

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF MINES  
**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 560**  
ANSWERED ON 23.07.2025

**CENTRALIZED AUCTION POLICY**

560. SHRI RAHUL KASWAN:

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that over 335 mineral blocks, including 70 critical mineral blocks like Lithium, Rare Earth Elements (REEs), etc, were auctioned since 2024 under the centralized auction policy launched in March 2025;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (c) the manner in which the Government proposes to ensure rapid operationalisation, given that only around 56 out of 440 auctioned blocks since 2015 are functional and delays persist due to State-level approvals;
- (d) whether the draft Mines and Minerals Development and Regulation (MMDR) Amendment Rules, 2025 include penalties for delayed exploration and environmental clearances and if so, the details of framework and timelines;
- (e) whether the Government plans to incentivize private exploration through Notified Private Exploration Agency (NPEA) and reforms to attract investments in critical minerals like copper and rare earths; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof and anticipated outcomes?

**ANSWER**

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

(a) & (b): Since 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2024, a total of 187 mineral blocks have been auctioned, including 34 critical and strategic mineral blocks auctioned by the Central Government including minerals such as Lithium, Rare Earth Elements (REEs), Nickel, and Cobalt etc. The Auction of the critical and strategic minerals (as defined in Part D of Schedule-I of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) (MMDR) Act) is being done by the Central Government as per the MMDR Amendment Act, 2023.

(c): Since 2015, 526 major mineral blocks have been auctioned by various State Governments, and Central Government, of which currently 66 blocks are in production. Unlike other projects, mining projects have a longer gestation period, and production from auctioned mines can commence only after obtaining necessary

approvals/clearances such as approval of mining plan, environmental clearance, forest clearances, land acquisition etc.

To accelerate the operationalization of auctioned mineral blocks, the Central Government has implemented several key measures, including holding frequent review meetings with State Governments to resolve on-ground issues, establishment of a dedicated Project Management Unit (PMU) to monitor progress and address bottlenecks, development of a mining dashboard to track status of auctioned blocks, close coordination with Ministry of Environment Forest & Climate Change (MoEF&CC) and other Ministries to streamline and expedite approvals/clearances.

(d): The draft amendment of Mineral (Auction) Rules, 2025 include penalties including for delayed exploration and environmental clearances. The draft is available on the Ministry of Mines website and can be accessed at

<https://mines.gov.in/admin/download/681301956a2f61746076053.pdf>

(e) & (f): The Government has taken steps to incentivize private exploration through the Notified Private Exploration Agencies (NPEA) from the year 2022-23. Till 17.07.2025, a total of 79 projects have been sanctioned by National Mineral Exploration Trust (NMET) to NPEAs. Further, a total of 196 projects of critical and strategic minerals including rare earth and Copper have been sanctioned by NMET.

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