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Research in Action Workshop 2026

Programme

27–28 April 2026

Ray Dolby Centre, Cavendish Laboratory, University of Cambridge

Day 1 — 27 April

10:00 – Registration & Tea/Coffee

10:30 – Welcome Note: Sunanda Nair-Bidkar, Chief of Strategy & Operations, Institute of New Economic Thinking (INET)

10:45 – Panel 1: Introductions

Theme: The current landscape of studying critical minerals in Social Sciences, Physics, Chemistry, Engineering; Green Transition, AI, 4IR; Need for Interdisciplinary Research.

- **Siddharth S. Saxena – Professor, University of Cambridge**
Introductory reflections on interdisciplinary critical minerals research
 - **Jewellord T. Nem Singh – Principal Research Fellow, University of Sussex**
Critical minerals in political economy and development studies
 - **Prajakti Kalra – Research Officer & Manager, University of Cambridge**
Interdisciplinary approaches to critical minerals
 - **Peter Nolan – Professor, University of Cambridge**
Global political economy and resource transitions
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11:15–12:30 – Panel 2: Energy Materials

Chair: Hayrullo Hamidov, Navoi University of Mining Science and Technology

- **Sian Dutton – Professor & Deputy Head, Cavendish Laboratory, University of Cambridge**
What scientists consider “critical minerals” and why: materials science and quantum technologies
 - **Zhumabay Bekenov, General Director, Institute of New Materials and Energy Technologies (INMET), Academy of Sciences, Kazakhstan**
 - **Mathew Coak – Assistant Professor, University of Birmingham**
New 2D quantum materials: science discovery to fuel an electronics revolution
 - **T Ramazanov, Professor at KAZNU and Head of Physical Society of Kazakhstan**
Thermonuclear energetics: plasma physics and materials science
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12:30–13:45 – Lunch

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13:45–15:15 – Panel 3: From the Region

Theme: Material Strategies and Prospectives

Chair: Chokan Laumulin, Kazakh British Technical University

- **Maratbek T. Gabdullin – Professor and Rector, Kazakh British Technical University**
Kazakhstan's national critical minerals landscape
- **Anton Souslov – Professor, Cavendish Laboratory, University of Cambridge**
Metamaterials as alternatives to critical minerals
- **Didar G. Batryshev – Associate Professor & Vice President, Academy of Sciences of Kazakhstan**
State of geological mapping and mineral resources
- **Holly Middleton-Spencer – Research Associate, University of Birmingham**
Ultracold atoms for quantum advantage

15:15–16:15 Panel 4: Commodity Trade and Networks across time and space

Chair: Prajakti Kalra – University of Cambridge

- **Miljana Radivojević – Associate Professor and Head of DREAM ERC Project at UCL**
Historical perspectives on metallurgy and resource use
- **Magnus Marsden – Professor and Director of Asia Centre, University of Sussex**
Trading networks and regional political economy
- **Roman Osharov – MIASU, Cambridge and Post-Doc University College Dublin**
The 'Critical Minerals' of the Nineteenth Century: Manganese Mining in the Russian-ruled Caucasus

16:15-16:30 – Tea & Coffee

16:30–17:45 – Panel 4: Critical Minerals and Commercialisation

Chair: Siddharth S. Saxena – University of Cambridge

- **Harjiv Singh – CEO, CambrianEdge.ai**
AI, Business and Critical Minerals in the global markets
- **Hayrullo Hamidov – Professor, Navoi Mining Institute, Uzbekistan**
Mining and materials discovery in Uzbekistan
- **Lionel Henderson, Vice-Rector, British Management University in Tashkent**
- **Vladislav Zavidsky – Resource Economist and Mining Services Expert, Kazakhstan**

19:00 – Dinner at Jesus College



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Ray Dolby Centre, Cavendish Laboratory, University of Cambridge

Day 2 — 28 April

10:00 – Tea & Coffee

10:15–10:45 – Introductory Remarks

Akshay Rao – Professor and Deputy Head, Cavendish Laboratory

10:45–12:00 – Panel 1: Mining, Export Diversification & Industrialisation

Chair: Yingfeng Ji, Post-Doctoral Research Associate, University of Sussex

- **Jewellord T. Nem Singh – Principal Research Fellow, University of Sussex**
From Structural Capacity to Fragmented Developmentalism: Why Mineral-Upgrading States Diverge Under Strategic Competition
- **Annabel Marin – Research Fellow, University of Sussex**
Critical Minerals and Industrial Development: Old Wine in New Bottles?
- **Serik Orazgaliyev – Associate Professor & Co-Chair SSDN, Nazarbayev University**
Resource Diplomacy in the Age of Critical Minerals: Kazakhstan's Strategic Balancing in the Global Political Economy

12:00–13:15 – Panel 2: The Changing Geopolitics of Mining & Supply Chains

Chair: Jewellord T. Nem Singh, University of Sussex

- **Christopher Vandome – Programme Lead, Critical Minerals Initiative, Chatham House, London**
Geopolitics of critical minerals
- **Clement Sefa-Nyarko – Lecturer in Security, Development and Leadership in Africa King's College London**
From strategic minerals to social risk: Rethinking vulnerability in critical mineral supply chains
- **Aidan Barlow – Lecturer, Department of Social & Policy Sciences, Centre for Development Studies (CDS) University of Bath**
Industrialisation through Geopolitics? Critical Minerals and Development in Zambia's Mining Sector

13:15–14:15 – Lunch

14:15–15:30 – Panel 3: Mining and the Challenge of Legitimacy

Chair: Anabel Marin – University of Sussex

- **Tomas Frederiksen – University of Manchester**
Critical minerals governance, politics and development: comparing Serbia and Zambia
- **Chokan Laumulin – Professor, Kazakh British Technical University**
Kazakhstan's Critical mineral strategies and issues of legitimacy
- **Florian Anderhuber - Deputy Director General, European Association of Mines and Metals (EUROMINES)**



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15:30–15:45 – Tea & Coffee

15:45–17:30 – Critical Energy: Resources, Infrastructure & Geopolitics

Chair: Prajakti Kalra, University of Cambridge

- **Alaeddine Louetti – Centre of Development Studies, University of Cambridge**
North Africa's Green Moment: Minerals, Multipolarity and the Fight to Set the Terms
- **Habiba Abdelshakour – Centre of Development Studies, University of Cambridge**
Governing the Transition: Infrastructure, Finance, and External Actors in Egypt's Energy Sector
- **S.K. Mani – Centre of Development Studies, University of Cambridge**
Technological Sovereignty in China's Semiconductor Sector

17:45–18:30 – Panel 4: Roundtable — Future of Critical Minerals Research

Theme: Gaps, interdisciplinary pathways, and future methodologies.

- **Siddharth S. Saxena – University of Cambridge**
- **Prajakti Kalra – University of Cambridge**
- **Jewellord T. Nem Singh – University of Sussex**
- **Yingfeng Ji – University of Sussex**

Discussion prompts:

- Mining vs Green Transition
- Pollution, People, Climate Change
- Quantity vs Disruptive Technologies
- Geopolitics vs National Strategies
- Economic development vs Universal needs

18:30 – Concluding Remarks

18:45 – Cavendish Tour followed by Drinks Reception



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