GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF MINES
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 476
ANSWERED ON 23.07.2025

FUNDS UNDER THE NATIONAL CRITICAL MINERAL MISSION

476. SHRI MANICKAM TAGORE B:
SHRI VIJAYAKUMAR *ALIAS* VIJAY VASANTH:
SHRI SURESH KUMAR SHETKAR:

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) the details of funds disbursed under the National Critical Mineral Mission and total number of exploration, mining, and processing projects that have been sanctioned and completed so far during the last five years, year-wise;
(b) the details of the current completion rate of critical mineral exploration projects undertaken by the Geological Survey of India and the detail numbers of new deposits of lithium, rare earths, cobalt, and graphite that have been quantitatively assessed;
(c) the timelines and action plans to operationalise mineral discoveries in North East India including vanadium, graphite, rare earth elements and lithium;
(d) whether environmental or land-use clearances have been obtained and if so, the details thereof;
(e) the details of strategy Government have adopted to support copper self-reliance through increased domestic ore production, in light of the upcoming 1 million tonne capacity at the Kutch Copper smelter; and
(f) the details of the total production target achieved so far toward India's goal of self-sufficiency in critical magnet materials?

ANSWER

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

(a) National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM) was approved on 29th January 2025 for a period upto 2030-31. During 2024-25, a token amount of ₹1 Lakh was allocated. During the current FY 2025-26, ₹410 Crore has been allocated.

(b) In general, GSI completes the exploration projects within an optimized timeframe of 15 to 18 months. In the last five years, since 2020-21 till 2024-25, GSI

had taken up 628 projects focused on various critical and strategic minerals. During the current year 2025-26, 228 exploration projects targeting critical and strategic minerals have been initiated across the country. Some of the deposits where GSI has augmented resources for lithium, rare earth elements, cobalt and graphite established at various grades and cut-offs through systematic exploration programs since MMDR amendment Act,2015 are given in Annexure-I.

(c) & (d) 5 limestone blocks in Assam and 4 blocks of critical minerals in Arunachal Pradesh have been auctioned recently in 2024-25. Mining projects have long gestation period and the actual time taken for operationalization of the auctioned block is dependent on the various approvals/clearances required after the auction of the block such as submission of scheme of prospecting, completion of geological exploration, environment clearance, forest clearance, land acquisition and infrastructure development etc.

(e) The Government has adopted a comprehensive, future-oriented roadmap to establish a self-sufficient, sustainable copper ecosystem aligned with the broader Viksit Bharat 2047 vision. The Central Government amended the MMDR Act, 1957 through the MMDR Amendment Act, 2023 with effect from 17.08.2023 with the objective of expanding domestic mining capacity and reducing import dependence for critical, strategic and deep-seated minerals.

Through the said amendment, a new mineral concession namely, exploration licence has been introduced for 29 critical and deep-seated minerals including Copper. The exploration licence granted through auction shall permit the licencee to undertake reconnaissance and prospecting operations for critical and deepseated minerals mentioned in the newly inserted Seventh Schedule to the MMDR Act.

To complement increase in domestic ore production to ensure easy feedstock availability for domestic copper smelters and refiners, the import duty on copper ore & concentrate (HS code 2603) and on copper blister (HS Code 74020010) has been eliminated under the Union Budget 2024-25 announcement.

Besides, Government released the Vision Document on Copper on 4th July 2025, outlining key strategic interventions to boost the entire copper value chain. It focuses on scaling up secondary refining, enhancing domestic recycling, and reducing dependence on open-market imports by securing overseas mineral assets through global partnerships. These steps aim to ensure long-term availability of domestic copper ore, reduce import dependence, and secure India’s position in the global copper supply chain.

(f) The critical magnet materials for production of Rare Earth (RE) magnets are Neodymium -Praseodymium (NdPr) & Samarium oxide/oxalate. The production of these materials over a period of three years is tabulated below:

Production (in tonnes)		
Year	**Samarium Oxalate/ Oxide (99%)**	**Nd. Pr. Oxalate/ Oxide (99%)**
2022-23	7.478	157.93
2023-24	10.26	244.09
2024-25	7.266	245.69

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Annexure-I

Sl. No.	Commodity	No. of Projects with resources	Cumulative Resource augmented at various grades (million ton)	Location
1	Lithium	6	12.92 Mt	Jammu & Kashmir (Salal-Haimna); Rajasthan (Rewat Hill), Chhattisgarh (Kathgora) etc.
2	REE	36	482.6 Mt	Gujarat (Ambadungar); Bihar (Batesarthan); Maharashtra (Kawalapur, Pipra-Mahegaon-Dongarla); Rajasthan (North of Kalaur Ka Danta) ; Tamil Nadu (Theni), Karnataka (Gundlupet) etc.
3	Cobalt	4	1.8 Mt	Karnataka (Tarlagatta), Rajasthan (Ladera), Andhra Pradesh (Gumpamkonda) etc.
4	Graphite	26	93.8 Mt	Madhya Pradesh (Tikara-Chiklar-Gowthana and Golighat) ; Arunachal Pradesh (Radphu and Phop), Jharkhand (Karma); Odisha (Dandapani) ; Jharkhand (Adhmaniya and Karma), Chhattisgarh (Oranga-Revatipur) etc.