

Media Reports of Private Entities Getting Permission to Mine and Explore Atomic Minerals from Offshore Regions are Incorrect

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It has come to the notice of the Ministry of Mines that there were some recent media reports suggesting that the Union Government has permitted private sector participation in the exploration and mining of atomic minerals such as Uranium and Thorium from the country's offshore regions by notifying the Offshore Areas Atomic Minerals Rules, 2025. Such reports are misleading and factually incorrect.

The Offshore Areas Atomic Minerals Operating Rights Rules, 2025 provide the procedure for the grant of operating rights for atomic mineral only to the Government, Government companies, or corporations and not to private entities.

It is important to state that Parliament, through the Offshore Areas Mineral (Development and Regulation) (Amendment) Act, 2023, amended the Offshore Areas Mineral (Development and Regulation) Act, 2002, effective from 17th August 2023. The First proviso to Section 6 of the OAMDR Act, 2002 explicitly restricts the grant of exploration licences, composite licences, or production leases for atomic minerals (specified in Part B of the First Schedule to the MMDR Act, 1957) to the Government, Government companies, or corporations only, subject to prescribed conditions and threshold values notified by the Central Government.

Further, under Section 35 of the OAMDR Act, 2002, the Central Government is empowered to frame rules for the effective implementation of the Act. Accordingly, the Offshore Areas Atomic Minerals Operating Rights Rules, 2025 were notified on 14th July 2025 in consultation with the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE), the nodal department for regulating atomic minerals. The rules provide the procedure for the grant of operating rights for atomic mineral only to the Government, Government companies, or corporations.

In light of the above, the media reports appear to be not consistent with the facts, provisions of the relevant Acts, Rules, and policy frameworks governing atomic minerals in India.

The Ministry of Mines reaffirms its commitment to transparency, adherence to legislative mandates, and ensuring that the exploration and mining of atomic minerals remain under strict regulatory control in accordance with national security and policy considerations.

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