

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF MINES
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.4288
ANSWERED ON 26.03.2025

MINERAL EXPLORATION UNDER NMEP

4288. SHRI DHAVAL LAXMANBHAI PATEL:

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

- (a) the steps taken to accelerate mineral exploration and resource mapping under the National Mineral Exploration Policy (NMEP);
- (b) the details of the regions identified for mineral exploration along with the minerals targeted under NMEP; and
- (c) the role of private players and public-private partnerships in mineral exploration along with the incentives provided to them?

ANSWER

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

(a) & (b): To intensify exploration activities in line with the National Mineral Exploration Policy (NMEP), various strategies adopted by the Geological Survey of India, an attached office of the Ministry of Mines, to identify more regions and new minerals for mineral exploration in the country are as follows:

- GSI through National Geochemical Mapping (NGCM) programme has completed 21.39 lakh sq. km in the targeted priority areas to derive anomalous zone/s of elemental concentration. Under its National Geophysical Mapping (NGPM) programme, an area of 16.84 lakh sq. km has been mapped.
- National Aero-Geophysical Mapping Programme (NAGMP) is another flagship programme of GSI launched to acquire uniform aero-geophysical data at 80 m height and 120 m spacing in soil- covered terrains for demarcating potential concealed mineral areas. Survey under NAGMP has been completed in 7 blocks and 322 anomaly areas were identified.
- GSI has also intensified mineral exploration programmes on critical and strategic minerals over the years. Since FS 2016-17 to 2023-24, GSI had taken up a total of 2169 mineral exploration programmes for various mineral commodities including 704 projects on critical and strategic minerals across the country. During FS 2024-25, GSI has taken up 437 mineral exploration programmes including 195 projects on critical and strategic minerals in different parts of the country.

- GSI has systematically mapped about 20.43 lakh sq km within Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of the country. Based on the acquired marine geoscientific data, GSI has delineated 5.89 lakh Offshore Prospective Areas (OPA) for focused explorations within EEZ for various minerals viz. heavy minerals, lime-mud, construction sand, polymetallic nodules/crust etc. GSI is also giving thrust for preliminary mineral exploration in OPA areas by G4 surveys followed by close grid exploration (G3) in EEZ for augmenting offshore mineral resource potential.
- Some of the significant mineral blocks developed by GSI through mineral exploration projects across the country in the recent years are, REE ore in Kawalapur, Maharashtra, Batesarhan, Bihar and Gundlupet, Karnataka, Tungsten ore and Lithium ore in Rewat Hill, Rajasthan, Nickel ore in Banasandra, Karnataka, Vanadium ore & Graphite ore in Radhpu Block, Arunachal Pradesh and Adhamaniya block, Jharkhand, Copper ore in Madansahi-Kesharpur East, Odisha, Copper ore & Gold ore in Machanur West Block, Karnataka, Potash ore in Satipura sub-basin blocks, Rajasthan, Phosphorite ore in Sambalpur & Bhedi blocks, Chhattisgarh, Gallium ore & Vanadium ore in North of Rouni block, Chhattisgarh and Iron Ore in Barpada South & Gadadharpur Blocks, Odisha.

(c): As per the MMDR Amendment Act, 2021, a provision has been made for notification of accredited private exploration agencies under the second proviso to sub-section (1) of section 4 of the Act to undertake exploration without prospecting licence. Further, such agencies have been allowed to obtain funding under the National Mineral Exploration Trust (NMET). As per the MMDR Amendment Act, 2023, a new mineral concession called Exploration Licence (EL) has been introduced for 29 critical and deep-seated minerals specified in the Seventh Schedule to the Act. The EL granted through auction shall permit the licensee to undertake reconnaissance and prospecting operations for these 29 critical and deep-seated minerals.

The Ministry of Mines has notified 31 private exploration agencies (NPEAs) and NMET has till date funded 72 projects of NPEAs with total approved cost of ₹ 122.34 crores. Further, Mobilization advance (up to 30% of the approved project cost) is available for NPEAs against submission of Bank Guarantee of equal value to help them mobilize their resources for smooth execution of exploration activity. NMET has launched a scheme for partial reimbursement of exploration expense for holders of Exploration Licences where NMET will partially reimburse exploration expenses incurred by Exploration Licence Holders upto 50% of direct cost with ceiling of ₹20 Crores. NMET also supports holders of Composite Licences with the scheme for Partial reimbursement of exploration expenses upto 50% of direct cost incurred for exploration with ceiling of ₹ 8 Crores. Furthermore, NMET also provides Exploration Incentive of 25% of the approved cost of the project for G4 items in greenfield areas for gold, basemetals, other precious minerals, strategic/ critical minerals and fertilizer minerals if the block is upgraded from G4 to G3 Stage.
