Ministry of Mines Launches the Ninth Tranche of Critical Mineral Block Auction and the Third Tranche of Exploration Licence Auction; Unveils Landmark Reform

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The Ministry of Mines today launched the Ninth Tranche of e-auction of Critical and Strategic Mineral Blocks, together with the Third Tranche of the Auction for Grant of Exploration Licence (EL) blocks. The launch was officiated by Shri G. Kishan Reddy, Hon'ble Union Minister for Coal and Mines, Government of India, with Dr Pramod Sawant, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Goa, as Chief Guest, in the gracious presence of Shri Satish Chandra Dubey, Hon'ble Minister of State for Coal and Mines, Government of India. The event was attended by senior dignitaries from the Government of India, representatives from State Governments, Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) and media representatives.

Launch of Tranche IX of Critical and Strategic Mineral Blocks Auction:

In this tranche, a total of 20 critical and strategic mineral blocks are being put up for auction under the provisions of the Mineral (Auction) Rules. In the previous eight tranches, 100 unique critical and strategic mineral blocks were offered, of which 64 have been successfully auctioned, a success rate of 64%.

Details of blocks put up for auction:

State	Number of Blocks	Minerals
Andhra Pradesh	1	Graphite
Bihar	1	Glauconite
Chhattisgarh	5	Phosphorite-Limestone, Vanadium, Gallium, Titanium, Rare Earth Elements (REE), Bauxite, Aluminous Laterite, Glauconite

State	Number of Blocks	Minerals
Madhya Pradesh	2	Vanadium, Gallium, Titanium, Bauxite, Aluminous Laterite
Maharashtra	2	Rare Earth Elements (REE), Rare Metal, Vanadium, Gallium, Titanium, Bauxite, Aluminous Laterite
Rajasthan	3	Potash and Halite, Tungsten
Telangana	3	Titanium, Vanadium, Scandium, Gallium, Aluminous Laterite
West Bengal	3	Graphite, Rare Earth Elements (REE), Rare Metal

The blocks on offer include a diverse portfolio of strategically important minerals which are critical for sectors such as clean energy technologies, electric mobility, advanced manufacturing, fertilizers, defence, aerospace, electronics, and other strategic industries, thereby strengthening India's mineral security and supporting the country's energy transition.

Third Tranche of Exploration Licence (EL) Auction Also Launched

Alongside the Ninth Tranche, the Ministry also launched the Third Tranche of the Auction for Grant of Exploration Licence (EL). Exploration Licences, introduced through Section 10BA of the MMDR Act, enable private investment in the exploration of 29 Critical and Deep-Seated Minerals specified in the Seventh Schedule of the Act, opening up exploration to private industry even before mining begins. So far, 11 EL blocks have been successfully auctioned in two tranches.

Details of Exploration Licence blocks put up for auction under Tranche III:

State	Number of Blocks	Minerals
Madhya Pradesh	1	Copper
Maharashtra	1	Vanadium
West Bengal	1	Rare Earth Elements (REE)
Rajasthan	4	Potash and Halite, Rare Earth Elements (REE) and associated mineralisation
Telangana	3	Rare Earth Elements (REE)

State	Number of Blocks	Minerals
Gujarat	1	Vanadium and associated mineralisation

Reforms to Improve Auction Outcomes

The Government has notified the Mineral (Auction) Third Amendment Rules, 2026 on 16 October 2026, reducing the minimum number of Technically Qualified Bidders required for the second round from three to two for Part D minerals. The change, built into the Tender Documents for both tranches, addresses a key reason blocks have gone unsold. Letters of Intent will now be issued automatically through the Unified Mining Portal. These build on earlier reforms, including Mineral (Auction) Second Amendment Rules, 2025 and Insurance Surety Bonds, aimed at improving ease of doing business and investor confidence.

The sale of Tender Documents for both the auction processes has commenced from Thursday, November 05, 2026. The last date for purchase of the Tender Document is Friday, January 01, 2027 (by 17:00 hrs IST), and the last date for submission of bids (Technical Bid and Initial Price Offer) is Thursday, January 07, 2027 (by 17:00 hrs IST).

Critical Mineral Blocks (Composite Licence and Mining Lease) will be auctioned online through a transparent two-stage ascending forward auction, where the bidder quoting the highest percentage of revenue share wins. Exploration Licence Blocks will be auctioned online through a transparent two-stage descending reverse auction, where the bidder quoting the lowest percentage share out of the revenue share of the future lessee wins. Details are available on the MSTC e-auction platform at:

https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/mlcln/

With these launches and reforms, the Government continues to advance its efforts towards strengthening the domestic availability of critical and strategic minerals, encouraging private sector participation, promoting exploration and responsible mining, and building a resilient, self-reliant, and globally competitive mineral ecosystem in India.

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