

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF MINES
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.2909
ANSWERED ON 06.08.2025

EXPLORATION AND AUCTION OF CRITICAL AND STRATEGIC MINERALS

2909. SHRI YADUVEER WADIYAR:
SHRI KARAN BHUSHAN SINGH:

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

- (a) the manner in which the Government has enhanced the exploration and auction of critical and strategic minerals such as lithium, cobalt and rare earth elements during the last year;
- (b) whether the Government has successfully auctioned any blocks under the new exploration licence regime; and
- (c) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

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

(a): The Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) (MMDR) Act, 1957 amended with effect from 17.08.2023 has empowered the Central Government to exclusively auction critical and strategic minerals like lithium, cobalt, and rare earth elements etc. During the last year (2024-25), 24 critical and strategic mineral blocks have been successfully auctioned by the Central Government.

To enhance exploration of critical and strategic minerals, National Mineral Exploration Trust (NMET) provides exploration incentives and also offers partial reimbursement of exploration expenses to holders of Exploration and Composite Licenses for critical and deep-seated minerals. During last year (2024-25), NMET has sanctioned 72 projects of critical and strategic minerals. Further, Geological Survey of India (GSI) has carried out 195 exploration projects for critical and strategic minerals during last year (2024-25) in different parts of the country.

(b) & (c): The Notice Inviting Tenders (NITs) for the 1st tranche of auction of 13 mineral blocks for grant of Exploration Licence has been issued on 13th March, 2025.
