

PARLIAMENT QUESTION: DOMESTIC EXPLORATION AND AVAILABILITY OF CRITICAL MINERALS

प्रविष्टि तिथि: 29 JAN 2026 5:01PM by PIB Delhi

The Atomic Minerals Directorate for Exploration and Research (AMD), a constituent unit of Department of Atomic Energy (DAE), has a major mandate to identify, evaluate and augment the mineral resources of critical elements like niobium, tantalum, beryllium, lithium, zirconium, titanium and rare earths containing uranium and thorium, besides minerals of uranium and thorium, in potential geological domains of the country, which are essential for India's nuclear energy and strategic sectors.

As on date, AMD has established:

- Approximately 7.23 million tonne (Mt) in-situ Rare Earth Elements Oxide and 1.18Mt Thorium Oxide (ThO₂) contained in 13.15Mt monazite (a mineral of Thorium and Rare Earths), 761.97Mt titanium-bearing minerals (ilmenite, rutile and leucoxene) and 38Mt zircon (zirconium bearing minerals) occurring in the coastal beach, teri / red sands and inland alluvium in parts of Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Gujarat and Maharashtra.
- 1.29Mt in-situ Rare Earth Oxide (REO) resources in hard rocks in parts of Gujarat and Rajasthan. In addition, 29,900t Th-Oxide; 1,42,200t Nb-Oxide; 3,85,700t Zr-Oxide and 81,300t V-oxide in-situ resource in hard rocks have been established in association with the REO resources.
- 1,800t lithium oxide (Li₂O) has been established in hard rocks in Karnataka.

Additionally, 149.129t of Columbite - Tantalite (Nb-Ta mineral), 4,250.059t of Beryl (Be mineral), 3,296.679t of Lepidolite (Li mineral), 72.151t of Spodumene (Li mineral), 4.212t of Amblygonite (Li mineral) and 123.763t of Xenotime (Y mineral) bearing heavy mineral concentrate have been stockpiled incidental to prospecting operations.

Besides, 4,39,800 tonne (t) in-situ U-oxide resource has been established in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Jharkhand, Meghalaya, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Maharashtra. The Uranium produced domestically is utilized in domestically safeguarded reactors. The Uranium required for India's nuclear energy being generated through IAEA safeguarded reactors is being imported.

To enhance domestic exploration for the critical minerals essential for India's nuclear energy and strategic sectors, AMD has adopted integrated and multi-disciplinary exploration strategy (including heliborne and ground geophysical surveys, ground geological, geochemical and radiometric surveys and drilling) to augment the resources of critical and strategic minerals in identified thrust areas of the country.

IREL (India) Limited (IREL), a PSU under Department of Atomic Energy produces critical minerals such as Titanium bearing minerals, Zircon bearing minerals and Rare Earth elements for nuclear energy sector. Kerala Minerals and Metals Limited (KMML) a state PSE under Government of Kerala also undertake

similar activity. IREL has been operating in three locations having the facility for integrated mining and processing of mineral sands and a facility for extraction and refining of Rare Earths. IREL has been granted LOI for three deposits (two in the state of Odisha and one in Tamil Nadu) and nominated as prospective lessee for one deposit in Andhra Pradesh to augment the processing capacity of these minerals for which pre-project activities are underway.

This information was given by Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science & Technology and Earth Sciences, and Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office, Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr. Jitendra Singh in a written reply in Rajya Sabha today.

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इस विज्ञप्ति को इन भाषाओं में पढ़ें: Urdu , हिन्दी