

Rajasthan to e-auction mines, first state to do so

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Image for representation only.

JAIPUR: Rajasthan government will be conducting e-auction of major minerals, becoming the first state in the country to do so. The auction will be completed in 45-60 days from the day bidding starts.

E-bidding was chosen to have transparency in the allocation process in the wake of the recent cancellation of allocated mines after irregularities were found in the auctioning process under former principal secretary Ashok Singhvi.

In fact, the government plans to invite the media during the auctioning. "We are soon going to re lease an order on this. Our backroom preparations have almost been completed. The guidelines from the centre on e-auctioning are already in place. All the necessary approvals have been taken from the ministry," an official close to the development told TOI. To ensure a level playing field and avoid last-minute glitches, the registered bidders will be educated on the e-auctioning process.

Government-run MSTC has been selected to conduct the e-auction. The website for this e-auction is already under the testing phase. "The idea is that the bids are not cancelled later due to some extraneous reasons, as this causes significant loss to the exchequer," said the official.

The state government will also float a document for suggestions from probable bidders. The document will include a survey report of the Geological Survey of India (GSI). "The intention is to have complete fairness in the system. Challenges are many as Rajasthan is the first state to follow this process and we want it to be flawless," said the official.

In the first phase, 10-11 mines will be auctioned. Among these, one is of lead, copper and zinc, while rest other are of limestone (steel and cement). The area of each mine is around 10 square kilometres, mostly located in Jaisalmer, Bhilwara, Nagaur and Pratapgarh.

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