

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF COAL**

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 6077
ANSWERED ON 01.04.2026**

NOTIFICATION OF COKING COAL AS CRITICAL AND STRATEGIC MINERAL

6077. SHRI MOHIBULLAH:

Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state

(a) whether the Government has notified coking coal as a critical and strategic mineral by amending the First Schedule of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 and if so, the details and rationale for granting such status to a fossil fuel;

(b) whether the Government has conducted any independent environmental, ecological or climate impact assessment before classifying coking coal as a critical mineral particularly considering its potential impacts on forests, biodiversity, water resources and public health in coal-bearing regions such as Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, etc.;

(c) the manner in which a high-carbon fossil fuel has been categorised as a critical mineral, a category generally reserved globally for minerals essential for clean-energy technologies such as lithium, cobalt and rare earth elements; and

(d) the steps proposed by the Government to ensure that the classification of coking coal as a strategic mineral does not lead to dilution of environmental safeguards?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR COAL AND MINES

(SHRI SATISH CHANDRA DUBEY)

(a): The Government has notified coking coal as a critical and strategic mineral by amending the First Schedule of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 vide notification dated 27 January 2026, with the objective to accelerate production of domestic coking coal to promote Atamnirbhar Bharat by reducing coking coal import. Presently, India's coking coal requirement is primarily met through imports despite having a significant reserve of about 37.37 billion tons (BT) in India as on 01.04.2025.

(b): As regards environmental, ecological or climate impact, though no specific assessment study has been conducted, the High Level Committee - Vikshit Bharat (HLC-VB), Niti Aayog, after detailed consultation with stakeholders, has recommended notifying coking coal as a Critical Mineral to expedite its domestic exploration and production and securing the needs of the steel sector required for infrastructure development.

(c): The classification of coking coal as a critical and strategic mineral is based on its economic and strategic importance rather than its carbon profile. Coking coal is essential for steel production, which supports the infrastructure and industrial growth of the country. It may be noted that coking coal is used in steel making globally. Some other countries, including the US and the EU, have coking coal in their Critical Materials list.

(d): After notification of coking coal as a critical mineral, certain procedural relaxations will be available for the start of mining operations. However, environmental safeguards are not diluted, and the existing environmental regulatory framework remain applicable. All mining projects, including coking coal, continue to be governed by applicable environmental, forest and wildlife laws, rules and procedures, under which detailed assessments and statutory clearances are mandatory before commencement of mining operations.
