

COUNTERING CHINA'S CURBS ON RARE EARTH MINERALS

Posted On: 29 JUL 2025 4:36PM by PIB Delhi

As per the information received from Ministry of Mines, the Union Cabinet has approved the launch of the National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM) on 29th January, 2025, for a period of seven years from 2024-25 to 2030-31, with a proposed expenditure of Rs.16,300 crore and an expected investment of Rs.18,000 crore by Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) and other stakeholders. The NCMM aims to secure a long-term sustainable supply of critical minerals and strengthen India's critical mineral value chains encompassing all stages from mineral exploration and mining to beneficiation, processing, and recovery from end-of-life products.

In order to boost domestic production and reduce India's dependence on imported lithium, cobalt and other key materials required for EV batteries, the Government of India has taken significant steps, which are as under:

The Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 (MMDR) has been amended through the MMDR Amendment Act, 2023 w.e.f. 17.08.2023. The Amendment Act, 2023 provides for:

- i. A list of 24 critical and strategic minerals in Part D of Schedule-I.
- ii. Omission of six minerals from the list of 12 atomic minerals in Part B of Schedule-I namely Lithium, Titanium, Beryl and beryllium bearing minerals, Niobium, Tantalum and Zirconium bearing minerals and their inclusion in the list of aforesaid 24 critical and strategic minerals.
- iii. Section 11D of the Act, which empowers Central Government to exclusively auction mining lease and composite license for critical and strategic minerals specified in Part D of the Schedule-I.
- iv. Exploration license for 29 minerals included in Schedule-VII of the Act.

In addition, Ministry of Mines has been empowered to auction blocks for grant of Exploration License through an order dated 21st October, 2024 under Section 20A of MMDR Act 1957. Central Government has successfully auctioned 24 blocks of critical and strategic minerals in 04 tranches in 2024.

The exploration of critical minerals has been significantly increased. Over the past three years, the Geological Survey of India (GSI) has undertaken 368 exploration projects focused on critical and strategic minerals. In the FY 2024-25, 195 projects are being executed and 227 projects have been approved for the upcoming financial year.

100% FDI is allowed under "Automatic" route for mining and exploration of metal and non-metal ores. A foreign company may incorporate an Indian subsidiary company or invest in an existing Indian Company to become eligible for grant of mining and exploration rights.

To support the critical minerals sector, Government has eliminated customs duties on 25 minerals and reduced Basic Customs Duties (BCD) on 2 minerals in the Union Budget for 2024-25.

This information was given by the Minister of State for Heavy Industries, Shri Bhupathiraju Srinivasa Varma in a written reply in the Lok Sabha today.

(Release ID: 2149747)