

Ministry of Coal Takes Yet Another Step Towards Speedy Exploration for Early Operationalization of Coal Mines

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In its ongoing effort to strengthen the coal sector and bring India closer to the vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat, the Government has taken an important step aimed at speeding up the exploration and operationalization of coal mines. In exercise of the powers under the second proviso to sub-section (1) of section 4 of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957, private entities duly accredited by the Quality Council of India – National Accreditation Board for Education and Training (QCI-NABET) have been notified on 26th November 2025, as notified Accredited Prospecting Agencies. The notification published by Ministry of Coal in this matter is available on its website at <https://coal.nic.in/sites/default/files/2025-11/28-11-2025a-wn.pdf>

This adds another 18 agencies for carrying out prospecting operations for the exploration of Coal and Lignite, enabling the coal blocks allottees to have more flexibility and choice towards engaging these agencies for carrying out the exploration of coal and lignite. Exploration and preparation of geological report is a prerequisite for operationalization of the coal mine. The addition of these exploration agencies will result in saving of around 6 months' time, which was earlier required for obtaining of prospecting license by the agency.

By expanding the pool of authorized prospecting agencies, the Government aims to harness private sector resources, promote efficiency, competitiveness, and technological innovation in the exploration ecosystem.

This step is expected to significantly accelerate the pace of exploration and enable early enhancement of mining contributing to faster resource development and enhance coal and lignite availability for the country, contributing enhanced availability of coal and lignite to meet the nation's growing energy needs.

The Government of India remains committed to fostering a transparent, efficient, and future-ready mineral exploration framework that strengthens national energy security and drives economic growth.

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