



Ministry of Mines classifies Barytes, Felspar, Mica and Quartz as Major Minerals

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The Ministry of Mines vide gazette notification dated 20th February, 2025 has shifted minerals Barytes, Felspar, Mica and Quartz from the list of minor minerals to the category of major minerals.

This move follows the recent approval of the National Critical Mineral Mission by the Union Cabinet on 29th January, 2025. The Mission envisages exploration and mining of critical minerals within the country including recovery of these minerals from mines of other minerals, overburden and tailings.

Quartz, Felspar and Mica are found in pegmatite rocks, which are an important source of many critical minerals such as Beryl, Lithium, Niobium, Tantalum, Molybdenum, Tin, Titanium, Tungsten, etc. These minerals have vital role in various new technologies, in energy transition, spacecraft industries, healthcare sector, etc. When the leases of Quartz, Felspar and Mica are granted as minor mineral leases, the lease holders do not declare existence of critical minerals or extract the critical minerals associated with it such as Lithium, Beryl, etc. as their primary objective is to use these minerals as minor minerals for construction, glass / ceramic making, etc. Consequently, the critical minerals associated with these minerals are neither getting extracted nor reported.

Similarly, Baryte has various industrial applications which is used for oil and gas drilling, electronics, TV screens, rubber, glass, ceramics, paint, radiation shielding and medical applications. Baryte is used to make high density concrete to block x-ray emissions in hospitals, power plants, and laboratories. Baryte often occurs as concretions and vein fillings in limestone and dolostone. It is found in association with ores of Antimony, Cobalt, Copper, Lead, Manganese and Silver. Baryte with iron ore occurs in pocket type of deposit which cannot be mined in isolation. While mining either of the minerals, the production of associated mineral is inevitable.

In view of the importance of these minerals, the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Mines & Minerals Sector constituted under the chairmanship of Dr. V. K. Saraswat, Member NITI Aayog, recommended that these minerals be shifted from the list of minor

minerals to the category of major minerals. Once categorised as major minerals, there would be an increase in exploration and scientific mining of these minerals which are an important source of many critical minerals.

Reclassification of minerals Barytes, Felspar, Mica and Quartz will not adversely affect the lease period of the existing leases. As major minerals, the leases for these minerals will get extended to a period of 50 years from the date of grant or till the completion of renewal period, if any, whichever is later as per section 8A of the MMDR Act, 1957. These mines will gradually register with the Indian Bureau of Mines and will be regulated as major minerals. A transition time of four months, that is, up to 30th June, 2025 has been provided. The revenue from mines of these minerals will continue to accrue to the State Government as earlier.

Shuhaib T

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