



Only 82 of 592 mining blocks operational; Anil Agarwal flags import dependence amid geopolitical risks

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The remarks come amid rising geopolitical tensions, particularly in West Asia, which have underscored the strategic importance of energy and mineral security.

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Anil Agarwal, chairman, Vedanta Group. | Credits: Narendra Bisht



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Anil Agarwal, Chairman of **Vedanta**, has called for urgent reforms in India's mining sector, flagging structural bottlenecks that continue to delay the operationalisation of auctioned blocks, even as global uncertainties heighten concerns around resource security.

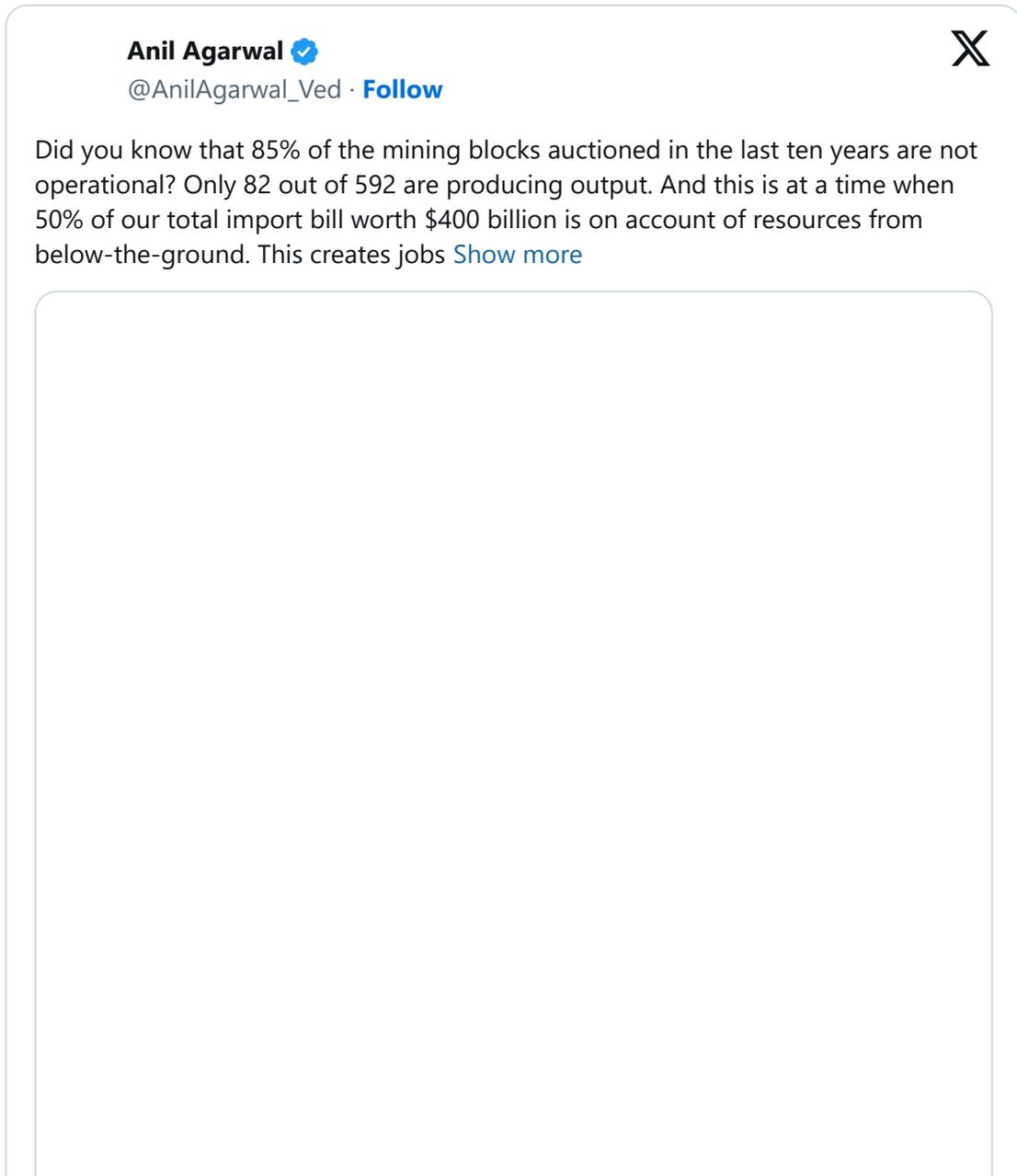
In a post on X, Agarwal said nearly 85% of mining blocks auctioned over the past decade remain non-operational, with only 82 out of 592 currently producing output. He noted that this comes at a time when about 50% of India's \$400 billion import bill is driven by dependence on imported natural resources.

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“This creates jobs in other countries. We should create them here,” he said, questioning why a large number of blocks remain idle despite being auctioned.

Agarwal identifies three key bottlenecks

Agarwal identified three key bottlenecks—land acquisition challenges, delays in environmental and forest clearances, and high premiums that render some mines commercially unviable—as the primary reasons for the slow pace of operationalisation.

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The remarks come amid rising geopolitical tensions, particularly in West Asia, which have underscored the strategic importance of energy and mineral security.

Calling for immediate policy intervention, Agarwal stressed that faster post-auction execution is critical. “At a time of global crisis, energy and mineral security are a strategic imperative. After auction, work must start immediately on the ground,” he said.

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He recommended a technology-enabled system for land acquisition, enabling direct transfer of payments to landowners, and suggested that public hearings may not be necessary in most cases. Agarwal also advocated for a shift towards self-certification and trust-based regulatory approvals to expedite clearances.

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Further, he urged the government to cap mining premiums at 60% to ensure commercial viability of projects.

Highlighting the sector's potential, Agarwal said India could emerge as a global hub for minerals, metals and hydrocarbons, with mining acting as a catalyst for employment generation, particularly for women.

Reiterating confidence in the government's facilitative approach, he called for collective action to unlock the sector's potential and advance the vision of a self-reliant India.

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