No. M.VI-16/7/2024-Mines VI-Part(6)
Government of India
Ministry of Mines
*****

Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi
Dated the 13th October, 2025

ORDER

WHEREAS, the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 (hereinafter, 'the Act') was enacted to provide for development and regulation of mines and minerals in the country.

2. AND WHEREAS, minor minerals are those minerals which are specified or notified under section 3(e) of the Act.

3. AND WHEREAS, the mineral 'Limestone used in kilns for manufacture of lime used as building material' was declared as minor mineral vide Notification No. G.S.R. 436, dated the 1st June, 1958 as amended by Notification No. G.S.R. 1199, dated 12th September, 1961 and further superseded by Notification No. G.S.R. 786(E), dated 23rd August, 1989 in exercise of the powers conferred by section 3(e) of the Act. Limestone when used for any other purpose is a mineral other than minor minerals (hereinafter, 'major minerals').

4 . AND WHEREAS, an Inter-Ministerial Committee was constituted on 11th March, 2024 in NITI Aayog on Mines and Minerals Sector. The said Committee in its report dated 4th November, 2024 has observed that presently, use of limestone in making lime has significantly reduced and most of limestone is used in cement manufacturing and in chemical industries, smelters, fertilizer unit, sugar factory etc. Considering that limestone is widely available in many parts of the country, and given its use predominant in cement industry, there appears compelling reason to classify limestone as major minerals. Accordingly, the Committee recommended that entry regarding limestone in notification of minor minerals may be deleted and all minor mineral leases of limestone may be converted as major mineral leases.

5. AND WHEREAS, the Central Government in exercise of the powers conferred by section 3(e) of the Act has amended the notification No. G.S.R. 786(E), dated 23rd August, 1989 to remove 'Limestone used in kilns for manufacture of lime used as building material' from the list of minor minerals *vide* Notification No. G.S.R 751 (E) dated 10th October, 2025. Therefore, on and from 10th October, 2025, all type of mineral Limestone is a major mineral.

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6 . AND WHEREAS, as per Section 13 of the Act, the Central Government is empowered to make rules in respect of major minerals. The Central Government has framed the Minerals (Other than Atomic and Hydro Carbons Energy Minerals) Concession Rules, 2016 (hereinafter, 'MCR, 2016') in exercise of the powers conferred by section 13 of the Act.

7 . AND WHEREAS, the Central Government has framed the Mineral Conservation and Development Rules, 2017 (hereinafter, 'MCDR, 2017') in exercise of the powers conferred by section 18 of the Act in the interest of conservation and systematic development of minerals in the country.

8 . AND WHEREAS, pursuant to the reclassification of minor mineral Limestone as major minerals, the existing minor mineral leases of limestone will be regulated in accordance with the provisions of the Act and the rules framed thereunder in respect of other major minerals. As such, the lease period of the existing minor mineral leases of Limestone shall be governed as per section 8A of the MMDR Act on classification of Limestone as major mineral. Thus, lease period of mining leases granted after the commencement of the MMDR Amendment Act, 2015 shall be for the period of 50 years. Further, in case of mining leases granted before the commencement of the MMDR Amendment Act, 2015, the lease period shall be extended and be deemed to have been extended up to a period ending on 31st March, 2020 (for merchant mines) or 31st March, 2030 (for captive mines) with effect from the date of expiry of the period of renewal last made or till the completion of renewal period, if any, or a period of 50 years from the date of grant of such lease, whichever is later, subject to the condition that all the terms and conditions of the lease have been complied with.

9 . AND WHEREAS, various issues related to application of existing rules for major minerals may arise due to transition of the existing minor mineral mining leases to major mineral category, such as period for registration of lease holders with the Indian Bureau of Mines, approval of mining plan, royalty rates applicable, compliance of various requirements, etc. Accordingly, it is considered necessary to make certain transitory arrangements for smooth transition of the existing minor mineral mining leases of Limestone to major mineral category.

10. AND WHEREAS, it is also noted that certain applicationsfor grant mineral concession in respect of minor mineral Limestone were pending before State Governments that will be affected by categorization of 'Limestone used in kilns for manufacture of lime used as building material' to major mineral. Accordingly, a transitory period is required to be provided to the applicants that have already

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made progress to obtain mineral concession in respect of limestone as a minor mineral.

11. AND WHEREAS, Section 20A of the Act provides that the Central Government may issue such directions to the State Governments, as may be required for the conservation of mineral resources, or on any policy matter in the national interest, and for the scientific and sustainable development and exploitation of mineral resources.

12. NOW THEREFORE, notwithstanding anything contained in the Act, the MCR, 2016 and the MCDR, 2017, in exercise of the powers conferred under Section 20A of the Act, the Central Government, for the conservation of mineral resources, in the national interest, and for the scientific and sustainable development and exploitation of mineral resources, hereby directs the following:

A. Directions with respect to existing minor mineral leases of Limestone

i. The existing lease holders in respect ofLimestone that were granted as minor mineral leases shall cause themselves to register online with the Indian Bureau of Mines under the provisions of Rule 45(1) of the MCDR 2017 on or before 31st March, 2026.

ii. The existing mines of such leases shall continue to pay royalty to the State Governments at the existing rates specified by the respective State Governments up to 31st March, 2026 or till further directions, whichever is earlier.

iii. The existing mining plans for such leases approved by the respective State Governments shall continue to remain valid till 31st March, 2027 or their expiry, whichever is earlier, provided that the lessee shall submit a copy of the existing approved mining plan to the Indian Bureau of Mines on or before 31st March, 2026. For cases where the validity of the mining plan is expiring before 31st March, 2027:

a. the lessee may submit a mining plan to the State Government for its approval for carrying out mining upto 31st March, 2027 provided that the approval of the State Government shall be accorded on or before 31st March, 2026. In such cases, the lessee shall submit a copy of the approved mining plan document to Indian Bureau of Mines on or before 30 April, 2026;

OR,

the lessee may submit the mining plan document for approval by the

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Indian Bureau of Mines to carry out mining beyond its validity period.

b. For carrying out mining beyond31st March, 2027, the lessees will submit fresh mining plan for approval of IBM at least 180 days before 31st March, 2027.

iv. All such mining leases shall be exempt from filing digital aerial images of mining lease area under Rule 34A of the MCDR, 2017 on or before 1st July, 2026. The existing lease holders of such leases shall submit digital aerial images of mining lease area to the Indian Bureau of Mines under Rule 34A of the MCDR, 2017 on or before 1st July, 2027.

v. The existing financial assurance submitted to the State Governments at the existing rates for financial assurance given to the State Governments for the purposes of due and proper implementation of the progressive mine closure plan or the final mine closure plan, as the case may be, shall be considered to be valid till 31^{st} March, 2027, for compliance of Rule 27 of the MCDR 2017.

vi. All such mining leases shall be exempt from filing of online self-assessment report as per the star rating template under Rule 35 of the MCDR 2017 for up to FY 2025-26. However, such lease holders shall be required to submit the online self-assessment report as per the star rating template for FY 2026-27 within the prescribed timeline, i.e., on or before 1^{st} July, 2027. Further, the existing lease holders shall be required to maintain three-star rating from FY 2029-30 and thereafter maintain the same on year-on-year basis.

vii. The lessees in respect of Limestone that were granted as minor mineral leases shall not be penalized for non-filing of monthly and annual returns under Rule 45 of the MCDR, 2017 to the Indian Bureau of Mines till 31st March, 2026, subject to the condition that the lessees shall continue to submit their returns to the State Governments as per the existing provisions and the lessees shall submit returns under Rule 45 of the MCDR, 2017 to the Indian Bureau of Mines from April, 2026 onwards.

viii. No penalty shall be imposed on such existing minestill 30th June, 2026 for contravention of the provisions of the MCR, 2016 and the MCDR, 2017, other than Rule 45 of the MCDR, 2017 as above.

ix. The exemptions from the rules are applicable only for the period as specified above and the respective rule shall be applicable beyond the period of exemption specified.

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B. Directions with respect to pending applications for grant of mineral concession in respect of Limestone as a minor mineral

i. where an application has been made for grant of a mineral concession, but the State Government has not issued letter of intent (by whatever name called) for grant the mineral concession before 10th October, 2025, the application shall lapse.

ii. where the State Government had issued letter of intent (by whatever name called) for grant of a mineral concession before 10th October, 2025 and such letter of intent was valid as on 10th October, 2025 or where the auction process for grant of mineral concession has been concluded and preferred bidder has been selected before 10th October, 2025 but the letter of intent (by whatever name called) for grant of mineral concession has not been issued, the mining lease shall be granted and executed in accordance with the rules made by the State Government in respect of minor minerals within a period of two years from the date of issue of this order. No mining lease shall be executed after the said period.

iii. After the grant and execution of mining lease, all the provision of the Act and the rules made thereunder shall apply to such mining lease which are applicable to minerals other than minor mineral.

D. Mahur
13.10.2025

(Dinesh Mahur)
Joint Secretary to the Government of India
Phone No.: 011-23384334

To

The Principal Secretaries/Secretaries,
In-charge of Mining Department,
All State Governments and Union Territories

Copy for information to: The Controller General, Indian Bureau of Mines, Nagpur.