GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF MINES
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 473
ANSWERED ON 22.07.2026

REDUCING IMPORT DEPENDENCY ON CRITICAL MINERALS

473. SHRI ESWARASAMY K:
SHRI ANURAG SHARMA:

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the current percentage of India's import dependence on critical minerals, including Lithium, Cobalt and Rare Earth Elements required for Electric Vehicles (EVs), electronics and other strategic sectors;
(b) the present status of the implementation of the Critical Minerals Mission along with its key objectives, implementation timeline, budgetary allocation and targets for achieving self-reliance in the exploration, mining, processing and recycling of critical minerals; and
(c) the details of bilateral agreements, strategic partnerships, overseas exploration projects and acquisition of mineral assets undertaken by the Government to secure a reliable supply chain of critical minerals for Indian manufacturers including the progress made and the expected outcomes of such initiatives?

ANSWER

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

(a): There is a significant production of some critical minerals in the country like graphite, phosphate, titanium, zirconium and rare earth elements (REEs), while India is largely import dependent for meeting the domestic requirements of several critical minerals, such as lithium, cobalt, nickel, potash.

(b) & (c):

- The key objectives of the National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM) are:

(i) To secure India's critical mineral supply chain by ensuring mineral availability from domestic and foreign sources.

(ii) Strengthening the critical mineral value chains by enhancing technological, regulatory, and financial ecosystems to foster innovation, skill development, and global competitiveness in mineral exploration, mining, beneficiation, processing, and recycling.

- NCMM has been approved for the period from FY 2024–25 to FY 2030–31, with a financial outlay of ₹16,300 crore. The NCMM outlines the following outputs/targets:

Key heads	**Total (FY 2024-25 to 2030-31)**
Domestic Critical Mineral Exploration Projects	1200
Foreign Critical Mineral Mines	50
Incentive scheme for recycling - total materials recycled (kt)	400
Patents in critical mineral value chain	1000
Skill development	10000
Mineral Processing Parks	4
Centre of Excellence	3
Mineral Stockpile (cumulative)	5

Several initiatives have been taken up since the approval of the NCMM which inter alia include:

- The Union Cabinet approved a ₹1,500 crore Incentive Scheme to develop recycling capacity for the separation and production of critical minerals from secondary sources. The Scheme Guidelines were issued on 02.10.2025. The scheme has received a very positive response from the private sector.

- The Ministry of Mines has successfully auctioned 56 critical mineral blocks. Additionally, the Central Government has also successfully auctioned 11 blocks of Exploration License, which include six blocks of critical minerals.

- The Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act (MMDR Act), 1957 has been amended in 2025 whereby the scope of NMEDT has been expanded to support critical mineral exploration and mining overseas.

- Guidelines for funding Pilot Projects for Recovery of Critical Minerals from overburden/tailings/fly ash/ Red mud etc. issued on 14.11.2025.

- During Union Budget 2024–25, customs duties were eliminated on 25 critical minerals. In Budget 2025–26, Basic Customs Duty (BCD) was exempted on cobalt powder and waste, scrap of lithium-ion batteries, etc. Further, in Budget 2026–27, BCD was exempted on the import of capital goods required for processing of critical minerals in India.

- Forty-eight Private Exploration Agencies have been notified for taking up exploration projects with 100% funding support from NMEDT.

- To encourage and incentivize private-sector participation in mineral exploration, scheme for partial reimbursement of exploration expenses has been introduced for holders of Composite Licences (CL) (reimbursement of up to 50%, subject to a ceiling of ₹8 crore) and holders of Exploration Licence (EL) (up to 50% of expenses, with a maximum limit of ₹20 crore).

- The Ministry of Mines has launched a scheme for reimbursement of up to 50% of the eligible exploration expenditure incurred by Composite Licence (CL) holders on approved exploration activities in offshore CL blocks, subject to a maximum limit of ₹300 crore.

- To strengthen the critical mineral sector and cooperation with Ministry has entered into bilateral agreements/ Memorandum of Understandings/ Joint Declaration of Intent with the Governments of a number of countries including Argentina, Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, Malawi, Mongolia, Mozambique, Peru, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

- Further, the Ministry of Mines engages regularly with various multilateral and bilateral platforms like Mineral Security Partnership (MSP), Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF), India-UK Technology and Security Initiative(TSI), Quad etc, for strengthening the critical minerals value chain.

- Khanij Bidesh India Limited (KABIL), under Ministry of Mines, has signed an Exploration and Development Agreement with CAMYEN, a state-owned enterprise of Catamarca province of Argentina, for exploration and mining of five Lithium Brine Blocks in Argentina covering an area of 15703 Ha.

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