in this regard;
- (c) the details of licence issued by the authorities for mining of beach sand in the public and private sector;
- (d) whether the Government proposed to impose separate licence and also to make an umbrella system for mining of beach sand containing different radioactive minerals and if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) whether the Government proposes to relax the terms and conditions of mining of sand by private undertaking and if so, the details thereof?

**ANSWER**

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES & PENSIONS AND  
PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICER (DR. JITENDRA SINGH):

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- (a) Yes, Sir.
- (b) "Beach Sand Minerals (BSM)" which include Ilmenite, Rutile, Zircon, Monazite, Leucosene, Sillimanite and Garnet are defined as "Atomic Minerals" under Part-B of First Schedule of the Mines and Minerals (Development & Regulations) Act, 1957. These minerals occur together in beach sand mineral deposits. BSM contain precious critical elements viz: Zirconium (Zr), Hafnium (Hf), Titanium (Ti), Rare Earth Elements (Lanthanides), Thorium (Th), Uranium (U) etc. which are used by Atomic Energy, Defence and Space sectors in various strategic applications due to their superior properties. Presently grant of mineral concessions for Atomic Minerals is regulated under the Atomic Mineral Concession Rules (AMCR) 2016. Zirconium, Hafnium and Thorium are very important strategic elements for the ongoing Nuclear power installations and 3rd stage Nuclear Power Programme in the Country. Monazite being the primary source of Thorium and Rare Earth, occurring in association with Beach

Sand Minerals, any loss or leakage of Monazite or Zircon due to mineral processing or handling of Beach Sand Minerals will be significant loss to the country affecting the National Security. In view of the above, Government of India has taken the following action:

- (i) Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India, vide notification No. 26/2015-2020, Dated: 21.8.2018 amended the export policy of “Beach Sand Minerals” and declared that export of BSM are to be canalized through M/s. Indian Rare Earths Limited (IREL), a CPSE under Department of Atomic Energy(DAE).
  - (ii) Ministry of Mines, Government of India vide notification No. G.S.R. 134(E), dated: 20.2.2019 amended the threshold value of “Monazite” to “Zero” in Schedule-A of AMCR-2016 and declared all the BSM deposits / any other Placer deposits in association with monazite are above threshold. This has resulted in all the BSM deposits or any other placer deposits containing BSM irrespective of the grade of “Monazite” shall be regulated under AMCR-2016.
- (c) The mining lease in respect of First Schedule minerals under MMDR Act, 1957 requires the previous approval from Ministry of Mines. In the case of atomic minerals, Ministry of Mines refers for the comments of DAE and after receipt of No Objection Certificate (NOC) from DAE, approval is granted by Ministry of Mines. Subsequently, the respective State Government grants the mining lease to the concerned applicant.
- Mining leases are granted to public sector undertakings such as M/s. IREL (India) Limited and M/s. Kerala Minerals and Metals Limited in the State of Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Odisha. Mining leases were issued for beach sand minerals in favour of private sector in the State of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra. Termination procedures of these leases granted to private entrepreneurs have been initiated by the Government.
- (d) In accordance with the notification issued by Ministry of Mines, Government of India G.S.R. 134(E), dated: 20.2.2019, all the mineral concessions with respect to Beach Sand Minerals are regulated under the AMCR-2016 irrespective of grade of Monazite and the mineral concession rights are vested with Government and Government companies. As per this, participation of private sector in mining of BSM is not allowed.
- (e) No, Sir.

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