



Government Promotes Indigenous Potash Production and Alternative Nutrient Sources to Reduce Import Dependence

Potassium Derived from Molasses (PDM) Incentivised Under Nutrient Based Subsidy Scheme

GSI Intensifies Potash Exploration; ICAR Develops Potash Biofertilizers to Strengthen Self-Reliance

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The Government of India has undertaken a series of initiatives to promote indigenous production of potash and develop sustainable alternatives to reduce the country's dependence on imported potash fertilizers. These efforts include incentivising the use of Potassium Derived from Molasses (PDM), intensifying domestic potash exploration, and promoting potash biofertilizers through scientific research and technological interventions.

Potassium Derived from Molasses (PDM) is a by-product of sugar industry. PDM has minimum 14.5% potash and can be used by farmers in field as an alternative to MOP (Muriate of Potash with 60% potash content). Thus, PDM reduces the dependence on imported potash. PDM was notified under Fertilizer Control Order (1985) in 2009, and in order to incentivize the use of PDM, it was inducted under Nutrient Based Subsidy (NBS) Scheme w.e.f. 13.10.2021.

In order to promote manufacturing and availability of PDM to the farmers as a sustainable, eco-friendly, and cost-effective alternative to conventional Muriate of Potash (MOP), a tune of Rs. 345 per tonne of subsidy has been fixed for PDM for Kharif, 2026 season. Further, to monitor the price of PDM, a Joint Working Group (JWG) of Department of Food & Public Distribution and Department of Fertilizers along with Indian Sugar and Bio-Energy Manufacturers Association (ISMA) & fertilizer companies has been constituted.

To enhance the domestic exploration of potash in the country in alignment with the objectives of National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM), Geological Survey of India (GSI) has intensified its exploration activities with special emphasis on the exploration of critical minerals in the country. Since the launch of NCMM in 2024-25, GSI undertook 8 exploration projects on potash in Rajasthan and Punjab. Further, during 2026-27, GSI took up 6 mineral exploration projects for potash in Rajasthan and Punjab. Since the Mines and Minerals Development and Regulation (MMDR) Amendment Act, 2015, GSI has established a total of 456.52 million tonnes resource of potash at various grades and different cut-offs from Rajasthan and Punjab.

To support self-reliance in potash production through indigenous and alternative nutrient sources, Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR) has identified and developed potassium-solubilizing microorganisms (*Frateuria aurantia*, *Serratia liquefaciens* and *Bacillus* sp), which are being promoted as potash biofertilizers to improve the availability of native soil potassium and reduce dependence on imported potash fertilizers.

This information was provided by Smt. Anupriya Patel, Minister of State in the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers, in a written reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha today.

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