

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF MINES
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 4142
ANSWERED ON 18.03.2026

EXTRACTION OF REE FROM MINING WASTE

4142. SMT. JYOTSNA CHARANDAS MAHANT:

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Union Government is aware of recent studies and initiatives by South Eastern Coalfields Limited (SECL) identifying significant potential for extracting Rare Earth Elements (REE) from coal mine waste (overburden dumps) in Chhattisgarh and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) the detailed roadmap including the timeline and proposed investment for the scientific exploration and commercialisation of these critical mineral resources in the said State;
- (c) whether the Union Government plans to establish a specialised 'Critical Mineral Processing Hub' or Industrial Park in Chhattisgarh to ensure that the value-addition of these minerals occurs locally rather than exporting raw waste and if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) the specific skill development programmes and employment mandates are being designed to ensure that the local youth and workforce are prioritized for the high-tech jobs generated by this new mining frontier?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR COAL AND MINES
(SHRI SATISH CHANDRA DUBEY)

(a) to (d): Ministry of Mines has formulated a "Policy for Exploration of Critical Minerals in New Projects and Recovery of Critical Minerals from Overburden, Dumps and Tailings of Existing Mines, 2025" which aims at ensuring systematic identification, assessment and recovery of critical and strategic minerals from the new exploration projects as well as existing mines. Based on this policy and Ministry of Coal directives, all Coal India Limited (CIL) subsidiaries implement the identification and exploration of valuable minerals, including rare earth elements, during coal exploration and in coal mine overburden (OB) dumps as per standard operating procedures (SoPs) formulated for this purpose.

In the South Eastern Coalfields Limited (SECL) command area, Central Mine Planning & Design Institute Limited (CMPDI) has successfully completed sampling of two boreholes from coal blocks.

Further, Union Cabinet has approved the National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM) on 29 January, 2025 to secure a long-term sustainable supply of critical minerals (including REEs) and strengthen India's critical mineral value chain encompassing all stages from mineral exploration and mining to beneficiation, processing, and recovery from end-of life products.

NCMM also includes promotion of recovery of Critical Minerals from tailings/dumps etc. In this context, the Ministry of Mines has issued guidelines on 14.11.2025 for setting up pilot projects for recovery of critical minerals (including REEs) from overburden, tailings, fly ash, red mud, etc. by encouraging collaborations between industry, academia and research institutions. Under this scheme, one project of Non-Ferrous Technology Development Centre (NFTDC) related to REE separation from multiple feedstock has already been approved.

Additionally, under NCMM, ₹500 crore has been earmarked to support domestic critical mineral processing capabilities by developing mineral processing parks using existing infrastructure, for ensuring processing of critical minerals within the country and promoting local value addition. These initiatives support the development of technical skills and employment opportunities associated with mineral processing and allied activities.
