

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF MINES
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO – 2087
ANSWERED ON 12.03.2025

OPERATIONALISING AUCTION MINERAL BLOCKS

2087. DR. MOHAMMAD JAWED:
DR. KALYAN VAIJINATHRAO KALE:

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for the significant delays in operationalising auctioned mineral blocks considering that only 50 out of 404 auctioned blocks since 2015 are currently operational;

(b) the details of steps being taken by the newly established Project Monitoring Unit (PMU) to expedite the operationalisation of the remaining blocks and its expected role in addressing inter-ministerial and state-level bottlenecks;

(c) the measures proposed to streamline the process of obtaining statutory clearances required for operationalising auctioned mines;

(d) whether the Government plans to introduce legislative reforms to simplify approvals and if so, the details thereof;

(e) the details of initiatives being implemented to increase investment in mineral exploration particularly in Obvious Geological Potential (OGP) areas along with the outcomes achieved so far under the Exploration Licence (EL) regime; and

(f) whether the Government is considering to revive the Post-Auction Mining Clearances and Approval Facilitator (PAMCAF) to provide coordinated oversight and faster development of auctioned blocks?

ANSWER

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

(a) As on date, out of 457 auctioned, 56 mines are operational. Time taken for operationalization is dependent on obtaining various clearances required after the auction of the mining block.

(b) and (c). The newly established Project Monitoring Unit (PMU) supports the Ministry in expediting the operationalization of mineral blocks by streamlining approvals, tracking the progress and handholding of bidders in getting clearances from different agencies. This includes:

- i. Conducting baseline study of all auctioned blocks to assess the current status of clearances.
- ii. Liaising with various Central and State regulatory authorities to facilitate the approval process and maintaining detailed records of pending approvals.

(d) No Sir.

(e) The Central Government is making significant investment in mineral exploration, particularly in Obvious Geological Potential (OGP) area through Geological Survey of India (GSI) and National Mineral Exploration Trust (NMET).

- GSI has enhanced mineral exploration using advanced technologies like National Aero-Geophysical Mapping Programme (NAGMP), advanced Time Domain Electromagnetic (TDEM), Magnetic Heliborne Survey, and Mineral Prospectively Mapping (MPM) etc., focusing on deep-seated and concealed deposits.
- Mineral exploration programs have increased from 251 in 2020-21 to 438 in 2024-25, covering both OGP and non-OGP areas. Since the MMDR Act amendments in 2015 & 2023, GSI has handed over 307 resource bearing G2/G3 reports and 343 Geological Memorandums.
- The MMDR Amendment Act, 2021 has made provision for notification of accredited private exploration agencies to enable them to carry out exploration without prospecting licence and access funding under NMET.
- As on 28th February 2025, the Ministry has sanctioned 430 Mineral Exploration Projects through NMET, out of which 238 projects have been successfully completed.
- Under the Exploration Licence (EL) regime following the MMDR Amendment Act, 2023, GSI has submitted 34 EL Blocks to the Ministry of Mines.

(f) In light of the newly established PMU, there is no need to revive the Post-Auction Mining Clearances and Approval Facilitator (PAMCAF).
