

**MINUTES OF THE 52<sup>nd</sup> MEETING OF STATE GEOLOGICAL PROGRAMMING AND  
ADVISORY BOARD (SGPAB), WEST BENGAL**

Date of Meeting: 28.08.24

Venue: 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Conference Hall of the Industry, Commerce and Enterprises Department

List of Participants: Attached in Annexure-I.

Proceedings of the 52<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of SGPAB, West Bengal-

52.01.00	<p>Smt. Vandana Yadav, IAS, Principal Secretary to the Government of West Bengal, Department of Industry, Commerce &amp; Enterprises, Chaired the 52<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the SGPAB, West Bengal. She welcomed all the delegates and dignitaries from various organizations and initiated the discussion with a brief overview of the mineral scenario in West Bengal. She emphasized upon the recent developments in the mineral realm as per latest amendments in relevant regulations brought out by the Nodal Ministry in GoI. She also highlighted the recent verdicts passed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court accepting the authority of various State Governments to impose taxes on the mineral commodities. She also emphasized that the State Government is taking all possible efforts to process the pending applications for grant of various Exploration and Mining Licenses and urged the respective authorities to acknowledge the State specific factors such as dense population and small land holdings resulting in difficulties in identifying vacant land, complex demography etc. Moreover, she requested representatives from GSI, ONGC, ECL, MECL and others to actively share information related to their activities in different areas of West Bengal to promote increased mining activity. She requested the house to work out upon the optimal methodology regarding recovery of mineral resources with minimal disturbance to the environment and stressed upon development of an SoP in this regard which can be fruitfully worked upon intra- &amp; inter-departmentally.</p>
52.01.01	<p>Shri P. Mohan Gandhi, IAS, Secretary to the Government of West Bengal, Department of Industry, Commerce &amp; Enterprises stated that the state is focussed for development and management of Minor Minerals since last two (02) years and after recent introduction of W.B. Sand Mining Policy &amp; WB Policy of Mining of Minor Minerals in Raiyati land, important instances for sustainable mining for sand and other in-situ minor minerals could be taken up. Furthermore, he also mentioned that the work of finalization of land details is currently under process with coordination with the District Administration before proceeding with Auction Proposals of seven (07) Major Mineral Blocks of Apatite, Cesium &amp; Copper etc. It is expected that, after obtaining the land &amp; allied information, they shall be put into the next stage. He also stated that, as requested by the State Government, GSI has already taken up the G-3 level exploration work on Rudra Gold prospect and the report shall soon be finalized.</p> <p>He further stated that the Dept. of I C &amp; E &amp; office of DMM had organized a Workshop with all NPEAs which was attended by representatives of GSI for charting out the course for carrying out new exploration works involving the private exploration agencies. He requested to share the exploration data from various organizations with DMM as preparation of a data repository by the Geological personnel &amp; Mining Officers under DMM is underway which after completion shall be available in the Public domain.</p>

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	<p>He further requested the representatives of GSI to share information from other mineral rich States regarding any steps initiated by them in recent times towards grant of Exploration License including the bid document, if any available in this regard.</p>
52.01.02	<p>Smt. Sonali Datta (Ray), Special Secretary to the Government of West Bengal, Director of Mines and Minerals and Member Secretary WB SGPAB welcomed all delegates and dignitaries from various organizations. She informed the house that the 51<sup>st</sup> meeting of the SGPAB was held on 16<sup>th</sup> January, 2024 and since then, 32 geological reports on Raiyati lands and 95 mining plans (comprising 72 for sand and river bed materials and 23 for minor minerals) have been approved.</p> <p>She also informed the house that the work of scrutiny and updating of District Survey Reports (DSRs) for five districts namely Bankura, Purulia, Purba Bardhaman, Paschim Bardhaman and Birbhum have been completed after obtaining approval of the Environment Department authorities. These updated DSRs are now available on the websites of the Districts, DMM and the Department of Industry, Commerce &amp; Enterprises.</p> <p>It was also informed to the house that the work for updating the DSRs of Darjeeling, Jhargram, Purba &amp; Paschim Medinipur is in progress.</p> <p>The DMM highlighted the progress of in-house exploration activities taken up as per the proposed programme of the 51<sup>st</sup> SGPAB. It was apprised that G-2 level Geological Reports for two-dimension stone (Granite) blocks in Purulia district have been successfully completed and may be recommended shortly for auction. Furthermore, one (01) Talc-Steatite Block in Darjeeling district assessed at the G-4 level may be recommended for Composite License depending upon the final status of the Land Availability report as per DGPS Block boundary.</p> <p>Additionally, she informed that after the successful procurement of Arc-GIS software through NMET funding, the office of DMM, West Bengal is developing a Minor Mineral Database, and already data amalgamation pertaining to Bankura district is almost complete. After its finalization, the mineral repository preparation of other districts shall be taken up.</p> <p>DMM also outlined the upcoming in-house projects for 2024-2025 on Granite and Baryte exploration in Purulia district, Quartz-Feldspar exploration in Bankura district and a Geo-Tourism project in East Bagrakote, Kalimpong district.</p> <p>DMM also provided an update on the ongoing evaluation of mineral blocks in Purulia district, detailing the status of five blocks under consideration. This includes four prospective Apatite mineral blocks and one Copper block, which are being assessed for direct mining leases, as well as two Cesium and Rare Metal (RM) mineral blocks that are under review for composite licenses. These proposals are currently being examined by the Department of Industry, Commerce &amp; Enterprises.</p> <p>In the light of recent amendments to the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act (MMDR Act), which stipulates a maximum area of 100 square kilometers for composite license blocks and maximum 50 sq. km area for Mining Lease Blocks, which is rarely possible in this state owing to dense population and small land holdings, the DMM requested the representatives of GSI to put forward their opinion on an optimum minimum area so that the Major Mineral blocks can be successfully put to auction.</p>

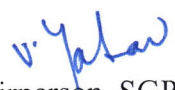
52.01.03	<p><b>CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE 51<sup>st</sup> MEETING OF SGPAB, WEST BENGAL</b></p> <p>The minutes of the 51<sup>st</sup> meeting of SGPAB, West Bengal was confirmed by the House unanimously.</p>
52.02.00	<p><b>Member participants (GSI SUWBAN and ONGC) had discussed the action taken report on the agenda items of the 51<sup>st</sup> WBSGPAB.</b></p>
52.03.00	<p><b>DISCUSSION ON THE REVIEW OF THE PROGRESS OF WORKS (F.S. 2023-2024) AND PROPOSED PROGRAMME (F.S. 2024-2025) OF DMM, WBMDTCL, GSI, MECL, ONGC &amp; CMPDI.</b></p> <p>The proposed programmes of all the Member organizations were approved by the house after respective PPT presentation.</p>
52.04.00	<p><b>DISCUSSION ON AGENDA ITEMS OF 52<sup>nd</sup> SGPAB:</b></p>
52.04.01	<p><b>Agenda 1</b></p> <p><b>Issue 1:</b> GSI, ER may be requested to enlighten us regarding current status of Rudra Gold Block in light of their recent prospecting works underwent in G-3 level.</p> <p><b>Comments of GSI:</b> GSI has informed the House that they have started operations in the G-3 stage for the Rudra Gold block and had sent soil &amp; Bed rock samples for analysis. Based upon their results, drilling points shall be fixed. Once the exploration work gets completed, report shall be handed over to DMM by them.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>(Action: GSI ER)</b></p> <p><b>Issue 2:</b> The GSI has carried out extensive work on REEs and RMs across West Bengal. Therefore, they were requested to suggest new blocks for further exploration based on their stream sediment, drilling data etc. These blocks, upon further exploration by PSUs or NPEAs, may potentially be converted into actionable blocks in the future.</p> <p><b>Comments of GSI:</b> The Geological Survey of India (GSI) has informed that they will consider the issue and, in the near future, will submit a report to our Directorate providing information on the blocks across West Bengal where significant values of Rare Earth Elements (REE) and Rare Metals (RM) have been identified to facilitate their feasibility of auction.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>(Action: GSI ER)</b></p> <p><b>Issue 3:</b> Segregation of DGPS Block boundary area into Mineralized and Non-mineralized zones is required against Chirugora, Purdaha, Medinitanr Apatite Blocks and Tamakhun Copper Block, all occurring in Purulia district. Therefore, modified Part-IV A is requested from GSI in this connection.</p> <p><b>Comments of GSI:</b> The Geological Survey of India (GSI) has informed us that the requisite data of all the Major Mineral Blocks shall be provided shortly.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>(Action: GSI ER)</b></p>



	<p><b>Issue 4:</b> In the light of the recent amendment in the MMDR Act (Feb'24) GSI is requested to give their opinions regarding suitable minimum area for 02- Composite License Blocks &amp; 05 Mining lease Blocks.</p> <p><b>Comments of GSI:</b> The requisite information shall be provided shortly.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>(Action: GSI ER)</b></p> <p><b>Issue 5:</b> As per the recent exploration work done by GSI along the Odisha Coast line, it was requested to suggest the possibility of offshore mineral exploration along the coast line of West Bengal.</p> <p><b>Comments of GSI:</b> After discussing the matter with the Head of the Marine and Coastal Survey Division (M &amp; CSD) of GSI, they will inform shortly.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>(Action: GSI ER)</b></p>
52.04.02	<p><b>Agenda 2 (Issue: GSI)</b></p> <p><b>A.</b> Status of Reconstitution of JWG for auctioning of Mineral blocks  <b>Comments of DMM:</b> Currently, the utility of JWG is minimal, based on the MMDR Amendment Act, 2023, it is applicable during auction of new exploration license blocks, but currently no exploration license blocks are present in this state.</p> <p><b>B.</b> Status of auction of Rudra block (Gold)  <b>Comments of DMM, WB:</b> Issue already addressed in Agenda-1 of DMM.</p>
52.04.03	<p><b>Agenda 3 (Issue: ECL)</b>  Eastern Coalfields Limited (ECL) is a Government of India enterprise having its corporate headquarters at Sanctoria, West Burdwan in India. It is a fully owned subsidiary of Coal India Limited (CIL). ECL is involved in coal production in the state of West Bengal and Jharkhand. For more kindly visit the website at <a href="https://www.easterncoal.nic.in/">https://www.easterncoal.nic.in/</a>.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. ECL would like to request to kindly provide support in regular coal exploration activities in the State of West Bengal, where administrative help of the authorities would be required for carrying out the Exploration activities.</li> <li>2. Wherever new coal mines are required to be opened or existing coal mine is required to be expanded, help of local administration would be required regarding land acquisition.</li> <li>3. Cooperation from Land and Revenue Dept., Govt. of West Bengal would be required for various reasons like, land record data etc.</li> <li>4. Wherever exploration activities are being carried out or proposed to be carried out in Forest Area, cooperation from the Forest and Environment Dept. of Govt. of West Bengal would be required to carry out the exploration activities. In this regard, ECL would like to request to reassess the clauses like NPV, plantation of 110 trees against each drill site etc. by the respective Ministry of West Bengal Government.</li> </ol> <p><b>Comments of DMM/IC&amp;E:</b> The information has been duly noted, and ECL is requested to send a letter depicting the difficulties.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>(Action: ECL)</b></p>

52.04.04	<p><b>Agenda 4 (Issue: MECL)</b></p> <p>1. Consent of block i.e. Lamagaon Bijanbari block in Darjeeling identified by MECL</p> <p><b>Comments of DMM/IC&amp;E:</b> It is currently under active consideration by the Department of Industry, Commerce and Enterprises.</p>
52.04.05	<p><b>Agenda 5 (Issue: ONGC)</b></p> <p>a) Grant of Mining Lease for Oil &amp; Gas Discovery in the well Asokenagar-1, Block WB-ONN-2005/4</p> <p>b) PEL for the Block BP-ONHP-2021/1</p> <p>c) Declaration of inaccessible area of OALP-III Block BP-ONHP-2018/1 for hydrocarbon exploration activities</p> <p><b>Comments of DMM/IC&amp;E:</b> The Dept. of I C &amp; E shall take requisite steps in the issues stated above.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>(Action: I C &amp; E)</b></p>
52.04.06	<p><b>Agenda 6:</b></p> <p><b><u>Miscellaneous</u></b></p> <p>1. It was revealed from the PPT of the GSI personnel that Granites in Purulia district contain significant REE values. Director, DMM requested GSI to provide Block boundary coordinates of REE-enriched areas in Purulia to avoid overlaps with ongoing DMM and WBMDTCL projects on Dimensional stone areas.</p> <p><b>Comments of GSI:</b> GSI has confirmed that they will provide the coordinates and necessary data for these areas in due course to facilitate effective coordination.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>(Action: GSI, ER)</b></p>
52.05.00	<p><b>Concluding Remarks:</b> The Member Secretary, SGPAB &amp; DMM stated that the interaction among the various exploration agencies has enriched the house on the predominance of REE occurrences allied with other mineral deposits, especially in the already established G-2 level areas of Granite deposits in the state.</p>

The 52<sup>nd</sup> SGPAB Meeting ended with vote of thanks to & from the chair.

  
 Chairperson, SGPAB  
 &

Principal Secretary to the Govt. of West Bengal  
Department of Industry, Commerce & Enterprises