

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF MINES
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 257
ANSWERED ON 24.07.2024

STRATEGY TO SECURE MINERALS

257. SHRI BIDYUT BARAN MAHATO:
SHRI VIJAY KUMAR DUBEY:
SHRI BHARTRUHARI MAHTAB:

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is planning to bring out a strategy to secure minerals essential for advanced technology sectors;
- (b) if so, the details thereof along with the reforms introduced in the sector; and
- (c) if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (c) Yes, the Government of India has taken several initiatives to secure supply of minerals that are key to India's strategic interest and also to meet the requirement of key sectors including advanced technologies.

To secure the domestic supply of critical minerals essential for advanced technologies, Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 (MMDR Act), and the Offshore Areas Mineral (Development and Regulation) Act, 2002 (OAMDR Act), have been amended in 2023. The amendments aim to enhance exploration and mining of critical and strategic minerals, ensuring self-sufficiency in sectors like high-tech electronics and renewable energy. The Central Government has been empowered to auction blocks for 24 critical and strategic minerals under MMDR Act and has successfully auctioned 14 blocks till date. Additionally, a new mineral concession namely Exploration Licence has been introduced for 29 critical and deep-seated minerals, which will permit the licensee to undertake reconnaissance and prospecting operations for these minerals.

Further, to encourage private participation in exploration, Ministry of Mines has notified 22 private exploration agencies (NPEAs). These agencies are taking up exploration projects through funding from National Mineral Exploration Trust (NMET).

In 2023, the Ministry of Mines enlarged the scope of the S&T program by launching S&T-PRISM (Promotion of Research and Innovation in Start-ups and MSMEs) to fund research and innovation in Start-ups and MSMEs working in the field of mining and mineral sector in order to bridge up the gap between R&D and commercialisation.

The Ministry of Mines has also entered into bilateral agreements with the resource rich countries such as Australia, Argentina, Chile, Mozambique etc. which are having rich critical mineral resources and access to the latest technologies in the exploration and development of critical minerals.

The joint venture company- Khanij Bidesh India Ltd. (KABIL) under Ministry has acquired 15700 ha in Catamarca province of Argentina for exploration and mining of Lithium.

The above initiatives will contribute towards India's economic growth by ensuring availability and a reliable supply chain of the mineral resources.
