

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINES
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2506

ANSWERED ON:14.12.2015

Mineral Explorations

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Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has set up the National Mineral Exploration Trust (NMET) recently;
- (b) if so, the details and the objectives thereof;
- (c) whether the Government proposes to take up aero geophysical survey of 8.13 lakh square kilometer of geological potential area in the country;
- (d) if so, the details thereof including the extent to which the State Governments are likely to be involved in this regard, State/UT-wise; and
- (e) the other steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to boost the exploration and production of various minerals in the country?

Answer

(a) & (b): Yes, Madam. The Central Government has established the National Mineral Exploration Trust [NMET] vide Gazette Notification No. G.S.R.633 (E) dated 14th August, 2015. The NMET has a Governing Body chaired by the Union Minister In-charge of Ministry of Mines and an Executive Committee chaired by Secretary, Ministry of Mines. Further, vide Gazette Notification No. G.S.R.632 (E) dated 14th August, 2015, the Government has notified the National Mineral Exploration Trust Rules, 2015. Both these Gazette Notifications are available on the website of Ministry of Mines i.e. www.mines.nic.in.

The primary objective of the NMET is to promote regional and detailed mineral exploration in the country to increase overall mineral production and achieve sustainable development of the mineral sector. The NMET Rules detail the objects and functions of the Trust.

(c) & (d): Geological Survey of India [GSI], an attached office of the Ministry of Mines, proposes to take up aerogeophysical survey of 8.13 lakh square kilometer of geological potential area in the country through outsourcing.

In the first phase, it has been proposed that, reconnaissance aerogeophysical survey of the area will be completed with magnetometer and gravity sensors, and in the second phase, high resolution airborne survey will be carried out over potential mineral zones identified from the reconnaissance survey. The potential area for aerogeophysical survey covers parts of the States of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Bihar, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Kerala, West Bengal, Meghalaya, Goa, Haryana, Sikkim and Assam. The data generated through aerogeophysical survey will be shared with the concerned States for taking up further exploration works.

(e): GSI, being the principal agency for mineral resource assessment of the country, has taken the following major steps for accelerating mineral exploration:

- Adoption of multisensor aero-geophysical surveys and hyper-spectral mapping.
- Integrated surveys for targeting concealed and deep-seated mineral deposits.
- Introduction of high precision instruments for generating precise geophysical and chemical data.
- Expeditious completion of geochemical and geophysical mapping in the geologically high mineral potential area measuring about 3.44 lakh sq km by 2017 and 2018 respectively.
- Procurement of a state-of-the-art Oceanographic Research Vessel for survey and exploration in Exclusive Economic Zone [EEZ] and beyond.

Further, the Government has amended the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) (MMDR) Act 1957, through the MMDR Amendment Act 2015 with effect from 12.1.2015, for promoting the mining sector. The amendments in the MMDR Act, 1957 are expected to give impetus to the sector by:

- (i) removing discretion in grant of mineral concessions, as mineral concessions will now be granted through auction by competitive bidding;
- (ii) allowing opening of mines which were closed due to pendency of decision on applications for second or subsequent renewal through extension of validity of lease period of the existing leases;
- (iii) providing security of tenure of mining lease period with a uniform lease period of 50 years;
- (iv) simplification of procedure, and removal of delay by eliminating requirement of prior approval of Central Government for grant of mining lease through auction;
- (v) allowing easy transferability of mineral concessions granted through auction, which would facilitate investments into the mining sector;
- (vi) establishment of District Mineral Foundation, which will work for the interest and benefit of persons, and areas, affected by mining related operations.

The Central Government has further empowered the State Governments for regulation of grant of mineral concessions in respect of an additional 31 minerals, which have been notified as 'minor' minerals on 10.2.2015.