GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF COAL

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.2419
ANSWERED ON- 10.08.2026

COMMERCIAL COAL MINING

2419. DR. MENAKA GURUSWAMY:

Will the Minister of ***COAL*** be pleased to state:

(a) the number of commercial coal blocks auctioned during the last five years;
(b) whether coal imports have continued despite the expansion of commercial mining;
(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and
(d) whether any assessment has been carried out regarding the effectiveness of the commercial coal mining policy?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR COAL AND MINES
(SHRI SATISH CHANDRA DUBEY)

(a) A total of 124 coal blocks have been successfully auctioned during last five financial years (from FY 2021-22 to FY 2025-26).

(b) & (c) Yes, Madam. Coal imports have continued despite the increased contribution from the allocated coal blocks. However, imports by thermal power plants have declined by 30.9% over the last three years as given below:

FY 2023-24: 65.7 MT (23.9 MT for Domestic Coal-Based Plants & 41.8 MT for Imported Coal-Based Plants)

FY 2024-25: 62.5 MT (14.0 MT for Domestic Coal-Based Plants & 48.5 MT for Imported Coal-Based Plants)

FY 2025-26 (Provisional): 45.4 MT (6.8 MT for Domestic Coal-Based Plants & 38.6 MT for Imported Coal-Based Plants)

Under the prevailing import policy, coal is placed under the Open General Licence (OGL), which allows industrial consumers and power producers to import coal based on commercial considerations, quality requirements and logistical convenience. The major reasons for continued coal imports are as follows:

- **Limited availability of coking coal:** India has limited reserves of high-grade coking coal, and nearly 90% of the requirement of the domestic steel industry is met through imports.

- **Imported Coal-Based (ICB) power plants:** Certain thermal power plants are designed to operate on imported coal and cannot readily substitute it with domestic coal.
- High-grade coal requirements of sectors like Cement, Steel, Sponge Iron etc and the blending requirements of some coal-based power plants to meet technical and operational requirements.

(d) While no separate or independent study has been commissioned to evaluate the commercial coal mining policy, the success of commercial coal mining policy is reflected in the progress achieved since its introduction in June 2020. As on 30.06.2026, 141 coal blocks have been auctioned across 14 rounds, of which 132 have been allocated. Of these, 23 commercial coal blocks have become operational (having obtained Mine Opening Permission), and production has increased from 1.15 Million Tonnes (FY 2021–22) to 26.12 Million Tonnes (FY 2025–26). The commercial auction has diversified investor participation, with 44 first-time bidders emerging as successful allottees from sectors beyond traditional mining.

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