PARLIAMENT QUESTION: MINING OF RARE EARTH METALS

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Atomic Minerals Directorate for Exploration and Research (AMD), a constituent unit of Department of Atomic Energy (DAE), is carrying out integrated and multi-disciplinary exploration to augment Rare Earth Elements (REE) and uranium in potential geological domains of the country.

Geological Survey of India (GSI) has prioritized the exploration of critical and strategic minerals, including REE. Between 2021-22 and 2023-24, GSI carried out 166 mineral exploration projects targeting REE in the country. Further, in 2024-25, GSI carried out 78 exploration projects on REE and taken up 92 projects during 2025-26. The Ministry of Mines has successfully auctioned 46 critical mineral blocks, including 7 blocks of REE. Additionally, the Central Government has also successfully auctioned 7 blocks of Exploration License, which include two blocks of REE.

IREL (India) Limited (IREL), a Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) under the DAE is mandated to process Rare Earth (RE) bearing minerals from Beach Sand Materials (BSM) ore to extract rare earths in the form of high pure RE oxides in the country. IREL has been operating in three locations having the facility for integrated mining and processing of mineral sands and a facility each for extraction and refining of rare earths.

Uranium Corporation of India Limited (UCIL), a PSU under the DAE, is engaged in mining and processing of uranium ore. UCIL is presently operating seven uranium mines and two ore processing plants in the state of Jharkhand and one uranium mine and plant at Tummalapalle in the state of Andhra Pradesh.

The resources of REE estimated by AMD as on date are -

i. Approximately 7.23 million tonne (Mt) Total Rare Earth Oxide Equivalent (TREO Eq.) contained in 13.15 Mt monazite [a mineral of rare earth elements and thorium] occurring in teri, beach sands and inland alluvium in parts of Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Gujarat and Maharashtra.
ii. 1.29 Mt in-situ TREO Eq. in hard rock terrains in parts of Gujarat and Rajasthan.

Khanij Bidesh India Limited (KABIL), a JV under the aegis of Ministry of Mines, has been created to acquire overseas mineral assets like Lithium, Cobalt, REE etc. KABIL has signed an Exploration and Development Agreement with CAMYEN, for the exploration and mining of five Lithium Brine Blocks in Argentina. Till date, KABIL has not signed/ executed any long-term agreements for REEs, Cobalt and Uranium with any country or business entities.

This information was submitted by Union Minister of State for Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions & Prime Minister's Office , Dr. Jitendra Singh in Rajya Sabha on 2nd April 2026.

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