

# India-US to deepen collaboration in mining, critical minerals tech

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India and the United States have agreed to work closely on technology, develop collaborative programs for geological research agencies and quickly finalise an agreement on critical minerals, official sources said.

The decision was taken at the two-day annual review meeting of the India-US Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET), held on June 17-18 at New Delhi.

A deeper collaboration in the mining sector has become one of the fastest moving thrust areas in India's engagements with the US on critical and emerging technologies.

"The first round of talks has taken place, and we have received assurances from the US side. The next step in the negotiations will focus on determining the specific technologies we need for the sector," a senior official at the Ministry of

Mines said. The Ministry has also reached out to the US Department of State for assistance on projects related to critical minerals, and trade technologies needed in the critical minerals sector.

A collaborative program between the Geological Survey of India and the US Geological Survey will focus on exploration, characterisation and evaluation of rare earth elements and critical mineral deposits.

The ministry of mines did not respond to an emailed query.

Launched in January 2023, the iCET is a bilateral framework agreed upon by both countries to expand cooperation on a host of technologies including AI, quantum computing, semiconductors, and wireless telecommunication. The framework is considered to be crucial in strengthening the Indo-US strategic partnership in technological and defence cooperation. The initiative is spearheaded by the National Security Council of both countries. National

Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval and his American counterpart Jake Sullivan chaired the recent review meeting.

## Quest for critical minerals

A joint fact sheet issued by both sides after the meeting shows the two countries have also committed to quickly conclude a bilateral Memorandum of Understanding on critical minerals, to be signed between the US Department of Commerce and the Indian Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the Ministry of Mines.

They are also driving additional areas of cooperation in critical mineral supply chains such as for graphite, gallium, and germanium.

Released by the Ministry of External Affairs, the fact sheet stresses on promoting India's vital role in the Mineral Security Partnership, and talks of both nations co-investing in a lithium resource project in South America and a rare earths deposit in Africa. The moves aim to "sustainably and responsibly diversify supply chains", it says.

**Joint research by geological agencies, MoU on critical minerals, and tech exchange is on the anvil**