

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF MINES
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 137
ANSWERED ON 29.11.2021

SOLUTION MINING OF POTASH IN RAJASTHAN

137. SHRI SAMBHAJI CHHATRAPATI:

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Mineral Exploration Corporation Ltd. (MECL), Rajasthan State Minerals Ltd. (RSMML) and the Department of Mines and Geology (DMG) of the State Government of Rajasthan have entered into a tripartite agreement for conducting feasibility study for solution mining of potash in Rajasthan;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the subsoil potash bearing strata are adequate enough for commercial exploitation for use as fertilizer; and
- (d) how much time is likely to be taken to complete the feasibility study of the reserve?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF MINES, COAL AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS
(SHRI PRALHAD JOSHI)

(a) to (d): Yes, Sir. Mineral Exploration Corporation Ltd. (MECL), Rajasthan State Mines and Minerals Ltd. (RSMML) and the Department of Mines and Geology (DMG) of the State Government of Rajasthan have signed a tripartite agreement on 21st January 2021 for undertaking a comprehensive feasibility study for solution mining of potash and feasibility of pilot plant construction at Bikaner District.

Geological Survey of India [GSI], an attached office of Ministry of Mines and MECL have carried out detailed exploration of the potash since 2015 and based on extensive exploration campaigns entailing exploratory drilling up-to a depth of 1000m, it has been established that the region is characterized by high grade sub-surface evaporate bedded salt deposits with elements like Na, K, Mg, Cl, etc. in various mineral forms. One of the key resources that has been established during these exploration programs is Potash (K), which is a significant constituent for the fertilizers. The extraction of minerals depends on the grant of the mineral concessions by the State Government. The utilization of mineral resources is done by exploiting and subsequent use by the industry.

The timeline for completion of feasibility study as per the tripartite agreement is nine months. However, in view of constraints like COVID pandemic and compliance of Govt. of India guidelines, the timeline has been extended to August, 2022.
