

# Cabinet okays ₹34,300 cr critical mineral mission

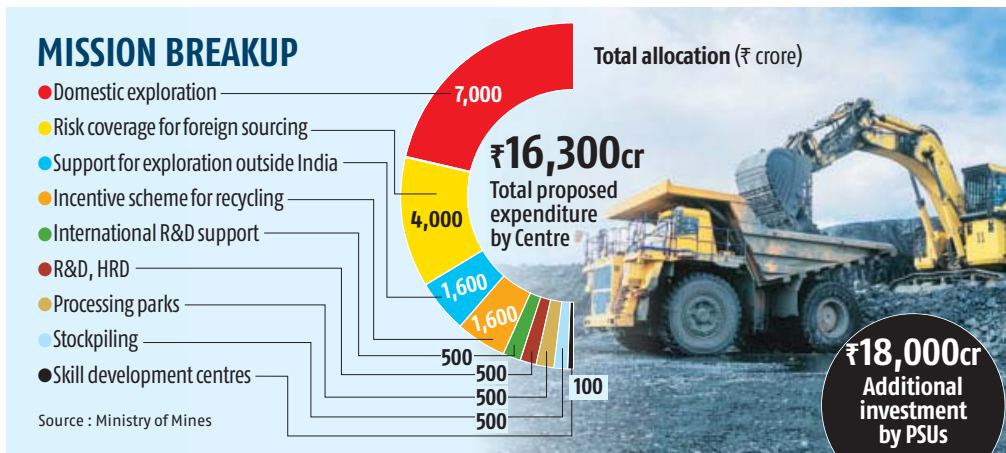
Financial incentives, fast-track approval, mineral pacts with foreign nations planned

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New Delhi, 29 January

Aimed at encouraging the Indian government and private companies to acquire critical mineral assets abroad, enhance trade with resource-rich countries, and establish a stockpile at home, the Cabinet on Wednesday approved the National Critical Mineral Mission at a cost of ₹34,300 crore.

To be implemented by the Ministry of Mines over seven years until 2030-31 (FY31), the mission will have an outlay of ₹16,300 crore, including ₹2,600 crore as budgetary support. In addition, ₹18,000 crore investment is expected from public sector undertakings (PSUs). Spanning the entire value chain across exploration, mining, beneficiation, processing, and recovery of critical minerals, the mission aims to develop a comprehensive strategy for achieving self-reliance in critical minerals.

Scaling up exploration efforts, the mission will offer financial incentives for critical mineral exploration and promote the recovery of these minerals from overburden and tailings. A fast-track regulatory approval process



for mining projects will be established. The Centre has targeted 1,200 exploration projects to be auctioned by FY31, alongside more than 100 blocks of critical mineral resources. In addition to the lack of clarity on reserves, the high cost of investment in exploration has so far deterred potential investors from participating in the bidding process.

## Setting sights on foreign deposits

Resources located abroad are especially in focus. "The government will motivate central PSUs

and encourage private sector companies to allocate funds for acquiring critical mineral assets overseas, empowering central PSUs, their joint ventures, and subsidiaries to invest abroad by issuing necessary guidelines," a detailed brief by the mines ministry said. The government will provide targeted subsidies for mining and the establishment of evacuation infrastructure. Khanij Bidesh India (KABIL), a joint venture of government mining companies, has acquired brine-type lithium assets in Argentina. Meanwhile, the Centre will aim

to enter into critical minerals partnership agreements with resource-rich countries while working to include critical minerals chapters in existing trade pacts with countries of interest, the ministry said.

The mission includes provisions for the setting up of mineral processing parks and supporting the recycling of critical minerals. To promote research in the sector, the government will support patent filing procedures for innovators and startups and set up a Centre of Excellence on Critical Minerals.