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India Launches Critical Minerals Mission for Self-Reliance

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New Delhi – The Government of India has unveiled the National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM), a sweeping initiative aimed at bolstering national self-sufficiency in essential minerals such as lithium, cobalt, rare earth elements, and graphite key resources for sectors ranging from clean energy to defense.

Under the mission, the Geological Survey of India (GSI) will conduct 1,200 exploration projects over the 2024–25 to 2030–31 period, targeting mineral reserves across the country. The initiative has secured a government budget of ₹16,300 crore, along with ₹18,000 crore expected in additional investments from public sector enterprises and other stakeholders.

A committee set up in November 2022 identified 30 critical minerals, 24 of which have been included in Part D of the MMDR Act's First Schedule. This gives the central government exclusive authority to auction leases and licenses for these minerals.

To guide policy and innovation, the mission also plans to establish a Centre of Excellence on Critical Minerals, alongside processing parks, fast-track approvals, and incentives for recycling and processing through secondary sources like tailings and mining waste.

The mission is central to India's broader strategic shift toward reducing dependence on imported minerals. In his Independence Day address, Prime Minister Narendra Modi noted that exploration efforts are already underway in over 1,200 locations, underscoring the mission's urgency and nationwide scale.

These efforts align with India's goals of ensuring resource security, supporting sectors like renewable energy, technology, and defense, and remaining resilient amid global supply uncertainties.

Moreover, India is advancing partnerships with overseas mining entities and expanding its mineral value chain through processing parks and recycling incentives.

The NCMM marks a pivotal step toward sustainable mineral harvesting, facilitating a shift from reliance on external sources to a future grounded in domestic capability and innovation.