



Government Notifies Coking Coal as Critical & Strategic Mineral under MMDR Act, 1957

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As part of ongoing structural reforms in the mining sector and in line with the vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat and Viksit Bharat 2047, the Government of India has notified Coking Coal as a Critical and Strategic Mineral under the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 (MMDR Act). The details may be accessed through this link <https://coal.nic.in/sites/default/files/2026-01/29-01-2026a-wn.pdf>.

The decision has been taken on the basis of the recommendations of the High-Level Committee on Implementation of Viksit Bharat Goals (HLC-VB) and policy inputs from NITI Aayog, recognising the strategic role of coking coal in ensuring mineral security and meeting the requirements of the domestic steel sector.

India has an estimated 37.37 billion tonnes of coking coal resources, largely located in Jharkhand, with additional reserves in Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal and Chhattisgarh. Despite this domestic availability, imports of coking coal have increased from 51.20 million tonnes in 2020–21 to 57.58 million tonnes in 2024–25. Currently, around 95 % of the coking coal requirement of the steel sector is met through imports, leading to significant foreign exchange outgo.

To address this continued dependence, the Central Government, in exercise of powers conferred under Section 11C of the MMDR Act, 1957, has amended the First Schedule of the Act. Accordingly, in Part A, the term “Coal” now reads as “Coal, including Coking Coal”, and “Coking Coal” has been included in Part D, which lists Critical and Strategic Minerals.

The inclusion of coking coal in this category is expected to facilitate faster approvals, improve ease of doing business, and accelerate exploration and mining activities, including of deep-seated deposits. Mining of critical minerals is exempt from public consultation requirements and permits the utilisation of degraded forest land for compensatory afforestation, measures that are also expected to encourage greater private sector participation.

The reform is anticipated to reduce import dependence, strengthen supply-chain resilience for the steel sector, and support the objectives of the National Steel Policy. It is also expected to promote private investment in exploration, beneficiation, and the adoption of advanced mining technologies, while generating employment across the mining, logistics, and steel value chain.

It is clarified that, in accordance with Section 11D (3) of the MMDR Act, royalty, auction premium, and other statutory payments related to mining leases shall continue to accrue to the respective State Governments, even where mineral auctions are conducted by the Central Government.

By enabling optimal utilisation of domestic coking coal resources and reinforcing national mineral security, the notification of coking coal as a Critical and Strategic Mineral marks an important step towards building a resilient, self-reliant industrial ecosystem and advancing the vision of Viksit Bharat.

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