



# GEONESIS

*Indian Mining & Exploration Updates*

Volume 12 - Issue 04

**GOVT TO LAUNCH 12TH ROUND  
OF COMMERCIAL COAL MINES  
AUCTION**

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# GOVT TO LAUNCH 12TH ROUND OF COMMERCIAL COAL MINES AUCTION ON MARCH 27

The tranche includes 13 blocks across 10 states, covering deposits of critical and deep-seated minerals such as gold, copper, diamonds, zinc, rare earth elements (REE), vanadium, and zirconium – key inputs for industries ranging from electronics and renewable energy to defence and aerospace.

The Ministry of Mines, in collaboration with the Goa government on Thursday launched India's first-ever Exploration Licence (EL) auction, marking a significant step toward unlocking the country's critical and deep-seated mineral reserves.

Union Coal and Mines Minister G. Kishan Reddy and Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant jointly presided over the event, which also featured a "Roadshow" for the fifth tranche of critical mineral block auctions. Additionally, they inaugurated the AI Hackathon 2025, themed "Mineral Targeting using Artificial Intelligence," aimed at utilizing advanced datasets to identify hidden mineral deposits and promote innovation in sustainable mining practices.

Speaking at the event, Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy emphasized the significance of the initiative, stating, "For the first time, India is opening up systematic early-stage exploration through a structured and transparent auction process. This reform will accelerate the discovery of critical and deep-seated minerals, boost investor confidence, and pave the way for a self-reliant, future-ready mineral ecosystem aligned with India's clean energy and industrial ambitions."

Sr. No	Name of the Coal Mine	State
1	Chitarpur (Revised)	Jharkhand
2	Mahuagarhi	Jharkhand
3	Patal East (Western Part)	Jharkhand
4	Rajgamar Dipside (Deavnara)	Chhattisgarh
5	Rajgamar Dipside (South of Phulakdih Nala)	Chhattisgarh
6	Mandakini-B	Odisha
7	New Patrapara North	Odisha
8	Cholapathar	Jharkhand
9	Phutamura	Chhattisgarh
10	Thanatola (East)	Madhya Pradesh
11	Thanatola (North)	Madhya Pradesh
12	Thanatola (West)	Madhya Pradesh
13	West of Tubed	Jharkhand
14	Dahegaon Jhunki	Maharashtra
15	Dahegaon Saptadhara	Maharashtra
16	Nabasab	West Bengal
17	South of Hingla	West Bengal
18	Tambia South	Madhya Pradesh
19	Teram	Chhattisgarh
20	Vijaynagar North	Chhattisgarh
21	Vijaynagar South	Chhattisgarh
22	West of Chhal	Chhattisgarh
23	Yensa	Maharashtra
24	Punam Singh ki Dhani	Rajasthan
25	Riri	Rajasthan

Source : BusinessLine

# 125 COAL MINES SEE INVESTMENTS WORTH RS 40,900 CR, CREATE OVER 4 LAKH JOBS: CENTRE

The coal sector is emerging as a key champion of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' and 125 coal mines have been successfully auctioned across 11 rounds, attracting investments worth approximately Rs 40,900 crore and creating over 4 lakh direct and indirect jobs, the government has said.

The Ministry of Coal, in its continued efforts to enhance domestic coal production and strengthen India's energy security, has now launched the 12th tranche of commercial coal mine auctions.

With the 12th tranche, an additional 28 coal and lignite blocks are being auctioned, further reducing India's reliance on imported coal and conserving foreign exchange, said Union Minister of Coal and Mines, G. Kishan Reddy.

"The transparent auction process has spurred healthy competition, pushing public sector PSUs to compete with private players, thereby driving greater efficiency, reforms, and operational transformation. This shift is significantly enhancing the global competitiveness of India's coal sector," said the minister.

The Union Minister encouraged all stakeholders and industry players to actively participate in the 12th tranche of auctions, underscoring the collective responsibility in building an energy-secure and self-reliant

India.

In his address, Union Minister of State for Coal and Mines, Satish Chandra Dubey, stated that with India surpassing 1 billion tonnes of coal production, the launch of the 12th round of commercial coal mine auctions marks another significant step towards energy self-sufficiency.

He emphasised that a transparent auction mechanism, industry-friendly policies, and increased private sector participation will not only enhance coal production but also attract investment, create employment opportunities, and accelerate infrastructure growth.

The auction also includes two lignite mines, catering to varied energy needs. Out of the total mines, 13 are fully explored and ready for immediate development, while 12 are partially explored, offering long-term investment opportunities and contributing to the growth of India's coal sector.

In addition, three mines from previous round of commercial coal mine auctions are also being offered. The mines being auctioned are spread across coal and lignite bearing states of Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, West Bengal and Rajasthan.

Source : [Assamtribune.com](http://Assamtribune.com)

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## ODISHA SETS PRECEDENT WITH RECORD-BREAKING MINING PENALTIES

Supreme Court's Directive Fuels Accountability and Enforcement in Odisha's Mining Sector

To address illegal mining in Odisha, the state government has imposed fines amounting to Rs 18,169.14 crores for violations of environmental and mining regulations.

This directive stems from a Supreme Court judgment following a report by the Central Empowered Committee (CEC), which highlighted unlawful extraction practices.

As of now, Rs 16,103.96 crores for environmental violations and Rs 1,101.69 crores for mining plan violations have been recovered. However, illegal mining persists despite strict enforcement

measures like forming task forces, automating mineral grade analysis, and setting up advanced laboratories.

The Odisha government faces pressure to enhance measures to prevent future violations, ensuring sustainable mining practices and stricter compliance protocols.

Source : [pragativadi.com](http://pragativadi.com)

# INDIA LAUNCHES FIRST EXPLORATION LICENCE AUCTIONS, 13 CRITICAL AND DEEP-SEATED MINERAL BLOCKS UP FOR GRABS

The discussions at the event covered several key topics, including strategies for auctioning untapped mining blocks in Goa, plans to revive dormant mines, and solutions for managing expired and lapsed leases in compliance with Section 10A(2) of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957.

Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant lauded the Union government’s reform initiatives, stating, “Goa has a rich mining legacy, and we are committed to responsible, technology-driven mineral development. These reforms will not only unlock India’s mineral potential but also create new opportunities for sustainable mining.”

Updates were provided on the progress of operationalizing auctioned mining blocks and ongoing exploration projects, with special emphasis on the contributions of organizations such as the Geological Survey of India and Mineral Exploration and Consultancy Ltd. Chief

Minister Sawant also highlighted the economic impact of reviving mining operations in Goa, emphasizing their role in strengthening the state’s economy and contributing to the Gross State Domestic Product.

He further acknowledged the Union government and Prime Minister Narendra Modi for their steadfast support in advancing these initiatives.

The event concluded with the auction of 13 exploration license blocks, covering critical minerals such as Rare Earth Elements (REEs), zinc, diamonds, copper, and Platinum Group Elements. The transparent bidding process aims to accelerate mineral exploration, encourage private sector participation, and enhance India’s technological and energy independence.

Name of the Block	Mineral	State	District	Ceiling Price (%)
Ontillu-Chandragiri REE Exploration Block	REE	Andhra Pradesh	Tirupati and Chittoor	40.00
Shergaon Lead-Zinc Exploration Block	Lead-Zinc	Arunachal Pradesh	West Kameng	40.00
North of Kondagaon Diamond Exploration Block	Diamond	Chhattisgarh	Kondagaon	40.00
Sorgaon-Garenga Diamond Exploration Block	Diamond	Chhattisgarh	Bastar	40.00
Devkigalol- Jetpur Vanadium Exploration Block	Vanadium and associated mineralization	Gujarat	Junagadh and Amreli	40.00
Chatakpur-Bagu Gold Exploration Block	Gold and associated minerals	Jharkhand	Khunti and West Singhbhum	40.00
Taramba-Dalbhangra Gold and Copper Exploration Block	Gold and Copper	Jharkhand	Khunti, Saraikela-Kharsawan, Ranchi and West Singhbhum	40.00
Devadurga Gold and Copper Exploration Block	Gold and Copper	Karnataka	Raichur-Deodurga	40.00
Padhar PGE Exploration Block	PGE and associated mineralization	Madhya Pradesh	Betul	40.00
Kondalwadi Tantalum Exploration Block	Tantalum	Maharashtra	Nanded	40.00
Jinjaon Lead and Zinc Exploration Block	Lead and Zinc	Maharashtra	Gadchiroli	40.00
Nawatara- Devigarh REE Exploration Block	REE & associated mineralization	Rajasthan	Barmar	40.00
Harpalpur-Mahobkanth Zirconium Exploration Block	Zirconium	Uttar Pradesh	Jhansi and Mahoba	40.00

Source : pib.gov.in

# A MILESTONE: INDIA'S COAL OUTPUT CROSSES A BILLION TONNES IN 2024-25

*The Union government had earlier projected coal production to reach 1 billion tonnes (bt) by FY24, but it was later pushed to FY25*

In a significant milestone, India crossed the record annual coal output of 1 billion tonnes (bt) on Thursday to hit 1.03 bt, constituting a 5.24 per cent uptick over the total production of 953.3 million tonnes in 2023-24.

The landmark that comes days ahead of this financial year's end, was driven by a 1.3 per cent rise in Coal India's output, albeit on a large base, along with a substantive 29 per cent growth in the production of the energy-laden sedimentary rock by privately owned captive and commercial coal mines.

Apart from China, India is the only country to cross the 1 billion tonnes mark in annual coal output.

## Significance of this Milestone

- **Fostering Energy Security:** Coal contributes approximately 55% of its energy mix, and around 74% in electricity generation.
- **Powering economy:** Increasing production will substitute imports and contributing in foreign exchange savings.

## How did India accomplish this remarkable Milestone?

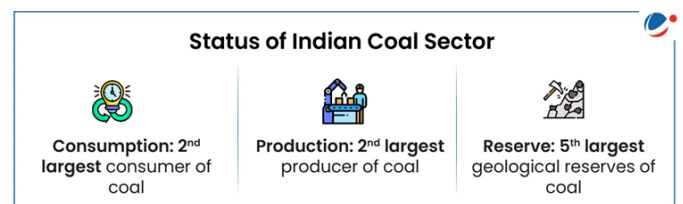
- Coal Mines (Special Provisions) CMSP Act- 2015 paved way for the coal mines for commercial mining by private entities.
- Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2021, allowed Composite Prospecting Licence-cum-Mining Lease (PL-cum-ML) specifically for coal.

## Initiatives:

### Integrated Coal Logistic Policy and Plan, 2024

- PM Gati Shati-National Master Plan in coal sector
- Other: Mission Coking Coal, National Coal Index (NCI), etc.

**FDI Policy: Allowing 100% FDI in coal mining under the automatic route has attracted global expertise and advanced technologies.**



## Existing Challenges/Concern for Coal Sector

- **Global Pushback against Coal:** Developed countries are pushing for phasedown of coal production.
- **Import dependence:** India imported about 260 million tonnes of coal in FY 2023-24, dominated by non-coking coal (~77% of total imports).
- **Other issues:** Land acquisition, environmental degradation due to open cast mining, etc.

Source : EnergyWorld.com

# RECOVERING CRITICAL MINERALS FROM MINING TAILINGS.

The Union Cabinet approved the National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM) on January 29, 2025, with a budget allocation of Rs 163 billion for seven years, spanning from FY 2024-25 to 2030-31. The initiative focuses on ensuring a sustainable supply of critical minerals and strengthening India's critical mineral value chains, covering exploration, mining, beneficiation, processing, and recovery from end-of-life products.

A key aspect of the mission is the promotion of advanced technologies to recover critical minerals from industrial waste such as tailings, overburden, fly ash, and red mud. To support this, the government has allocated Rs 1 billion for pilot projects aimed at developing novel mineral recovery method methods. These projects will be implemented through collaborations between industry, academia, and research institutions.

Additionally, the mission emphasizes research and development (R&D) in mining and metallurgy. The Ministry of Mines has been actively fostering innovation by funding startups, MSMEs, and individual innovators through the

Science & Technology-Promotion of Research and Innovation in Start-ups and MSME. (S&T-PRISM) initiative. This support aims to facilitate the development of indigenous technologies for processing and extracting critical minerals.

As part of the Union Budget 2025-26, the government has eliminated customs duty on waste and scrap of critical minerals. This measure is expected to enhance the recycling sector by reducing costs for secondary producers, creating a competitive environment for Indian businesses against international counterparts, and boosting exports of secondary and downstream products.

The NCMM also includes a provision of Rs 15 billion to incentivise the establishment of recycling facilities. These incentives aim to expand domestic recycling capabilities and reduce dependency on imported raw materials, reinforcing India's position in the global critical minerals market.

Source : sciencedirect.com

## MINING TO RESUME IN GOA IN NEXT SIX MONTHS, SAYS UNION MINISTER REDDY

Union minister G Kishan Reddy has said that iron ore mining activity in Goa, which has been halted in the coastal state since 2018, will resume in the next six months.

The Coal and Mines Minister was talking to reporters here on Thursday after launching the country's first-ever auction of Exploration Licences for 13 exploration blocks for critical minerals.

"The Goa government is following all the norms laid down by the Supreme Court concerning iron ore mining. The mining activity will begin full-fledged in Goa in the next six months," he said.

Reddy said all issues related to environmental concerns, revenue generation and employment opportunities would be addressed during the resumption of the mining activity.

He said he had a productive discussion on each mineral block in the state.

The Union minister chaired a review meeting on Thursday in Goa to know the status of the auctioned mines, plans to auction more mineral blocks as well as non-operational mining leases in the coastal state.

The iron ore mining activity in Goa first came to a standstill in 2012 after the Justice M B Shah Commission pointed out illegalities in the sector. The industry partially resumed its operations in 2014, but was shut down again in February 2018 after the Supreme Court quashed 88 mining leases.

Talking to reporters, Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant welcomed the Centre's push to revive Goa's mining sector, and added that it was significant to the state's economy.

**Source: Hindustan Times**

## UNLOCK POTENTIAL OF MINING SECTOR: CS

To explore possibilities in the state's mining and mineral sector, the department of geology and mining organised a workshop on 'Major auctionable mineral blocks and exploration possibilities in Uttar Pradesh' here on Friday.

Speaking on the occasion, chief secretary Manoj Kumar Singh said: "Mining and minerals are key sources of resources and revenue for the economic progress of any country. There is immense potential in UP's mineral and mining sector and much more needs to be done to unlock this potential." He launched the online tender process 'notice inviting tender' (NIT)) for the auction of two iron ore blocks and one limestone block in Sonbhadra district. He mentioned that granite is abundantly found in Sonbhadra district and efforts to accelerate its

excavation should be prioritised.

He further emphasised that to attract capital investment in this sector, the state should adopt simplified policies that align with the guidelines of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) and the ministry of environment to enhance mining possibilities.

During the workshop, presentations and discussions were conducted by representatives from the Geological Survey of India (GSI), MECL, IBM, NMET and various private exploration agencies regarding mineral exploration in the state.

In her welcome address, Mala Shrivastava, secretary and director, geology and mining, provided detailed information about the department's policies and invited various exploration agencies to undertake exploration activities for key minerals and sub-minerals in Uttar Pradesh.

**Source: Times of India**



# HINDUSTAN COPPER TO GENERATE RS 2,400 CRORE FROM JHARKHAND COPPER MINES

Hindustan Copper, a government-owned corporation, is set to earn an estimated Rs 2,400 crore over the next 20 years through its agreement with a JSW Group firm. The firm, South West Mining Ltd (SWML), has been appointed as the developer and operator for two copper mining blocks in Jharkhand.

The deal, which was secured by SWML in January through a competitive bidding process, is based on a revenue-sharing model. It covers the Rakha and Chapri copper mining blocks and runs for 20 years, with an option for a 10-year extension.

Hindustan Copper's Chairman and Managing Director, Sanjiv Kumar Singh, emphasized the importance of the contract in revitalizing operations in Jharkhand. "This deal is pivotal for the revival of our operations in the region, and we project revenues of about Rs 2,400 crore over the next two decades," Singh said following his recent appointment.

Rakha, one of the two blocks, is an older mine that was closed nearly 20 years ago, while Chapri is a newly developed greenfield project. Both blocks are part of a single mining lease owned by Hindustan Copper. Once fully operational, Rakha is expected to process up to three million tonnes of ore annually, with partial operations expected to begin in late 2026-27.

Under the terms of the agreement, SWML will manage mine de-

velopment, capital expenditure, and day-to-day operations, including the installation and operation of a concentrator plant. This arrangement follows an asset-light model that benefits both parties, with Hindustan Copper providing technical support and receiving a share of the revenue.

The project is expected to play a significant role in meeting the rising demand for copper in industries like electric vehicles, renewable energy, construction, electronics, and healthcare. Singh also highlighted that the initiative would help reduce India's dependence on copper imports, supporting the country's industrial growth.

Hindustan Copper Limited (HCL) is a prominent public sector enterprise under the Ministry of Mines, Government of India, and is the nation's only vertically integrated copper producer. Established in 1967, HCL manages activities across the copper value chain, including mining, beneficiation, smelting, refining, and the production of various copper products.

The company operates mines and plants in states like Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, and Maharashtra. HCL plays a significant role in meeting India's growing demand for copper, an essential metal for industries like electrical, construction, and transportation. With a strong emphasis on sustainable mining practices, resource efficiency, and exploration to expand reserves, HCL is a key player in India's effort to achieve self-reliance in copper production and support the country's infrastructure and industrial growth.

**Source: EnergyWorld.com**



# DEEP SEA MINING AFFECTS MARINE BIODIVERSITY FOR DECADES, WARN SCIENTISTS

Rare-earth elements are crucial for electric batteries and devices, mining of which can lead to the destruction of marine biodiversity, a new study warns.

In Short

- Seabed mining harms marine life recovery
- The 1979 test site still shows biodiversity loss
- Study aids informed policy on deep-sea mining

Rare earth elements are a newfound interest for governments worldwide. These minerals are found on the seabed, mining of which can lead to the destruction of marine life, which can take decades to recover.

A deep-sea mining test done in the North Pacific in 1979 still had lower levels of biodiversity, as mentioned in a study published in the journal Nature.

This study was conducted 5,000m below the surface of the Pacific Ocean in the Clarion–Clipperton zone by the scientists who are part of Seabed Mining and Resilience to Experimental Impact (SMARTEX), a research project funded by the UK Natural Environment Research Council.

Rare Earth elements are elements that are difficult to extract and separate, but not rare in occurrence.

This includes cobalt, manganese, nickel, and monazite, which are critical in making electric batteries and devices.

These are present as nodules in the sea bed, which take thousands of years to form.

## CONSEQUENCES OF MINING

Clarion–Clipperton Zone contains more than 21 billion tonnes of nodules that are similar to more than 6 million square kilometres – about 25 times the size of the UK.

This area harbours sea animals and microbial communities that rely on the nodules as the only hard surface to settle on.

Dr Mark Hartl, a marine biologist, said: “If they’re removed, will that reduce the amount of oxygen in the deep sea and affect the organisms that live there? What is the effect of animal exposure to metal-containing sediment plumes churned up during the mining process? These are some of the questions we’re trying to answer.”

Some immediate impacts include mechanical disturbance, including the removal of hard surface spaces for species to live below the seabed and the compacting of sediment.

Four decades after mining in the Pacific Ocean region, the biological impacts on many groups of organisms and physical traces on the ocean floor are persistent.

Daniel Jones, the research’s lead author, said: “To tackle the crucial question of recovery from deep-sea mining, we need first to look to the past and use old mining tests to help understand long-term impacts.”

## IMPACT OF THIS STUDY

“Our results don’t provide an answer to whether deep-sea mining is societally



acceptable, but they do provide the data needed to make better informed policy decisions such as the creation and refinement of protected regions and how we would monitor future impacts,” said Co-author, Dr Adrian Glover, from the Natural History Museum.

He further quoted: “General ecological theory will predict that following disturbance, any ecosystem will go through a series of successional stages of recolonisation and growth.”

“However, until this study, we had no idea of the timescales of this critical process in the deep-sea mining regions, or how different parts of the community respond in different ways.”

Although deep-sea mining is currently prohibited under an international moratorium, it is regulated by the International Seabed Authority (ISA), which provides permission for mining.

Several countries, including India, are on this mission to explore the hidden jewels of the sea.

While rare earths are crucial for moving towards green energy, they shouldn't be at the cost of harming biodiversity. The movement to green energy should be a smooth shift rather than worsening the present condition.

**Source: Economic Times**

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# GOVT. SET TO AUCTION INDIA'S POTASH MINING BLOCKS IN RAJASTHAN

The Union government is set to auction India's first potash mining blocks in Hanumangarh district of Rajasthan on 01 May, 2025, aiming to reduce import dependence and boost domestic fertiliser production.

“Initially, potash mining is planned over an area of 32.47 sq. km, with 18.30 sq. km in Lakhasar of Bikaner's Sridungargarh tehsil and 14.17 sq. km in Bharusari of Hanumangarh's Rawatsar tehsil. There is ample scope to set up fertiliser industries in the state, generating employment,” a senior mining official said.

Rajasthan holds over 95 percent of India's estimated potash reserves, with sub-surface halite-bearing evaporites spread across 30,000 sq. km in Sriganganagar, Hanumangarh, Bikaner, Churu, and Nagaur districts. Eight sub-basins with potash mineralisation containing two percent potassium have been identified around Bikaner, Hansera, Arjunsar, Gharsisar, Jaitpur, Satipura, Bharusari, and Lakhasar. Among these, the Satipura, Bharusari, and Lakhasar sub-basins are the most promising, with a three percent potassium cut-off grade estimated at 2,476.58 million tonne.

The auction marks a significant step towards harnessing domestic resources, reducing dependency on imported fertilisers, and promoting industrial growth in Rajasthan.

What is Potash?

1. Potash is an impure combination of potassium carbonate and potassium (K) salts.
2. Principal Ore: Sylvinit is the most common ore used for Potash extraction.

Uses of Potash

1. Agriculture (Major Use – Over 90%)
  - a. Potash is a key component of fertilizers and is one of the three primary nutrients in agriculture, alongside Nitrogen (N) and Phosphorus (P), collectively forming the N-P-K ratio.
  - b. The ideal nutrient ratio for optimal plant growth is 4:2:1 (N:P:K).

2. Water Purification: Potash alum is used for removing water hardness and has antibacterial properties, making it essential in water treatment.

3. Industrial Applications: Used in the manufacturing of glass, ceramics, soaps, detergents, and explosives.

Common Types of Potash Fertilizers

1. Sulphate of Potash (SOP) – A premium-grade Potash fertilizer.
2. Muriate of Potash (MOP) – The most widely used Potash fertilizer.
3. Potash Derived from Molasses (PDM):
  - a. A 100% indigenous fertilizer under the Nutrient-Based Subsidy (NBS) scheme.
  - b. NBS Scheme: Provides fertilizer subsidies based on the actual nutrient content (Nitrogen, Phosphorus, and Potassium).

Potash as a Critical Mineral

Under the Mines & Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment (MMDR) Act, 2023, Potash has been classified as a critical mineral, emphasizing its strategic importance for India's agricultural and industrial needs.

Economic Status of Potash in India

1. Potash Reserves in India
  - Rajasthan: Holds 89% of India's Potash deposits.
  - Madhya Pradesh: Accounts for 5% of Potash reserves.
  - Uttar Pradesh: Contains 4% of Potash reserves.
3. Import Dependency: According to the Indian Mineral Yearbook 2022, India meets 100% of its Potash requirement through imports, making domestic exploration and production a key priority.

**Source: The Print**

# INDIA DISCOVERS MASSIVE GOLD RESERVES IN ODISHA. HERE IS WHY IT HARDLY MATTERS

India has confirmed today that new gold reserves were discovered across Odisha, specifically in the Deogarh, Keonjhar, and Mayurbhanj districts, according to official government disclosures in the Assembly.

The announcement directly lines up with a 2023 report from the Geological Survey of India, which had identified potential gold-bearing zones in the region during an earlier survey. Odisha's Mines Minister Bibhuti Jena told the Assembly, "Gold reserves have been identified in multiple districts," and added that Malkangiri, Sambalpur, and Boudh are also believed to contain deposits.

No official figure has been provided by the Indian government as of now. The discovery has been labeled "massive," but there is no confirmed estimate of how many metric tons were found. As of 2023, India held only 70.1 metric tons in total gold reserves.

Even if the Odisha find turns out to contain 10 to 20 metric tons, which is a realistic guess based on geological indicators, it will still barely touch India's annual gold import volume of 700 to 800 metric tons.

India's mining gap stays wide even after Odisha's discovery

India currently mines 1.6 metric tons of gold per year, according to industry records from 2020. That's less than 0.25% of what it imports. This means the country remains heavily dependent on foreign gold even after the Odisha development, so while the discovery could help expand domestic mining operations, the lack of extraction data or a mining timeline makes its actual impact unclear.

The Indian government hasn't released any plans to begin mining or refining gold from the new zones, and there's no word yet on when a full-scale geological assessment will be completed. The announcement, while timed closely with increasing BRICS discussions around gold-backed alternatives to the U.S. dollar, doesn't offer any direct roadmap for how the gold will be utilized. The BRICS bloc—Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa—has been exploring the idea of a currency backed by gold, and India's position in that group remains weak due to its extremely low production numbers and high import bills.

China's 1,000-ton gold find makes India's look like a footnote

In November 2024, China announced a 1,000-metric-ton gold discovery in central China, with an estimated market value of \$83 billion. This find is likely the largest gold deposit ever discovered, bigger than South Africa's South Deep mine, which holds 900 metric tons. The Chinese government immediately confirmed the scale of the discovery and fast-tracked plans to begin extraction.

Unlike India, China already holds over 2,000 metric tons in gold reserves and produces 380 metric tons annually, representing about 10% of global gold output. India's total mining capacity doesn't even reach 2 metric tons. That gap puts China in a completely different category when it comes to gold strategy and financial leverage.

The Chinese discovery strengthens its ability to push forward a BRICS gold-backed currency, something the bloc has been discussing for years as a counter to U.S. dollar dominance. With

the November discovery, China has more influence to push the bloc toward using gold as the foundation for international settlements. While India is a top consumer of gold, it has no significant role on the supply side.

The Chinese government, unlike India's, has the infrastructure, extraction technology, and political support needed to scale operations quickly. China has already begun preparing the mining zone for full production. Meanwhile, India still doesn't know how much gold it even found.

Russia's gold stash now ranks fifth in the world

On March 1, 2025, Russia's gold reserves reached \$217.4 billion, pushing the country past China in total value of holdings and placing it fifth globally. As reported by RBC, gold now accounts for 34.4% of Russia's total foreign reserves. Russia has been increasing its gold buying activity for more than a decade, ramping up purchases after the 2014 annexation of Crimea and even more aggressively after sanctions were imposed by Western governments.

In 2017, Russia purchased 224 metric tons of gold, primarily by cutting back its U.S. Treasury holdings. The decision to swap dollars for gold was part of the Kremlin's plan to reduce dependency on U.S. financial systems and avoid dollar-linked vulnerabilities. The Central Bank of Russia said it remains committed to growing its gold portfolio.

Despite this jump, the United States still holds the most gold reserves in the world, totaling 8,133.5 metric tons, which makes up over 74% of its foreign exchange reserves. Germany, Italy, and France also maintain significant stockpiles, each holding more than 2,400 metric tons, with gold comprising over 70% of their reserves.

As India watches these numbers grow, its own gold policy remains unclear. No statement has been released from the Reserve Bank of India on whether the Odisha discovery will play a role in long-term reserve planning or monetary strategy.

Gold demand surges while India stays on the sidelines

According to the World Gold Council, global demand for gold hit 4,900 metric tons in 2024, setting a new record. The surge was caused by heavy central bank purchases and high investor demand amid economic instability and geopolitical tensions. Over the course of the year, gold prices broke records 40 separate times, rising 27% overall. As of March 20, 2025, the official gold price in Russia was reported at 8,181 rubles per gram, which puts a 10-kilogram gold bar at 81.8 million rubles, or about \$1.09 million. The price increase reflects how central banks are treating gold—not as an asset, but as a necessity.

India's position in the global gold economy remains limited to consumption. Without clear mining figures, a working strategy, or tech capabilities, the Odisha discovery stays in the realm of announcements—not production.

Source: [mitrade.com](https://www.mittrade.com)

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