

● 100 MT FROM UNDERGROUND MINES BY FY28

CIL unveils 5-year plan to push green mining

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COAL MINISTER PRASHANT (left) on Tuesday said the country needs to move away from open-cast to undermountain mines by underpinning green mining as a model system for the energy sector. Coal India (CIL) targets to produce from 100 open to 110 million tonnes (MT) by FY28.

"We want to increase the share of the mining of coal to build an atmosphere that is sustainable in the mining sector. By 2025, we want to take the share of 100 million tonnes (MT) from the current level of 6%," Coal India has prepared a road map," he said at an event organised by the CIL.

He said, the ministry will take joint working by stakeholders for securing the plan and identifying changes that would be required in rules, particularly when the mining CIL has to step up for commercial coal mining.

"Scaling up production from India's 100 coal mines will help in reducing coal imports, thereby helping save foreign exchange. To achieve this vision, coal companies need to deploy the latest mining technologies," he said.

In FY23, of CIL's 240 MT of coal production, open-cast output accounts for around 90% and only 10 MT, or less than 4%, coal came from 100 mines in the five decades since coal sector nationalisation in 1973, coal from 100 mines will support the open-cast output that is under 10% of the total of 154.4 MT.

Of the 47 billion tonnes of coal produced by China, 100 mines accounted for more than 90%, about 77% of coal in US and 50% in South Africa is produced from underground mines. Europe has stopped open-cast mining and has shifted mostly on underground production. Almost 70% of the world coal comes from 100 mines.

CIL is known for its open-cast mining strategy, but also increasingly has been moving towards a different class of open-cast mines and high-quality quality of coal, which is green by nature.

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PRASHANT KUMAR, COAL MINISTER

India, to curb import dependence. In FY23, India consumed 139 MT of coal. Though the share of imports have gone down from 24% in FY20 to 13% in FY23, ministry expects an improvement to 10-12% by FY28.

The CIL vision document has outlined a multi-layered production plan, including the projects to be taken up and the various trackbacks.

"Coal India has given a multi-layered plan in several years due to increasing concerns on the environmental and social issues. It is the need of the hour that coal companies and government are all aligned in such a way that they become more sustainable," Coal Secretary Anil Kumar said.

As per the ministry, CIL expects coal from 100 mines to reach 11 MT in FY24, 15 MT in FY25, and 55 MT in FY28.

"Green mining is naturally coal intensive and has little impact on financing and fund, the environment related rules for open-cast require to consider green mining," CIL chairman Prashant Kumar said, adding that shift to 100 mining will be in parallel for the sustainability of the state-owned mining company.