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India-UK Launch Critical Minerals Global Supply Chain Observatory

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India-UK Launch Critical Minerals Global Supply Chain Observatory

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Source: ujjyari.com — Free UPSC & State PCS Current Affairs

WHY IN NEWS

India and the United Kingdom on **June 4, 2026** launched the **Critical Minerals Global Supply Chain Observatory (GSCO)** in New Delhi. The data platform — unveiled by Union **Coal and Mines Minister G. Kishan Reddy** and **UK Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper** — will monitor global critical-mineral supply chains, identify disruptions, and generate market intelligence to strengthen the resource security underpinning the clean-energy transition.

WHAT IS THE OBSERVATORY?

The **Global Supply Chain Observatory (GSCO)** is a **joint data-driven platform** to track and analyse the worldwide flow of **critical minerals** — the elements essential to clean energy, electric vehicles, electronics, and advanced manufacturing.

FEATURE	DETAIL
Launched	June 4, 2026, New Delhi
Launched by	G. Kishan Reddy (Coal & Mines) + Yvette Cooper (UK Foreign Secretary)
Indian partner	TEXMiN — Technology Innovation in Exploration & Mining Foundation, at IIT (ISM) Dhanbad
UK partner	University of Cambridge
Function	Monitor supply chains; flag risks/disruptions; generate market intelligence
Origins	India-UK PMS' engagement (Oct 2025) → research agreement (March 2026)

TEXMiN is a Technology Translational Research Park established by the **Department of Science and Technology (DST)** at IIT (ISM) Dhanbad — India's premier mining-and-minerals institute.

WHY CRITICAL MINERALS MATTER

Critical minerals – including **lithium, cobalt, nickel, graphite, and rare earth elements (REEs)** – are the building blocks of the energy transition:

- **Lithium, cobalt, nickel, graphite** → EV batteries and grid storage
- **Rare earths (neodymium, dysprosium)** → permanent magnets for wind turbines and EV motors
- **Copper** → all electrification

The strategic problem is **concentration**: a handful of countries dominate mining, and **China dominates processing** – controlling roughly **60% of global rare-earth mining and ~85% of processing capacity**. This gives a single country chokehold **leverage** over supply chains essential to every economy's decarbonisation.

INDIA'S CRITICAL MINERALS STRATEGY

The Observatory is one pillar of a broader Indian push to **de-risk** critical-mineral supply:

INITIATIVE	DETAIL
National Critical Mineral Mission	Launched 2025; covers exploration, mining, processing, recycling, and overseas acquisition of 30 identified critical minerals
KABIL (Khanij Bidesh India Ltd)	Joint venture of NALCO, HCL, and MECL to acquire mineral assets abroad (e.g., lithium in Argentina)
Minerals Security Partnership (MSP)	US-led multilateral grouping (India joined 2023) to build resilient supply chains
Critical mineral blocks auction	Domestic auctions of lithium, REE, and other blocks under the MMDR Act

The MMDR (Mines and Minerals Development and Regulation) Act was **amended in 2023** to enable the central auction of critical and atomic mineral blocks, recognising their strategic importance.

THE INDIA-UK BILATERAL DIMENSION

The Observatory flows directly from high-level India-UK engagement:

- **October 2025** – agreed at the India-UK Prime Ministers' **bilateral**
- **March 2026** – formalised via a research collaboration agreement

- It complements the broader **India-UK economic and technology partnership**, including the recently concluded **India-UK Free Trade Agreement**

For both countries, the logic is **collective de-risking** — pooling data and research to reduce dependence on any single supplier nation for the minerals their green transitions require.

UPSC RELEVANCE

Prelims

- **GSCO launched:** June 4, 2026, New Delhi
- **Indian partner:** TEXMiN (IIT-ISM Dhanbad, under DST)
- **UK partner:** University of Cambridge
- **Launched by:** G. Kishan Reddy + Yvette Cooper
- **National Critical Mineral Mission:** launched 2025 (30 critical minerals)
- **KABIL:** NALCO + HCL + MECL joint venture
- **MSP:** US-led; India joined 2023
- **MMDR Act amended 2023** for critical-mineral auctions
- **China:** ~60% of REE mining, ~85% of processing

Mains Angles

- 1 **GS3 — Resource Security:** Critical minerals are the “new oil” of the energy transition. Examine India’s strategy to secure them and reduce China dependence.
- 2 **GS2 — Bilateral Relations:** How do initiatives like the Critical Minerals Observatory deepen the India-UK strategic and economic partnership?
- 3 **GS3 — Energy Transition:** Discuss the supply-chain vulnerabilities that could constrain India’s renewable-energy and EV ambitions, and the role of international partnerships.

FACTS CORNER

FACT	DETAIL
Platform	Critical Minerals Global Supply Chain Observatory (GSCO)
Launched	June 4, 2026, New Delhi
Indian partner	TEXMiN (IIT-ISM Dhanbad, under DST)
UK partner	University of Cambridge
Launched by	G. Kishan Reddy (Coal & Mines) + Yvette Cooper (UK FS)
Origins	India-UK PMs' meeting Oct 2025; agreement March 2026
National Critical Mineral Mission	Launched 2025; 30 critical minerals
KABIL partners	NALCO + HCL + MECL
MSP	US-led; India joined 2023
MMDR Act critical-mineral amendment	2023
China's share	~60% REE mining; ~85% processing

Sources: ANI, Ministry of Mines, The Hindu

Source: India-UK Launch Critical Minerals Global Supply Chain Observatory — Ujjiyari.com | Free UPSC & State PCS Current Affairs

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