



## **KHANIJ SAMACHAR**

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# खनिज समाचार

# KHANIJ SAMACHAR



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# Lithium prices may come under more pressure

**RISING SUPPLIES.** Market turns surplus as ramp-up of new production outpaces demand growth

**Subramani Ra Mancombu**  
Chennai

Prices of lithium, a critical metal used in batteries of electric vehicles (EVs), will likely rule below the highs seen in 2022-23 as its supplies have increased leading to a surplus in the market, analysts say.

The critical metal prices have dropped by over 5 per cent since the beginning of 2024. Currently, battery-grade lithium carbonate prices are ruling at 91,323 Chinese yuan (\$12,574.42) a tonne and rates of lithium hydroxide — also battery-grade — at 83,030 yuan (\$11,432.54) a tonne.

## DOWN 70% Y-O-Y

Lithium prices, which are down 70 per cent year-on-year, had soared to 0.575 million yuan (\$79,000) a tonne in December 2022. Lithium carbonate and lithium hydroxide are refined lithium products. Research agency BMI, a unit of Fitch Solutions, said in 2024-2025 lithium prices are expected to remain below 2022-2023 highs, owing to a rapidly

expanding global lithium supply that has pushed the lithium market into surplus. "We forecast Chinese lithium carbonate 99.5 per cent to average \$15,500/tonne in 2024 and \$20,000/tonne in 2025 (compared with \$72,081/tonne in 2022 and \$35,956/tonne in 2023), and for Chinese lithium hydroxide monohydrate 56.5 per cent to average \$14,000/tonne in 2024 and \$20,500/tonne in 2025 (compared to \$69,496/tonne in 2022 and \$38,324/tonne in 2023)," said BMI in its outlook.

The World Bank, in its Commodity Outlook, said lithium prices tumbled by 18 per cent quarter-on-quarter. "Price declines were driven partly by weak demand, particularly for EVs, and subdued activity in China, but also by a continued ramp-up of supply anticipating prospective needs for the energy transition," it said.

The Australian Office of the Chief Economist (AOCE) said lithium prices will likely stabilise as high-cost producers exit the market. Making its prices forecast for years ahead, it said



**GOING SOUTH.** The critical metal's prices have dropped by over 5 per cent since the beginning of 2024. REUTERS

the forecasts have a high degree of uncertainty "as new producers enter the market around the world and uneven trends in EV demand growth". Lithium prices could respond to unexpected developments in the pace of EV adoption and other emerging uses, changes in battery technology and government policy, over the outlook period (to 2028), the AOCE said. "The fall in prices over 2023 has driven a reduction in production (particularly by some high-cost producers). This is likely to support a modest recovery in lithium prices over 2024 and 2025," it said. The International Energy

Agency (IEA) said from Africa to Indonesia and China, the ramp-up of new supply outpaced demand growth over the past two years. "Together with an inventory overhang in the downstream sector (e.g. battery cells, cathodes) and a correction of overly steep price rises in 2021-2022, this produced downward pressure on prices," it said.

BMI said a significant rise in lithium production in 2023, spurred by previously elevated prices, along with weaker-than-expected demand, pushed the market into surplus. Prices declined throughout 2023, returning to

## Lithium global demand-supply outlook\*

	2023	2024	2025
Production	1,019	1,322	1,540
Demand	1,001	1,219	1,419

Source: AOCE \*Figures in lithium carbonate equivalent - a measure of the quantity of lithium metal in the product

levels seen before the 2021 upswing. The AOCE said global lithium supply is projected to broadly keep pace with rising demand, with sizeable project pipelines among large producers (such as Australia and China) as well as among new and emerging producers (such as Argentina and Zimbabwe).

BMI concurred with the view that the increase in lithium supply, driven by these producers, is likely to cap further price growth, with the lithium market forecast to remain in surplus over 2024-2025. It said demand for lithium chemicals for use in EV batteries will be elevated, though. Xuan-Ce Wang, Managing Director, Chief Scientist and Professor at Mineral System and Geology, wrote on LinkedIn that the second

quarter of 2024 has seen significant strategic movements and investments in the lithium market, with varying degrees of progress across different regions. While some projects face challenges, others are on track for increased production and capacity expansion, he said.

IEA said the anticipated mine supply from announced projects will meet only 50 per cent of lithium requirements.

In the longer term, lithium prices are likely to be impacted by innovations in battery chemistries, including the adoption of batteries either without lithium or those that require a reduced amount of lithium, said BMI.

AOCE concurred that from 2026, alternate battery chemistries could put pressure on lithium-ion EV batteries, resulting in a fall in lithium prices for the rest of the outlook period.

Additionally, faster-than-anticipated advancement in battery recycling technology presents downside risks to lithium prices by significantly expanding the sustainable lithium supply, BMI said.

# Coal India's output grows 7.9% to 189 mt in Q1

**Mithun Dasgupta**  
Kolkata

State-run coal miner Coal India's production grew by 7.9 per cent year-on-year (y-o-y) to 189.3 million tonnes (mt) during the first quarter of this fiscal year from 175.5 million tonnes in the same period last fiscal year.

In a statement issued on Monday, CIL said it exceeded the production target of 189.2 mt for the first quarter, achieving 100 per cent satisfaction.

"While all the seven producing arms of CIL achieved positive growth, five of them have breached their respective targets," it said.

While Mahanadi Coalfields (MCL) witnessed 12.5 per cent y-o-y growth in production to 51.8 mt during Q1FY25, South Eastern Coalfields (SECL)'s output grew 0.6 per cent y-o-y to 42 mt in the period. Northern Coalfields (NCL)'s production stood at 35.8 mt, a 3.7 per cent growth. And, Eastern Coalfields (ECL) witnessed an 18.9 per cent y-o-y rise in its production to 11.7 mt during the period, according to a stock exchange filing.

Coal India's output for June increased to 63.1 mt, growing by 8.9 per cent y-o-y over last year's June when it had produced 58 mt.

"On the back of a strong production growth and in-

creased coal loading, CIL's total supplies shot up to 198.4 mt during April-June 2024, a 6 per cent year-on-year growth. The increase of 11.4 mt in absolute numbers came over a high base of 187 mt," the statement said.

At a time when the power demand in the country is spiking, CIL's supplies to coal-fired plants grew by 4 per cent to 160 mt during Q1FY25, marking a y-o-y increase of 6 mt. CIL's offtake to thermal power plants was 154 mt in the same period of FY24.

During Q1FY25, the coal behemoth's supplies to the non-power sector stood at 38.4 mt, logging a 16 per cent y-o-y growth, which was an all-time high for the first

quarter of any year to date. This sector was supplied 33 mt in April-June, 2023. The growth for June 2024 alone was 23 per cent y-o-y at 13.4 mt.

## SUFFICIENT BUFFER

"Coal inventory at CIL's pit-heads stood at 81.5 mt at the end of the first quarter FY25, 40 per cent higher than 58 mt for the comparative period of last year, providing sufficient buffer to meet any sudden gush in demand," the statement said.

Total average coal loading registered a healthy double digit growth of 10.3 per cent y-o-y at 367.2 rakes per day. For the comparative period of last fiscal, the figure was 333.



# खनिज ब्लॉक के लिए कई देशों से बातचीत

■ दिल्ली, नवभारत न्यूज नेटवर्क. खान मंत्रालय की संयुक्त सचिव वीना कुमारी डरमल ने मंगलवार को कहा कि भारत महत्वपूर्ण खनिज ब्लॉक को सरकार-से-सरकार आधार पर हासिल करने के लिए अफ्रीका के साथ-साथ लैटिन अमेरिका के देशों के साथ बातचीत कर रहा है. लिथियम जैसे महत्वपूर्ण खनिज आज की तेजी से बढ़ती स्वच्छ ऊर्जा प्रौद्योगिकियों में आवश्यक घटक हैं जिनमें पवन टर्बाइन, बिजली तंत्र तथा इलेक्ट्रिक वाहन शामिल हैं. स्वच्छ ऊर्जा में तेजी से हो रहे बदलाव के साथ इन खनिजों की मांग भी



तेजी से बढ़ रही है. भारत ऊर्जा भंडारण गठबंधन (आईईएसए) द्वारा आयोजित भारत ऊर्जा भंडारण सप्ताह (आईईएसडब्ल्यू) 2024 में डरमल ने कहा

कि हम सरकार से सरकार (जी2जी) के आधार पर या प्राथमिकता के आधार पर ब्लॉक प्राप्त करने के लिए अफ्रीका के साथ-साथ लैटिन अमेरिका के कई अन्य संसाधन संपन्न देशों के साथ चर्चा कर रहे हैं. उन्होंने कहा कि खान मंत्रालय भारत में महत्वपूर्ण खनिजों की खोज को अधिक से अधिक महत्व दे रहा है. संयुक्त सचिव ने कहा कि घरेलू मोर्चे पर सरकार ने छत्तीसगढ़ में एक लिथियम ब्लॉक की सफलतापूर्वक नीलामी की है. छत्तीसगढ़ सरकार जल्द ही लिथियम ब्लॉक से अन्वेषण तथा उत्पादन शुरू करने के लिए कदम उठाएगी.

## India explores new sources of coking coal, plans own pricing mechanism

**Abhishek Law**  
New Delhi

The Steel Ministry is looking to diversify its sourcing of coking coal, with Russia and Mongolia identified as key new markets, while plans are underway to establish the country's own mechanism for determining coking coal prices and creating an index.

India, the world's second-largest steelmaker, is the largest importer of coking coal. Australia accounts for 70 per cent of supplies.

After discussions with industry on Monday, it has been decided that trial runs for two shipments of coking coal from Mongolia — around 3 lakh tonnes — will be considered over the next three-to-six months, senior officials who took part in the meetings told *businessline*. The Trans-Siberian-Mongolian railway will be tapped.

Under consideration is the "one nation, one buying" of coking coal, on the lines of Japan and China. The industry is yet to come on board.

"Some points relate to securing coking coal by tapping new geographies, and determining the right price for coking



India is the largest importer of coking coal. Australia accounts for 70 per cent of supplies

coal. Tapping Mongolia for supplies and having own price mechanism are being considered for immediate implementation," a person present in the meeting said.

### PRICE INDEX

One point that came up was the need to have a "more realistic" price discovery mechanism for coking coal.

India does not have its price discovery mechanism and follows two global indexes — Platts and Argus. These two have been criticised as "subjective." Another criticism is that liquidity in the spot market is as low as 4-6 per cent, and this small quantity determines the price, especially in India.

Deals between certain coal suppliers and their sister trad-

ing companies, or trader-to-trader bids and offers, get registered in the global indexes, thereby impacting the discovery mechanism, including spot prices.

As a result, coking coal prices were in the \$150-170/tonne range in 2021 and 2022, shot up to the \$350/tonne range in 2023. In 2024, prices have been hovering in the \$250/tonne range. "We could look at a cost and freight approach in determining price instead of free-on-board price mechanisms," an industry participant said.

### THE CATCH

At the meeting, it was also decided that Mongolia would be tapped for coking coal. A team comprising officials from the Ministry and industry representatives will soon visit the Central Asian nation to work out logistics and see if additional investments are required to be made there or not.

Mongolia is a landlocked nation and shares borders with China and Russia. India will seek alternative routes to China, including tapping the Vladivostok-Chennai route, to secure coal. "Any route through China has to be avoided," said a source.



# Coal Ministry Seeks View on Draft Coal, Lignite Mining Plan Norms

**Our Bureau**

**New Delhi:** The coal ministry on Tuesday said it held a stakeholders' consultation on draft Mining Plan Guidelines for Coal and Lignite Blocks, 2024, which proposes optimum extraction of mineral resources while ensuring sustainable resource management.

The key elements of the draft norms include the mandatory inclusion of restoration, remediation, and regeneration actions in mining plans for sustainable resource management, the ministry said in a statement.

The discussion saw participation of 25 coal and lignite mining companies including public sector enterprises,

captive and commercial miners, and officials from Tamil Nadu, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Meghalaya and Uttar Pradesh.

Adoption of advanced technology in mining is crucial for enhancing productivity, safety and efficiency, according to the draft guidelines.

The proposed norms refer to 'just transition' which means the equitable process of transitioning from traditional coal mining toward more sustainable and environmentally friendly manner. It will ensure the environment is protected, land is restored, and affected workers, communities, and regions are supported throughout the transformation. It also involves recognizing and addressing the social, economic, and environmental challenges associated with mine closure activities.

Every mine owner will take precautions for undertaking sustainable mining while mining and mine closure activities, the norms propose.

In underground mining the norms include the utilization of state-of-the-art blast-free technologies such as longwall mining systems, continuous miners, etc.

The project proponent shall phase out the manual mining and give preference to mechanized mining or mass production technologies such as longwall mining, and continuous miners over semi mechanized methods.

## KEY ELEMENTS

**Key elements of the draft norms include the mandatory inclusion of restoration, remediation and regeneration actions in mining plans for sustainable resource management**

## Copper futures: Go long at ₹840, stop-loss at ₹828

**Akhil Nallamuthu**  
bl. research bureau

Copper futures (July contract) hit a high of ₹957 on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX) in May, before turning downward. It has been falling since then, closing at ₹845.75 on Monday.

### COMMODITY CALL.

The long-term chart suggests that the price band of ₹835-845 is a potential demand zone.

Considering this, along with the broader trend, which is bullish, there is a good chance copper futures will rebound from here.

If such a move occurs, the contract could touch ₹915 in the short-term.

A breach of this level can take the contract up to ₹950. On the other hand, if the downswing continues,



the contract could approach ₹800, a strong support.

Notable support below ₹800 is at ₹760.

### TRADING STRATEGY

Copper futures is trading near a support, so traders can consider buying at ₹840. Place stop-loss at ₹828.

When the contract rises past ₹875, alter the stop-loss to ₹855.

On a rally to ₹900, tighten the stop-loss to ₹885. Book profits at ₹915.

## COMMODITY CALL.

### Aluminium: Buy July futures if they top ₹235



**Akhil Nallamuthu**  
bl. research bureau

Aluminium futures on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX) have been tracing a sideways trend for a little over two weeks. The July contract has been oscillating in the narrow range of ₹228 and ₹233.

While the trend has been bearish since the final week of May, the consolidation has put a stop to the downswing.

However, the sideways movement by itself is not a sign of a bullish reversal. But this increases the chances of a U-turn, especially considering that there is support at ₹225.

That said, the confirmation can be the breakout of ₹235, which is also a resistance. A move past ₹235 can result in a rally to ₹250. The price region between ₹250 and ₹255 is a resistance band.

On the other hand, if aluminium futures slip below ₹225, it can open the door for a decline to ₹210, a support. Subsequent support is at ₹200.

### TRADE STRATEGY

We recommended going short on July aluminium futures at ₹229 last week. Exit this trade since the down-trend is losing momentum.

Consider buying July futures if it crosses the barrier at ₹235. Target and stop-loss can be ₹250 and ₹228, respectively.



## MOIL scales new peak in sales during Apr-Jun

**MOIL** scaled new peak in sales in April-June, 2024 by achieving its best ever quarterly sales, with a remarkable growth of 14.5% Y-o-Y.

This performance was backed by record quarterly production, going up to a level of 4.70 lakh tonnes during April-June, 2024, registering a growth of 7.8% y-o-y. MOIL has also carried out exploratory core drilling of 30,028 meters in April-June'24, which is higher by 49% y-o-y. Ajit Kumar Saxena, CMD MOIL, mentioned that it was heartening to see MOIL team continuing the stellar performance rhythm and breaking the myth of first quarter syndrome.

## Coal production from commercial, captive coal mines grow by 35%

**THE** Government on Wednesday said that coal production from the captive and commercial coal mines grew by 35 per cent to 39.53 million tonnes (MT) in the first quarter of this fiscal.

The coal production from captive and commercial coal mines was 29.26 MT in the first quarter of FY24.

"Similarly, dispatch has shown a growth of 34.25 per cent YoY, from 34.07 MT in Q1 of FY24 to 45.68 MT in Q1 of FY25," the Coal Ministry said in a statement.



The coal output for the power sector has seen a substantial increase, rising from 25.02 MT in the first quarter of last year to 30.16 MT in the first quarter of this year, marking a 20.5 per cent year-on-year growth.

The Government said that it remains firmly

committed to assisting all coal block allottees to overcome challenges and optimise their operations.

The primary goal of the coal ministry is to significantly augment coal production, ensuring a consistent and reliable supply to meet the nations' escalating energy needs.

"Through collaborative efforts and targeted support, the Ministry aims to enhance efficiency, sustainability, and output across the coal sector," it said.

## Steel Body Wants Merger of 3 cos with SAIL for Synergy

Our Bureau

**New Delhi:** The Steel Executives Federation of India (SEFI) has urged the steel ministry to merge state-run Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited (RINL), Ferro Scrap Nigam Limited (FSNL) and Nagarnar steel plant with the Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL), bringing together the expertise of each of these firms to form a mega public sector undertaking. The federation, which represents SAIL, RINL, MECON Ltd, NMDC Iron and Steel Plant and National Mineral Development Corporation, asked the government to consider "the merger of these national assets instead of privatisation".

In a submission to the ministry, it said that owing to the individual strengths of these firms, the merger is likely to help SAIL achieve its 35 million tonnes capacity expansion target by 2030. These firms are grappling with problems such as inadequate human re-

sources and raw materials, affecting their financial feasibility. Nagarnar steel plant, Bastar, with a capacity of 3 MT, has abundant availability of raw materials but only 200 officers and 1,000 employees to operate it.

To top it, MECON Ltd has been asked to operate the plant "but MECON has no prior experience in steel plant operations", the SEFI said. RINL, it said, has a total production capacity of 7 MT, but its capacity utilisation is around 60%, owing to a lack of iron ore and other raw materials. "RINL has human resources available with skilled and technical capabilities, but as it doesn't have its iron ore mines, shortage of raw materials and compulsion to buy raw materials at higher prices has hampered the company's ability to make profits," said the submission. The federation also questioned the rationale behind the FSNL disinvestment, as the entity has reserves of ₹170 crore, movable assets amounting to ₹100 crore and a work order of more than ₹1,000 crore.



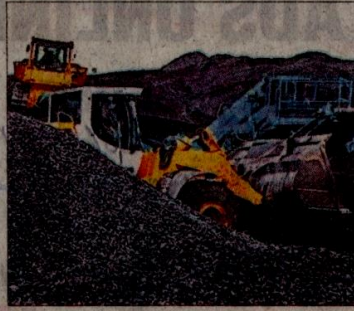
## Coal recorded 10.2% growth among 8 key infra sectors in May

**THE** coal sector has registered a growth of 10.2 per cent among all eight core industries of the economy in May, the Government said on Thursday.

The index of coal industry has reached 184.7 points during May as compared to 167.6 points during the same month last year.

"The coal sector has demonstrated highest growth of 10.2 per cent (provisional), following the electricity industry among the eight core industries for the month of May, 2024 as per the Index of Eight Core Industries (ICI) (Base Year 2011-12) released by Ministry of Commerce & Industries," the coal ministry said in a statement.

The driving force behind growth can be attributed to a considerable rise in coal production during May. This increase in production underscores the sector's capacity to meet



growing demand of energy and manufacturing industries.

The exceptional expansion of the coal sector, coupled with its substantial role in propelling the overall growth of the eight core industries, stands as evidence of the coal ministry's persistent endeavours and proactive initiatives. These efforts align with the vision of self reliance

and contribute to the nation's progress towards self-sufficiency and energy security, it said.

The eight core industries, viz. Cement, coal, crude oil, electricity, fertilizers, natural gas, refinery products, and steel, contribute 40.27 per cent to the country's Index of Industrial Production (IIP).

The latest data released on June 28 showed the eight key infrastructure sectors' growth rose by 6.3 per cent in May.

The production of the eight sectors grew 6.7 per cent in April.

The production growth of coal, natural gas and electricity rose by 10.2 per cent, 7.5 per cent and 12.8 per cent, respectively, against 7.2 per cent, (-) 0.3 per cent and 0.8 per cent in May 2023, according to the data released by the commerce and industry ministry.

## Cement sector sees marginal growth of 2-3 pc in Q1FY25: ICRA

**THE** cement sector has witnessed a muted growth of 2-3 per cent in the first quarter of current fiscal on account of a slowdown in construction activity because of the Lok Sabha polls, according to a report from rating agency ICRA.

However, the overall volumes for the FY2024-25 are likely to expand by 7-8 per cent driven by a healthy demand from the infrastructure and housing sectors.

"Nevertheless, the Government's focus on infrastructure projects, sanction of additional houses under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), and the industrial capex is expected to meaningfully improve cement volume offtake in H2 FY2025," it said.

The report also projects further consolidation in the cement industry by the top players to increase their capacity. The sector has witnessed consolidation by leading players such as Aditya Birla group firm UltraTech Cement and Adani group firm Ambuja Cements.

Besides, the sector is also expected to continue its organic growth in the medium term as makers continue to invest

to expand capacity.

"While organic growth is expected to continue in the medium term, cement companies are also preferring the inorganic route to boost capacities rapidly," it said.

ICRA estimates that the market share of the top five cement companies witnessed a steep rise to 54 per cent as of March 2024 from 45 per cent as of March 2015.

Now it "projects it to further increase to 58-59 per cent by March 2026, resulting in consolidation in the cement industry", it said.

Moreover, the cement companies may also witness an improvement in

their operating profit by 1-3 per cent due to softened raw materials prices.

"While the cement prices are projected to largely sustain at previous-year levels, some softening of cost-side pressures – primarily power and fuel costs along with an increasing focus on green power, is likely to result in an improvement in OPBITDA/MT by 1-3 per cent YoY to Rs 975-1,000/MT," ICRA Corporate Ratings Vice President and Co-Group Head Anupama Reddy said.





# Cement volume growth may stay muted at 3% in Q1: ICRA

**Our Bureau**

Mumbai

Rating agency ICRA expects cement volume growth in the June quarter to remain muted at 2-3 per cent year-on-year due to a slowdown in construction activities because of the general elections.

However, it is expected to bounce back and rise by a healthy 7-8 per cent in FY25, driven by healthy demand from the infrastructure and housing sectors.

The government's focus on infrastructure projects, the sanction of additional houses under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana and industrial capex are expected to meaningfully improve cement volume offtake in the second half of this fiscal year.

Anupama Reddy, Vice-President, ICRA, said the operating income of companies analysed by ICRA is expected to increase 7-8 per cent YoY in FY25, primarily driven by volume growth.

## GREEN POWER

While cement prices are projected to largely sustain at previous-year levels, some softening of cost-side pressures – primarily power and fuel costs along with an increasing focus on green

power is likely to result in an about 3 per cent increase in OPBITDA to ₹975-1,000 per tonne.

The green power to account for 40-42 per cent of the total power mix by the end of this fiscal compared to about 35 per cent as of FY23. The major cement players in the country aim to reduce their emissions by 15-17 per cent over the next 8-10 years by increasing the share of blended cement, which uses less clinker and consequently less fuel, boosting the share of green power consumption through a mix of solar, wind and waste heat recovery system (WHRS) capacities.

Of the overall capacity addition of 63-70 million tonnes by FY26, about 33-35 mt will be added in this fiscal. The eastern and southern regions are forecast to lead the expansion.

The capacity utilisation is expected to rise to 71 per cent in FY25 from 70 per cent in FY24, backed by higher cement volumes.

However, the utilisation remains moderate on an expanded base.

The market share of the top five cement companies witnessed a steep rise to 59 per cent as of March 2026 from 45 per cent as of March 2015.

## COMMODITY CALL.

### Buy zinc and revise the stop-loss to ₹258

**Akhil Nallamuthu**  
bl. research bureau



Zinc futures (July contract) on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX) stopped the downswing a month ago on the back of support at ₹250. After moving sideways for some time, the contract started to appreciate.

On Wednesday, it closed at ₹272.80. Given the current momentum, there is a good chance for zinc futures to extend the rally, probably to ₹300 in the near-term.

But in case it makes a U-turn and falls, it can find its first support between ₹260 and ₹263. A clear breach of ₹260 can open the door for further downside to ₹250, an important base.

If zinc futures break below ₹250, the near-term outlook can turn bearish. In such a case, the contract can moderate to ₹230, a support.

#### TRADE STRATEGY

We suggested buying zinc futures (July series) at ₹265 last week. Retain the trade but revise the stop-loss up to ₹258 from earlier recommended ₹248.

When the contract surpasses ₹275, raise the stop-loss to ₹268. Tighten the stop-loss further to ₹278 when the price hits ₹285. Book profits at ₹295.

THE HITAVADA(CITYLINE) DATE:6/7/2024 P.NO6

## Govt infra push steers steel demand to 221-275 mn tonnes by FY34: Report

**WITH** a sustained momentum of investment across different sectors, overall steel demand in India is projected to grow at a CAGR of 5 per cent to 7.3 per cent over the next decade leading to a steel demand of 221-275 million tonnes by FY 34 (under different scenarios), according to a report by Deloitte released on Friday.

The report, released at ISA Steel InfraBuild Summit here, also said Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu have established themselves as leaders in steel consumption, leading to 41 per cent of the total consumption in FY23.

"Government spending on infrastructure projects will drive the initial growth phase in the next decade. The development of 11 industrial corri-

dors comprising 32 projects, to be developed in four phases under the PM GatiShakti National Master Plan, will be a key driver for steel consumption," the report explained.

From FY14 to FY24, India's finished steel consumption posted a CAGR of 5.67 per cent. In FY24, domestic finished steel consumption reached 136 million tonnes, marking more than 14 per cent year-on-year growth driven by sustained momentum across developmental projects and increased government spending in various end-use industries.

The steel industry plays a crucial role in Telangana's economic landscape as during the last fiscal, the state's steel consumption grew by 15.75 per cent year-on-year from 4.730

million tonnes in FY22 to 5.475 million tons in FY23, outpacing the national average, the report said.

"Telangana's steel consumption in FY23 was 5.48 MT for a population of 3.5 crore which translates to a per capita steel consumption of 156.43 kg, significantly higher than the national per capita steel consumption of 93.4 kg. This not only underscores the state's robust industrial activity but also positions Telangana as a key driver of future economic growth," it said.

The rising growth of electric vehicles in Tamil Nadu will lead to an increased demand for electrical steel, while the growth of food processing industries will drive the demand for stainless steel, the report further said.



## Over 100 representatives participate in pre-bid meet for coal mine auction

**MORE** than 100 representatives from the industry participated in a pre-bid meeting for the tenth round of commercial coal mine auctions, the government said on Friday.

The Government has put on sale 67 coal blocks in the 10th round of auction that was launched last month.

"Ministry of Coal conducted the pre-bid meeting for 10th round of commercial coal mine auctions under chairmanship of Additional Secretary & Nominated Authority M Nagaraju, which was launched on June 21, 2024 offering 67 coal mines," an official statement



said. A detailed presentation on the auction process was made by the transaction advisor, SBI Capital Markets Ltd, while another was given by the technical advisor, CMPDIL, about the mines being offered under this tranche on a revenue-sharing basis. The bid due date of this tranche of auction is August 27.

Commercial coal block auction was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in June 2020. Since then, in the last nine rounds, the Ministry of Coal has successfully auctioned 107 coal blocks with 256 MT peak-rated capacity. So far, 11 commercial coal blocks have been operationalised.

BUSINESS LINE DATE:6/7/2024 P.NO1

## Diamond exports lose sheen as lab-grown stones sparkle

**Suresh P. Iyengar**  
Mumbai

Diamond export is set to plunge this fiscal year on weak demand and intense competition from cheap lab-grown diamond (LGD).

Cut and polished diamond exports declined 15 per cent to \$1.47 billion (\$1.72 billion) in the June quarter largely due to geopolitical tensions, per the Gem and Jewellery Export Promotion Council of India data. Polished lab-grown diamond exports declined 14 per cent in May to \$120 million (\$139 million).

Ajay Kedia, Director, Kedia Commodities, said the drop in the June quarter follows a substantial 27 per cent decline in 2023-24.

The slowdown in Chinese economic recovery and a change in consumer preference have dented demand. China accounts for about a

third of India's cut and polished diamond exports and primarily buys through Hong Kong.

India is the world's largest centre for cutting and polishing diamonds, processing nine out of ten stones, which underscores the deep impact of declining exports on the industry.

### PRICE CUTS

In May, the De Beers Group slashed LGD prices of its IJ colour (light tint of yellow or brown) lab-grown diamonds by 37 per cent to \$500 per carat from \$800. Earlier this year, it had cut mined diamond prices by 25 per cent.

The brand now has three linear price points of \$500 per carat stones, \$600 per carat for GH (near colour less) stones and \$900 per carat for the highest quality stones of DEF (colour less), reduced from \$1,500 per carat.

Sandrine Conseiller,



India's cut and polished diamond exports dropped 15% in the June quarter

CEO, De Beers Brands, had said the company was passing on its savings to customers as the wholesale price of lab-grown diamonds for jewellery continues to decline.

These lower prices will ensure that the brand remains competitive in the fast-evolving segment, while continuing to offer high quality lab-grown diamonds produced with 100 per cent renewable energy, he added.

Priced 90 per cent below natural diamonds, LGD now makes up for about 20 per cent of the total diamond market from near-zero in 2015.

Tanvi Shah, Director, CareEdge Advisory, said developed nations such as the US and Singapore along with China are investing heavily in lab-grown diamond production, which in turn is increasing competition at the international level.

However, he said India has advantages in terms of labour costs and increasing production capacity. India produces over three million LGD a year and accounts for 15 per cent of the global production. It is the second-largest producer of lab-grown diamonds after China.

LGD exports are expected to grow 7-9 per cent to touch \$1.5-1.53 billion in FY25, on account of increasing demand.



# SAIL to invest ₹6,500 crore towards capex in current fiscal

**Press Trust of India**  
Hyderabad

Steel Authority of India Ltd will be investing ₹6,500 crore towards capex during the current financial year as part of its ₹1 lakh crore investment plan over the next few years, SAIL CMD Amarendu Prakash said on Friday.

Speaking to mediapersons on the sidelines of a programme organised by the Indian Steel Association here, Prakash said the steel industry approached the government seeking measures to control the dumping of cheap metal by China into India and hoped that steps will be taken to address the menace.

"This year, the capex target is ₹6,500 crore. We also have regular capex on maintaining our facilities, as well as debottlenecking exercises. Most of



Amarendu Prakash, CMD, SAIL

the capex expansion (₹1-lakh crore by 2030) will start flowing from FY26. In the first phase from (the capacity) 20 million tonnes, we go to 35 million tons tonnes per annum by 2031. In the next phase, we will make it 50 million tonnes," the SAIL CMD told reporters.

## STEEL OUTLOOK

In the past, SAIL management had informed investors

about a planned ₹1-lakh crore investment across its plants for greenfield and brownfield expansions over the next 3-4 years, while aiming to maintain a debt-equity ratio of 1:1.

On the steel outlook, he said the world is growing at 0.5 per cent while India grew at 13 per cent last year and will continue to grow at 8 per cent CAGR in the next 10 years. On import of cheap steel from China, he said around the world countries have taken different steps such as increasing import tax and India is also expected to take calibrated steps.

"There are various ways in which trade measures are handled. So it is not just one single figure in percentage. We need to see the quality of steel which is coming to India, the prices at which the steel is coming to India," the official said.



# Glimpses of a rally

**BULLION CUES.** Traders may look to buy

**Akhil Nallamuthu**  
bl. research bureau

Precious metals had a glittering week. Gold appreciated 2.8 per cent, whereas silver rose 7.1 per cent to end the week at \$2,392 and \$31.2 per ounce respectively.

The positive trend was seen in the local market too. MCX gold futures (₹73,051 per 10 gram) rallied 2.1 per cent, whereas MCX silver futures (₹93,554 per kg) gained 4.5 per cent.

## MCX-GOLD (₹73,051)

Bulls pushed gold futures (August contract) higher last week. The price action shows that the contract has formed a good base at ₹71,000.

The odds for a fresh leg of rally have gone up significantly. Gold futures can move towards ₹78,000. The bullish inclination will be cancelled out only if the contract slips below the price band of ₹70,000-71,000.

**Trade strategy:** Buy gold August futures now at ₹73,050 and accumulate if the price dips to ₹71,700. Place initial stop-loss at ₹69,800. When the contract



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touches ₹75,000, raise the stop-loss to ₹73,800. Exit at ₹78,000.

## MCX-SILVER (₹93,554)

Silver futures (September series) bounced off the support at ₹90,000 last week. The chart shows the upswing possesses good momentum and we can expect more upside.

The contract can hit the psychological ₹1,00,000-mark. The bulls will face a threat only if the price drops below ₹88,300. In such a scenario, silver futures can decline to ₹82,000.

**Trade strategy:** Buy silver futures now at ₹93,550 and at ₹90,800. Keep a stop-loss at ₹88,000. When the price touches ₹97,500, alter the stop-loss to ₹95,000. Exit at ₹99,800.

# Singareni Collieries' Odisha coal mine to commence production soon

**Our Bureau**  
Hyderabad

Once stuck in bureaucratic delay, Naini Coal mine in Odisha, allocated to Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) on August 13, 2015, is likely to commence production in the next three months. The mine with an estimated

production capacity of 10 million tonnes annually is expected to produce five million tonnes on commencing production.

The mine was allocated to SCCL for captive utilisation of coal in its thermal power plant. The mine was facing abnormal delay in handing over forest land after receipt of stage-II forest clearance in October

2022, which had delayed the operationalisation of the mine.

After taking charge, the Union Minister of Coal and Mines, G Kishan Reddy, had held extensive discussions with the Odisha Government to resolve the long pending issue and operationalise the mine.

As a result, approval for

handing over of 643 hectares of forest land has been accorded to SCCL on July 4, according to an official release.

Although the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests had given forest clearances (in October 2022) to the Naini project, due to the non-preparation of a 'Wildlife Management Plan' by the Wildlife Institute, the Odisha Govern-

ment had not given full approval to the project.

## LONG-TERM PLANS

For 2024-25, five million tonnes of coal will be produced. In the next three years, the production will be increased in phases.

The target of 10 mtpa can be reached from 2026, SCCL officials said. This coal will be

transported to the nearby siding from where it will be supplied to Tangedco (Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation) and NTPC (National Thermal Power Corporation).

To facilitate this supply process, Singareni will apply to the Union Ministry of Coal for swapping of 'coal linkages', the official said. The total capacity

of the mine is 340.78 million tonnes, which means that will be possible to produce coal from here for the next 35 to years.

As part of the long-term plan, 750 to 1000 acres of land is being acquired at a distance of 40-50 km from the mine. There is a plan to set two thermal power plants with a capacity of 800 MW by 203

# Copper firms in a spot as Indonesia plans to stop concentrate exports

**Subramani Ra Mancombu**  
Chennai

Indonesia is likely to stop exporting copper concentrate from December this year to promote value-addition back home. This could create problems for Indian copper firms depending on these imports, Mayur Karmarkar, Managing Director, International Copper Association India (ICA India), has said.

Indonesia is one of the major sources of copper concentrates for India, which imports it duty-free due to the ASEAN Free Trade Agreement. "Indonesia is adding to its smelter capacity. The problem could aggravate a bit quickly. The government has to reduce duties on copper concentrates (from other sources) or allow imports at zero duty," he told *business-line* in an online interaction. India's demand for copper concentrate is likely to increase as the Adani Group's

**“**The government has to reduce duties on copper concentrates (from other sources) or allow imports at zero duty

**MAYUR KARMARKAR**  
MD, ICA India

Kutch Copper Plant would also require it. Allowing copper concentrate at a lower or zero duty would ensure a level playing field for domestic smelters and refiners, particularly when copper cathodes are being imported duty-free from Japan, he said. The government has understood the problem and is trying to work out a solution with African countries and Peru, he said.

**DOUBLE-DIGIT GROWTH**  
While the country is trying to achieve net zero emissions in



which copper plays a critical role, the inverted duty structure, where finished products are levied import duty lower than raw materials such as concentrates, is an issue that confronts the domestic industry. For example, copper tubes are coming from South-East Asia duty-free.

Indian smelters depend on concentrates as none of them own mines. "They have to buy the concentrate to make copper cathode," Karmarkar said.

During the 2023-24 fiscal, the copper sector witnessed double-digit growth, largely

driven by infrastructure. "Refined copper demand was largely met through imports. With demand growing, there is a constraint related to refined copper capacity. We hope this will be addressed to some extent by the Adani Group's copper plant," the ICA India managing director said.

The industry is faced with the quality control order but there is some breather now as it will be enforced only from December-end, he said.

This will also mean that by December-end, all importers will have to get certified for Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) quality and start supplying the material. "I am sure the Japanese cathode makers have started working in that direction and they will comply with the requirements soon," said Karmarkar.

On the other hand, the domestic industry is fully prepared with Hindalco and Vedanta being able to supply the cathodes. Currently, there is

no domestic production of inner groove tubes used in air conditioners but its production will likely begin in the next 2-3 months, he said.

With the Adani Group's copper plant going on stream, refined copper production will increase, he said.

Demand for copper will continue to grow at the same rate as last fiscal, while globally, clean energy transition is expected to drive demand. India is still depending on traditional drivers of copper demand, mainly infrastructure, the ICA India official said.

With many States implementing metro rail schemes, each metro coach will require 2.5 tonnes of copper. "Or each electrified railway route will require six tonnes per km of copper," he said.

The 5G technology is coming up in a big way and each 5G base station will require 70 kg of copper. The construction sector will likely see a demand of 30 gm per sq feet, Karmarkar said.



# Telangana slaps ₹3k cr fine on 170 mining cos for illegal extraction

Koride.Mahesh  
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**Hyderabad:** About 170 lease holders of mines and minerals in Telangana have been identified by the authorities for carrying out mining beyond their allocated jurisdiction and evading seigniorage to the state govt.

The govt slapped Rs 3,000 crore penalty, including Rs 389 crore seigniorage, on these 170 lease holders for extracting mines and minerals in violation of the mining rules. Apart from this, illegal mining was noticed in Nirmal and Kamareddy districts where some individuals were found allegedly doing mining without any lease or permission from the mines and geology department.

The state govt gets about Rs 5,500 crore annually through seigniorage. "If the leakages are plugged, the govt will get an additional Rs 2,000 crore to Rs 3,000 crore," a senior official of the mines and geology department said.

Confirming that the govt has cracked the whip on illegal mining quarries following huge loss of revenue to the exchequer, officials said demand notices and show-cause notices have been slapped on the lease holders to pay the seigniorage and also penalty — 5% to 10% of the seigniorage — within 15 days.

## MINERAL WEALTH

- Total mine lease holders | **2,681**
- Major lease holders | **122**
- Leased area | **69,368 hectares**
- Minor lease holders | **2,559**
- Leased area | **10,415 hectares**
- Available minerals in the state | Manganese, garnet, stowing sand, iron ore, limestone, barytes, dolomite, mica, marble, granite, quartz, feldspar, road metal, and laterite



The mines and geology department undertook a survey recently through electronic total station method to identify the geographical areas and boundaries of the leased mining areas. The survey would help in assessing the metric tonnes and cubic metres of mines and minerals excavated in a particular area, which will be checked with the seigniorage paid to the govt by the lease holders, a mines official said.

Officials said this is just the beginning as identification of errant lease holders in all the districts will be done soon.

Full report on [www.toi.in](http://www.toi.in)

## COMMODITY CALL.

Lead: Go short, stop-loss at ₹192.50

Akhil Nallamuthu  
bl. research bureau



Lead futures on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX) declined sharply between May 29 and June 14. But then, the downtrend lost momentum and the contract started to trace a sideways trend.

In the last three weeks, the July expiry lead futures have oscillated between ₹187 and ₹191. The chart shows the contract faces strong rejection at the ₹191 resistance, where the 50-day moving average coincides. This indicates short interest at this price level.

## OUTLOOK

Hence, at the moment, the likelihood of a fall is high. We expect lead futures to resume the downtrend from here, slip below the support at ₹187 and decline to ₹180 in the forthcoming weeks. However, if the contract surpasses the barrier at ₹191, it can appreciate to ₹196. Nevertheless, a rally beyond ₹196 is unlikely, for it is a significant barrier.

## STRATEGY

Go short on lead futures (July series) at the current market price of ₹190. Place stop-loss at ₹192.50. When the contract touches ₹187, modify the stop-loss to ₹190. Tighten the stop-loss further to ₹187 when the price hits ₹183. Liquidate the shorts at ₹180.



# Cement Cos' Earnings Likely to Stay Muted in June Qtr

Extreme heatwaves, higher competition, construction slowdown due to polls impacted producers in a traditionally lean season

Nikita Periwal

**Mumbai:** Earnings of Indian cement producers could be muted in the June quarter, traditionally a dry period coinciding with building activity, with competition denting the pricing power of incumbents in several pockets of the highly regionalised industry. Demand for the primary building material being relatively lower has further added to the pricing woes, as makers have not been able to sustain any hikes taken during the quarter.

An extreme heatwave in several re-

gions, the unavailability of labour, and slower construction activity amid the General Elections for nearly six weeks weighed on demand. Analysts expect volumes in the quarter to have grown in mid-single digits year-on-year, as compared to a double-digit growth in the previous quarter.

The volume growth for cement companies has moderated after eight consecutive quarters of robust growth, while prices have been trending lower for several months now and are at their lowest level in nearly three years.

"Overall, we expect revenue to drop ~3% YoY, worst performance since



COVID-19 and first lockdown, and ~11% QoQ in Q1FY25E," Elara Securities said in a pre-earnings note. Other analysts see the topline 1-4% lower as compared to the previous year.

The impact of this tepid demand and a correction in prices, though, will be offset by lower fuel prices and cost optimization efforts of companies. As a result, even with lower revenues, companies are seen clocking in an improvement in their profitability, with operating margins for the space seen improving by an average of up to 150 basis points on year.

Shree Cement, UltraTech Cement, JK Cement and JK Lakshmi Cement are seen faring the best in terms of an improvement in profitability.

## OUTLOOK

While the September quarter is seasonally weak for cement makers due to lower demand because of monso-

on rains, some pent-up demand from the previous quarter could boost earnings in the current quarter, analysts said.

The focus, though, will remain on commentary from companies for pricing, as a fierce fight for market share between the country's two largest producers and capacity addition from several players in the industry has kept prices subdued.

"Earnings for FY25/26E are at risk due to volatility in cement prices amid aggressive capacity expansion in the industry. We anticipate further consolidation in the space (mostly in the southern region due to its fragmented nature)," Nuvama Institutional Equities said.

## Earnings Preview

# Vedanta Eyes India's \$1-T Opportunity from Metals, Minerals: Anil Agarwal

**UNTAPPED POTENTIAL** With a few policy reforms, supply situation can become as robust as demand: Chairman

Our Bureau

**Mumbai:** The minerals and metals sector in India is a \$1-trillion (about ₹83 lakh crore) opportunity and Vedanta is uniquely positioned to benefit from this, given its scale and presence in the critical minerals space, Vedanta chairman Anil Agarwal has said.

"As the world looks to India as the plus one to China (and) India looks to become self-reliant, the potential is infinite," Agarwal told shareholders of the natural resources conglomerate at its annual general meeting on Wednesday. "Vedanta is uniquely positioned in the India story," he said.

Vedanta is the country's largest producer of crude oil in the private sector, aluminium, zinc and silver. The company is also one of the largest producers of power in the country. It also has a presence in steel and iron ore.

India has only explored about one-third of its geological potential, and with a few policy reforms, the supply situation in India can become as robust as demand, Agarwal said.

About half of the country's imports, worth \$350 billion, are minerals and metals, including oil and gas, he said.

Agarwal also highlighted how Vedanta is "future ready" given that about 70% of its topline is derived from critical minerals of the future.



TOI PHOTO

"That is the highest proportion out of any of our peer group," he said.

Its current projects include the expansion of its alumina refinery in Lanjigarh by 1.5 million tonne, operationalising the Bicholim iron ore mine in Goa, and production at its Jaya oilfield in Gujarat.

"As of now, we have over 50 projects under execution with high potential for increasing volume, business integration, and enhancing the range of value-added products across businesses," Agarwal said. The company will be investing about \$8 billion in these growth projects, he said.

Agarwal also reiterated that Vedanta is going ahead with its move to demerge the company into six verticals—a plan it had announced in 2023. "Each entity will have more independence in regard to capital allocation and their growth strategies," he said. The move is likely to broaden the investor base for Vedanta.



# जीएसआयचे विमान ४ वर्षांपासून उभेच!

## भूवैज्ञानिक सर्वेक्षणासाठी विमानाचा वापर केला जातो

वसीम कुरेशी

लोकमत न्यूज नेटवर्क  
नागपूर : जिऑलॉजिकल सर्व्हे ऑफ इंडिया (जीएसआय) चे विमान द्विन ऑटर गेल्या चार वर्षांपासून नागपुरात उभे आहे. आश्चर्याची गोष्ट म्हणजे ते उडण्यास सज्ज आहे परंतु उडवले जात नाही. या विमानात सर्वेक्षणासाठी असलेले उपकरण नादुरुस्त असल्याने त्याचे भूवैज्ञानिक सर्वेक्षणासाठी उड्डाण बंद आहे.

कॅनडाची कंपनी डी हॅविलॅंड कॅनडा द्विन ऑटरचे हे विमान आहे. त्याची प्रवासी क्षमता १५ सीटर आहे. जीएसआय कामासाठी डिझाइन

केलेले हे विमान रिमोट सेन्सिंग एअरबोर्न सर्वेक्षणासाठी वापरले जाते. हे मॅग्नेटोमीटर आणि गुरुत्वाकर्षण स्पेक्ट्रोमीटरसह उच्च दर्जाच्या सेन्सरसह सुसज्ज आहे. याद्वारे दुर्गम भागातही खनिजांच्या सर्वेक्षणाचे काम विभागासाठी सोपे होते. सूत्रांनी दिलेल्या माहितीनुसार, हे विमान नोव्हेंबर २०२२ मध्ये नागपुरात उतरले होते, परंतु त्यानंतर टेक ऑफ होऊ शकले नाही. विमानतळाला लागून असलेल्या एमआरओमध्ये ते पार्क केले आहे. दोन-तीन महिने सर्वेक्षणाचे काम केल्यानंतर हे विमान नागपुरातच उभे ठेवण्यात आल्याचे सांगण्यात आले.

### उपकरण उपलब्ध झाले नाही

- विमान वाहतूक क्षेत्रातील सूत्रांनी दिलेल्या माहितीनुसार, विमानाच्या पुढील भागावर बसवण्यात आलेले उपकरण विमान बनवणाऱ्या कॅनडाच्या कंपनीकडून अद्याप उपलब्ध झालेले नाही.
- याबाबत नागपूर येथील जीएसआयचे पीआरओ यांच्याशी संपर्क साधण्याचा प्रयत्न केला मात्र तो होऊ शकला नाही.



### सी प्लेनचे स्वप्न

- सूत्रांच्या माहितीनुसार कॅनडा आणि ऑस्ट्रेलियातील पर्यटनासाठी याचा वापर केला जातो. भारतातील गुजरातमधील स्टॅच्यू ऑफ युनिटीसाठीही ते वापरले गेले. पर्यटनासाठी ते कांची आणि गोव्यातही उड्डाण करत आहे. सुमारे ७ वर्षांपूर्वी नागपुरातही सी प्लेनचे स्वप्न पाहिले होते.
- विदर्भातील नागपूर, चंद्रपूर आणि पंच येथे या विमानाचे उड्डाण करण्यासाठी बरेच प्रयत्न केले गेले, परंतु हवामानामुळे ते शक्य झाले नाही. पाण्यातील द्विन ऑटरचे पाण्यातील लँडिंग आणि टेक ऑफ पाहून विदर्भातही सी प्लेनचे स्वप्न पाहिले होते.

# Vedanta sees \$1-t opportunity in minerals, metals, energy

**GROWTH DRIVERS.** Demand in these sectors will triple, says Anil Agarwal

Our Bureau  
Mumbai

Anil Agarwal, Vedanta Group Chairman, sees import of minerals, metals and energy tripling from the current \$350 billion as the economy grows at a faster rate.

The investment opportunity in these sectors could potentially become \$1 trillion.

Addressing shareholders at the Vedanta annual general meeting, he said 50 per cent of the country's imports worth over \$350 billion are minerals and metals, including oil and gas.

This will double and triple as the economy grows at a fast rate and these sectors are a \$1-trillion opportunity, he said.

About 70 per cent of Vedanta's topline comes from the



We are going ahead with the demerger of our businesses, which will lead to the creation of six strong companies and unlock massive value

**ANIL AGARWAL**  
Chairman, Vedanta Group



critical minerals of the future and this is the highest proportion compared with the peer group, he said.

While public conversation often focuses on lithium, cobalt and nickel, in reality, copper, aluminium, zinc and silver are all equally fundamental to the sunrise sectors of the new

economy, he added.

### DEMERGER PLANS ON

The company is in the process of splitting its business in six distinct entities and listing on the exchange separately.

"We are going ahead with the demerger of our businesses, which will lead to the

creation of six strong companies and unlock massive value," he said. Each demerged entity will chart their own course but follow Vedanta's core values, said Agarwal

### EXPANSION PLANS

Vedanta has thus far invested over \$35 billion in India and contributes about 1.4 per cent of India's GDP, and remains committed to growth.

On the expansion plans, he said the group will focus on the new 1.5-mtpa alumina refinery in Lanjigarh, operationalise the Bicholim mine in Goa, and commence production at Jaya oilfield in Gujarat this year.

The acquisition of Athena and Meenakshi Power Plants last fiscal will double merchant power capacity to 5 GW, he said.



## COMMODITY CALL.

### Aluminium futures: Stay off for now

Akhil Nallamuthu  
bl. research bureau



Aluminium futures on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX) have ruled sideways for nearly a month. The July expiry has been fluctuating between ₹228 and ₹235.

Prior to the contract entering the horizontal trend, it witnessed a decline. Yet, now that aluminium futures are range-bound, the downtrend has lost its momentum. Moreover, there is an important support at ₹225 apart from ₹228.

However, this does not mean a bullish reversal as there is a resistance at ₹235. So, effectively, the next leg of trend in aluminium futures depends on which of ₹225 and ₹235 is breached first.

If the contract breaks out of ₹235, the outlook will turn positive and consequently, it can rally to ₹250.

But if aluminium futures slip below ₹225, it will open the door for a decline to ₹210, which can even extend to ₹200.

#### TRADE STRATEGY

Stay on the sidelines. Initiate fresh trade along the direction of the break of the ₹225-235

LOKMAT DATE:12/7/2024 P.NO1

# कोळसा स्वच्छतेच्या नावावर कोट्यवधीचा गोलमाल

## टंकलेखनात चुका करून कोल वॉशरीजचे खिसे गरम

सुपर एक्सक्लुझिव्ह

कमल शर्मा

लोकमत न्यूज नेटवर्क

नागपूर : काही व्हाइट कॉलर लोकांनी कोळसा (कोल) वॉशरीच्या माध्यमातून काळा पैसा कमावण्याचा असा मार्ग शोधला, जो जाणून तुम्हाला धक्का बसेल. विजेचे संकट येते तेव्हा आपण वीज कंपन्यांना शिब्याशाप करतो. मात्र, हा विषय साधा नाही. कोल वॉशरीचा मोठा खेळ सुरू आहे आणि या भ्रष्टाचारात ऊर्जा विभागाचे अधिकारीच नाहीत, तर व्यापारी अन् राजकारणी अशी संपूर्ण यंत्रणाच गुंतलेली आहे. करदात्यांच्या पैशाची खुलेआम लूट केली जात आहे.

हे सर्व कसे घडते आहे, ते धक्कादायक आहे. यासाठी कोल वॉशरीजचा विषय समजून घ्यावा लागेल. तब्बल १० वर्षांनंतर पुन्हा सुरू करण्यात आलेली कोल वॉशरी भ्रष्टाचाराच्या अड्ड्यात रूपांतरित झाली आहे. त्यांना लाभ

देण्यासाठी सरकारी यंत्रणाही तत्पर आहे. आश्चर्य म्हणजे यासाठी महाजेनकोने टायपिंग मिस्टेकचे कारण देत नियमच बदलले आहेत. त्यामुळे कोल वॉशरीजवर ठोठावलेला कोट्यवधी रुपयांचा दंड कमी होईल. त्यामुळे औष्णिक वीज केंद्रांना निकृष्ट दर्जाचा कोळसा उपलब्ध करून देण्याचा मार्ग मोकळा होणार आहे.

महाराष्ट्रातील कोल वॉशरीजवर यापूर्वीही असे आरोप झाले होते, ज्यामुळे २०११ साली त्यांना बंद करण्यात आले होते. मात्र, २०१९ मध्ये कोणतीही मागणी नसताना ते पुन्हा सुरू करण्याचा निर्णय घेण्यात आला. यावेळी कोल वॉशरीजची जबाबदारी महाजेनकोच्या नियंत्रणात न ठेवण्याचा बदल करण्यात आला. २०१९ मध्ये महाराष्ट्र राज्य खनिकर्म महामंडळ (एमएसएमसी) ही नोडल एजन्सी बनवून फेरनिविदा प्रक्रिया सुरू करण्यात आली. २०२१ मध्ये प्रत्यक्ष कामाला सुरुवात झाली.

(पान ४ वर)

देशभरात केवळ एआरसी कार्यरत असल्याने कोळशात राखेचे प्रमाण ३१ टक्क्यांपेक्षा जास्त नसावे या सूत्राची अंमलबजावणी केली असल्याचा युक्तिवाद महाजेनकोने केला आहे. या सूत्रानुसार दंड ३ टक्क्यांनी कमी होणार असल्याचा दावा महाजेनकोचे अधिकारी करीत आहेत. अशा परिस्थितीत कोल वॉशरीजवरील दंड कमी होणारच आहे, शिवाय कोळशाच्या गुणवत्तेत घोक करण्याचीही संधी त्यांना मिळण्याची शक्यता आहे.



भाग १

‘एडीबी’च्या सूत्रानुसार, कोल वॉशरीजला कोळशातून ओलावा आणि राख काढून औष्णिक वीज केंद्राला द्यावी लागते. कोळशात राखेचे प्रमाण ३१ टक्क्यांपेक्षा जास्त नसावे. मात्र, ‘एआरसी’मध्ये अशी कोणतीही अट नाही.

### दंडाची प्रक्रिया इतकी किचकट का?

■ एमएसएमसीने कोल वॉशरीज-मधून येणाऱ्या कोळशाची तपासणी करण्यासाठी एजन्सीही नेमली आहे. मानकांचे पालन केले नाही तर महाजेनको वॉशरीजला दंड करते.

■ आता फॉर्म्युला बदलल्यानंतर दंड कमी होणार असला तरी, तो किती कमी होईल, हे अद्याप स्पष्ट झालेले नाही.

■ महाजेनकोच्या म्हणण्यानुसार दंड ठरविण्याची प्रक्रिया खूप किचकट असते, ज्यामुळे यासाठी खूप वेळ लागेल. त्यानंतरच कोल वॉशरीजला त्यांचे थकीत बिल मिळेल.



# Iron ore exports rise in Q1 despite falling Chinese demand

**Abhishek Law**  
New Delhi

The country's iron ore exports saw a near 5 per cent y-o-y increase for the April-June period (Q1FY25) to 10.25 million tonnes (mt) despite reduced demand from China, the key buyer. Indian exporters tapped into other smaller markets like Indonesia and Malaysia, trade data show.

China, despite a demand slowdown in steel-consuming sectors like real estate, accounted for 80 per cent of the deliveries of iron ore, the key steel-making raw material, or around 8.3 mt of the total shipments for the period under review.

Shipments to the neighbouring nation, however, fell 10 per cent y-o-y from 9.3 mt in the year-ago period, data collated by consultancy firm BigMint (formerly SteelMint) show.

Over the last six years, China has been the highest buyer of Indian iron ore with its share hovering around 70 per cent in Q1FY20, before peaking over 90 per cent during the Covid years (Q1FY21 and Q1FY22). Post-Covid too, the share of Chinese buying hovered around 80 per cent.

## DEMAND OUTLOOK

"In Q1, demand from China has been volatile. After a pick-up in May over April, shipments fell again in June," a mar-

## Iron ore exports

Unload country	April 2024	May 2024	June 2024	Total
China	2.11	3.75	2.45	8.32
Malaysia	0.07	0.11	0.12	0.29
Indonesia	0.06	0.12	0.05	0.17
UAE	0.15	0.06	1.02	1.22
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.44</b>	<b>4.17</b>	<b>3.64</b>	<b>10.25</b>

Source: BigMint

Figures including pellet/concentrates

ket participant told *business-line*. Data from BigMint show that in April, India exported (to China) 2.11 mt of iron ore; in May, the figure increased to 3.75 mt but fell to 2.45 mt in June.

Market sources said iron ore exports are expected to remain volatile in the near term.

Chinese economic conditions continue to be a concern for iron ore's long-term demand prospects. The economy there is not growing as fast as it used to, and is becoming less steel-intensive.

The property sector is in the grip of a protracted crisis. The government is trying to cap

steel production at or below the previous year's level to reduce overcapacity and cut emissions.

BNP Paribas India, in its India Steel Weekly (for July 8) report, said China's National Development and Reform Commission, in a survey, suggested "further weakening of steel prices in July" and the policies, announced earlier, that favoured the real estate market are losing momentum and are failing to significantly boost demand.

On Tuesday, China's Dalian iron ore futures fell. The most traded iron-ore contracts stood around \$114.70 per tonne, down 0.5 per cent in day time trade.

# Copper likely to gain on US Fed rate cut, demand for critical applications

**BULLISH OUTLOOK.** Market eyes decisions at 4-day China Communist Party plenum from July 15

**Subramani Ra Mancombu**  
Chennai

After having dropped from their record high of \$11,105 a tonne in May, copper prices are likely to gain on the US Fed cutting interest rates in the third quarter of 2024. Demand for the red metal in critical applications such as electric vehicles (EVs), wind power, and solar energy will also aid the uptrend, say analysts.

"Copper prices have been on a steady upward trend since the start of the year, barring the month of June, with a historic high of \$11,105/tonne reached on May 20, 2024. A number of idiosyncratic issues worked to boost copper in H1 2024," said research agency BMI, a unit of Fitch Solutions.

## SUPPLY CONCERNS

Pessimism over the Chinese economy and a weak US dollar pulled copper down in June to \$9,515, said BMI. However, since then copper has been able to make headway to \$9,944 on July 5. On Friday, the three-month copper contract on the London Metal Exchange was quoted at \$9,837.50 on the



## Copper balance sheet

	2023	2024*	2025*
Production			
• mine	22,397	22,807	24,016
• refined	27,535	28,020	28,861
Consumption	27,980	28,564	29,315
Closing stocks	666	741	287

Source - Office of the Chief Economist, Australia \*Forecast

London Metal Exchange. The Australian Office of the Chief Economist (AOCE) said copper prices have continued to trend higher in recent months, averaging about \$9,700 a tonne in the June quarter — up 14 per cent since the start of the year. "The surge in prices reflects strong growth in global demand, which is expected to largely persist over H2 2024," it said.

The World Bank, in its

Commodity Outlook, said copper prices have reached a two-year peak in the first quarter, reflecting supply concerns and signs of firmer global industrial production.

According to ING Think, the financial and economic analysis wing of Dutch multinational financial services firm ING, the latest commitment of traders report shows that investors boosted net bullish positions for copper by 9,156 lots for a

second consecutive week to 85,601 lots for the week ending July 5, the highest net long since May 31, 2024.

A major reason for copper regaining and analysts expecting prices to rebound is the four-day plenum of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), scheduled to be held from July 15.

## FOCUS ON REFORMS

BMI said prices regained some lost ground in July on the back of hopes of stimulus announcements during the third plenum of China, as well as increasing market participants expecting a rate cut by the US Fed sooner rather than later in light of fresh economic data supporting a cut.

Saish Sandeep Sawant Dessai, Analyst at Angel One, said the market is keenly awaiting the CCP's third plenum, which is expected to focus on economic policy and reforms. It is also looking out for upcoming data on China's yuan loans and total social financing, which could provide insights into future demand.

The World Bank said, "...the steady increase in the demand for copper, driven by energy transition technolo-

gies — particularly electricity grid infrastructure, EVs and solar panels — is set to continue," it said.

BMI said expectations of a rate cut by the US Fed, which led to a weakening of the US dollar compared to the highs of 2022 and 2023, worked to boost demand for copper priced in the greenback. "Second, high-frequency indicators of global growth, especially US growth, continued to surprise to the upside, building positive sentiment towards copper demand. Third, Chinese manufacturing PMI figures showed a mild recovery in March and April, boosting speculative holdings. Fourth, major Chinese copper smelters announced production cuts in March," it said.

## PRICE FORECAST

The AOCE said LME copper prices are forecast to average about \$9,500 a tonne in 2024 (up from \$8,700 in 2023), rising to \$9,970 in 2026.

BMI said, "We are raising our 2024 copper price forecast from \$9,200/tonne to \$9,600, as prices continue to be led by investor sentiment that is tilted towards a US Fed rate cut in Q3 2024."



# Coal India plans to ease e-auction norms for better participation

Mithun Dasgupta  
Kolkata

To encourage better participation from coal consumers, state-run miner Coal India (CIL) is planning to ease norms in e-auctions, like ramping up the quantities offered under the auction hammer and lowering the earnest money deposit (EMD) for bidders.

CIL, the world's largest coal producer, has circulated a concept note to e-auction bidders to seek their feedback as the miner has conceptualised new modalities for single window mode agnostic e-auction, according to a stock exchange filing by the company on Friday.

For the coal behemoth, the

sale of coal is broadly categorised as sale through fuel supply agreements (FSAs) and e-auctions. Of its annual coal production, presently, the miner can offer up to 20 per cent under e-auction in a year after meeting the FSA commitment.

CIL said it has asked all its subsidiary companies, except Northern Coalfields, to spike offer quantities under e-auction to 40 per cent of their respective total production for the second and third quarters of the current financial year.

Revamping its auction methodology under its electronic window, CIL has lowered EMD to ₹150 per tonne from ₹500 per tonne of coal to ease the e-auction norms.

The company feels this would encourage increased participation from e-auction bidders as blocked capital of consumers will be eased. "With more cash availability at their disposal, consumers could switch over to more auctions with the same capital," CIL said.

## OTHER CHANGES

Some of the other changes contemplated are a three-hour auction window replacing the earlier long-drawn process, allowing consumers to change their mode of transport from rail to road, post bidding, without additional premium, and allowing a single bidder to place a maximum of four bids against each basket which earlier was restricted to one

bid. CIL circulated the concept note to e-auction bidders on Thursday. It has asked all the bidders to go through the draft modalities and provide feedback within 15 days.

Generally, coal is supplied to consumers at notified prices. Reserve price in e-auction means the price that is arrived at, after adding on a certain percentage to the notified price of coal. Now, subsidiaries have been given flexibility to fix their reserve prices, taking into account different factors like local demand-supply scenario from different sources, optimise various modes of loading, particularly road mode available with the coal company, coal stock at mine and level of booking in earlier e-auction.

During the fourth quarter last fiscal, the total supply of coal through the e-auction route was 22.57 million tonnes and the average realisation per tonne stood at ₹2,545.01. During the period, the total supply of coal through the FSA was 175.94 million tonnes and the average realisation per tonne from the FSA sales was ₹1,535.54.

## वाँशरीजकडून ४५०० कोटींच्या थकबाकीदारांचे पुनर्वसन !

### मर्जीतील लोकांना सेट करण्याचा डाव

★ सुपर एक्सप्रेस

कमल शर्मा

लोकमत न्यूज नेटवर्क

नागपूर : दहा वर्षांनंतर सुरू झालेल्या कोल वाँशरीजबाबत उलटसुलट चर्चा सुरू आहेत. वीज केंद्रांना निकृष्ट दर्जाचा कोळसा पुरवठा आणि महाजेनको आणि राज्य खनिकर्म महामंडळ (एमएसएमसी) यांनी बाळगलेले मौन लक्षात घेता आपसात संगनमत असल्याचे दिसते. या घडामोडीत ४५०० कोटींच्या थकबाकीदारांचे पुनर्वसन करण्यासाठी कोल वाँशरीचा सगळा गोलमाल सुरू असल्याची विश्वसनीय माहिती आहे.

कोल वाँशरीबाबत सततच्या तक्रारी आणि आरोपांची लांबलचक मालिका पाहता राज्य सरकारने २०११ मध्ये त्या कायमस्वरूपी बंद केल्या. तथापि, २०११ मध्ये अचानक कोळसा धुण्याचे काम पुन्हा सुरू करण्याचे नियोजन करण्यात आले. यावेळी महाजेनकोऐवजी राज्य खनिकर्म महामंडळाला (एमएसएमसी) नोडल एजन्सी बनवून संपूर्ण जबाबदारी देण्यात आली. यातून आपल्या

कोल वाँशरीचा गोलमाल



भाग २

मर्जीतील लोकांना सेट करण्याचा खेळ सुरू झाला. एमएसएमसीने यासाठी दोन भागांत निविदा प्रक्रिया सुरू केली. ८० टक्के मोठ्या आणि २० टक्के छोटा कंत्राटदारांना काम देण्यात आले. ८० टक्क्यांअंतर्गत काम हिंदू महाभिनरल (बिलासपूर) आणि एसीबी इंडिया (नोएडा) यांना देण्यात आले. तर महावीर आणि रुक्माई यांना २० टक्क्यांखाली काम मिळाले आहे. हिंदू महाभिनरलला एकूण चार कोळसा वाँशरीज मिळाल्या.

दरम्यान, एका बड्या नेत्याने हिंदूचे संचालक राजीव आणि संजीव अग्रवाल यांना नागपुरात बोलावून एका खास व्यक्तीची भेट घडवून आणली. या बैठकीत चंद्रपूरच्या घुघुस आणि यवतमाळच्या वणी येथील कोल वाँशरीजचे काम हे विशेष गृहस्थ सांभाळतील, असे पडद्याआड ठरले.

नागपुरातील अनेकांनी पैसा गुंतवला

नेत्यांच्या खास मर्जीतील व्यक्ती चालवत असलेल्या चार कोल वाँशरीजच्या दैनंदिन खर्चासाठी नागपूर शहरातील अनेक फायनान्सर्स पुढे आले आहेत. हा फायनान्सर ७ टक्के व्याजाने पैसे पुरवत आहे. कोल वाँशरीला गेल्या आठ महिन्यांपासून पेमेंट न झाल्याने फायनान्सरची धडधड वाढली आहे.

१० वर्षांपूर्वी पायाभूत

सुविधांचे नूतनीकरण करून कोळसा धुण्याचे काम सुरू झाले. त्या विशेष गृहस्थाला आधीच डिफॉल्टर घोषित केल्यामुळे हिंदूच्या नावाने सर्व काम चालू आहे. कोळसा वाहतुकीची मलाई विशेष व्यक्तीला मिळत असल्याची चर्चा आहे. यासाठी काही शेल कंपन्यासुद्धा तयार करण्यात आलेल्या आहेत.



# किराणा दुकानदार झाले 'कोल वॉशरी'चे संचालक माजी मंत्र्याचे आहेत खासमखास



सुपर

एक्सप्लुझिव्ह

कोल 'वॉशरी'चा गोलमाल

कमल शर्मा

लोकमत न्यूज नेटवर्क

नागपूर : कोल वॉशरीजचा खेळ अगदी विचित्र आहे. या खेळात एकीकडे एका मोठ्या नेत्याच्या खास व्यक्तीचे पुनर्वसन झाले, तर दुसरीकडे एका माजी मंत्र्याच्या निकटवर्तीयाने किराणा दुकान ते कोल वॉशरीजपर्यंतचा प्रवास पूर्ण केला आहे.

किराणा दुकान चालवणारे ते गृहस्थ म्हणजे कोल वॉशरीजचे २० टक्के काम करणाऱ्या रुक्माई या कंपनीचे संचालक संजय हरदवानी होत. महाविकास आघाडीचे सरकार येण्यापूर्वी ते शहरात किराणा दुकान चालवित होते. यानंतर त्यांनी कमाल चौकात बालाजी बॅंग नावाचे दुकान उघडले. येथून त्यांची मंत्रिमहोदयांशी जवळीक निर्माण झाली. त्यांची बरीचशी कामेही तो हाताळू लागला. त्यानंतर त्यांनी कोळशाच्या क्षेत्रात उडी घेतली. त्यांचा फायदा व्हावा यासाठी एमएसएमसीने ८० आणि २० टक्के कामासाठी दोन निविदा काढल्या. काही दिवसांनीच हरदवानी आणि त्यांच्या सहकाऱ्यांची कंपनी



भाग ३

एमएसएमसीलाही फायदा

- महाराष्ट्र राज्य खनिकर्म महामंडळालाही (एमएसएमसी) कोल वॉशरीचे फायदे मिळत आहेत. कोल वॉशरीच्या माध्यमातून केलेल्या धुलाईचे पेमेंट महाजैनको एमएसएमसी देते.
- ते ५ रुपये प्रतिटन सेवा शुल्क कापून कोल वॉशरीला पेमेंट करते. यापूर्वी हे काम महाजैनकोच्या माध्यमातूनच केले जात होते. या पार्श्वभूमीवर एमएसएमसी बसल्याजागी कमाई करीत आहे.

रुक्माईला काम मिळाले. काळ बदलला.

मंत्रिमहोदयांची खुर्ची गेली, पण संजय हरदवानी हे नव्या सरकारमध्येही आपल्या जागी मात्र कायम आहेत.



THE HITAVADA(CITYLINE) DATE:14/7/2024 P.NO6

## WCL organises workshop on 'Sustainable initiatives in CIL'



■ Business Reporter

**APPRECIATING** the work done by Western Coalfields Limited (WCL) in the field of environmental conservation, D K Solanki, Deputy Secretary (SDC/JT/LA&IR), Ministry of Coal, Government of India, said that environmental protection will be possible only through collective efforts of all.

He was speaking at the inaugural ceremony of the workshop on "Sustainable initiatives in Coal India Limited" organised here by WCL. J P Dwivedi, Chairman-cum-Managing Director, WCL;

Bikram Ghosh, Director Finance, WCL; Ajay Mhetre, CVO, WCL; and C Jayadev, General Manager (Environment), CIL; were present as special guests.

In his presidential address, Dwivedi explained in detail the efforts being made by WCL for environmental conservation. He said that environmental conservation has always been an important issue for WCL.

Senior Manager (Public Relations) Ashish Tayal conducted the proceeding of the function while General Manager Milind Deshkar proposed the vote of thanks.

## Gold gaining strength

**BULLION CUES.** Silver expected to follow

Akhil Nallamuthu  
bl. research bureau

Gold advanced, whereas silver retracted last week. The former appreciated 0.8 per cent, whereas the latter dropped 1.3 per cent as they ended at \$2,411 and \$30.8 per ounce, respectively.

Similar divergence was observed in the domestic market too. Gold futures (₹73,269 per 10 gram) was up 0.3 per cent, but silver futures (₹93,109 per kg) lost 0.5 per cent.



### MCX-GOLD (₹73,269)

Gold futures (August), which fell in the first half of last week, recovered towards the end and managed to post a gain.

The chart shows that ₹75,000 is the nearest barrier. However, we anticipate gold futures surpassing this level and touching ₹78,000 in the short term. Only a breach of the support band of ₹70,000-71,000 will negate the upward bias. Support below ₹70,000 is at ₹67,500.

**Trade strategy:** We suggested buying gold August futures at ₹73,050 last week. Retain this trade with stop-loss at ₹69,800. Accumulate if the price dips to ₹71,700. When the contract touches ₹75,000,

raise the stop-loss to ₹73,800. Book profits at ₹78,000.

### MCX-SILVER (₹93,109)

Silver futures was largely trading in the narrow range of ₹92,000-94,500 through the week.

The contract has the potential to touch ₹1 lakh-mark. The trend will turn bearish only if silver futures dip below the support at ₹88,300.

**Trade strategy:** Retain the silver futures long we recommended at ₹93,550 last week. Add longs if the price moderates to ₹90,800. Keep a stop-loss at ₹88,000. When the price touches ₹97,500, alter the stop-loss to ₹95,000. Exit at ₹99,800.

BUSINESS LINE DATE:15/7/2024 P.NO2

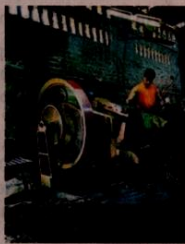
## India shifts from being net exporter to importer of steel in Q1

Abhishek Law  
New Delhi

India was a net importer of steel for Q1FY25 (April to June) with shipments coming in exceeding exports by 0.6 million tonnes (mt). Export of finished steel continued to fall consistently—poor global demand and competition from China—all through the first three months of the fiscal, while there was a steady increase in imports.

In the year-ago period, India was a net exporter of steel by 0.7 mt.

A Steel Ministry report, accessed by *businessline*, said in Q1FY25, finished steel imports stood at 1.9 mt, up 30



per cent y-o-y against 1.4 mt a year-ago. In comparison, exports stood at 1.3 mt, down 38 per cent y-o-y, against 2.1 mt in the year-ago period.

On a sequential basis, steel imports in June stood at 0.55

mt, down 24 per cent over May when it stood at 0.72 mt. However, imports increased 14 per cent over the year-ago-period when it stood at 0.5 mt.

### MARKET OFFERS

Exports last month stood at 0.34 mt, down 20 per cent sequentially over the 0.43 mt reported in May and was down 32 per cent over June last year when it was 0.5 mt.

Incidentally, as per consultancy firm BigMint, Indian cold rolled coil (CRC) offers to Europe were hovering in the \$680 - 690 per tonne range (from India's East Coast) while hot rolled coil (HRC) offers there are expected to resume soon.

Asian and West Asian mar-

kets offers continue to be muted, with Chinese price quotations being in the \$560/tonne range—lower than those quoted by Indian players.

"Imports in June was lower than May and it seems to be a good sign at the moment. But the bigger concern continues to be depressed exports. Global economic headwinds and cheaper Chinese products flooding key markets continue to impact orders."

"We have been in touch with some concerned ministries on rising steel imports, especially from China, and those shipments of China being routed through Vietnam," a Steel Ministry official said.

### DOMESTIC PRICES

Rising imports have impacted domestic steel prices. As per BigMint, Indian flat steel producers reduced prices of HRCs by around ₹1,000-1,750 per tonne (\$12-21/t) starting July. The price reduction for CRCs is around ₹1,000-1,500 per tonne (\$12-18/t).

"A few mills have also extended rebates around ₹500-750/tonne (\$6-9/t) for the June sales," the report said. Market sources say HRC prices are in the ₹53,000-54,000 per tonne range while CRC prices stood in the ₹60,000-61,000 per tonne bracket.

### OUTPUT VS DEMAND

For the period April-June,

steel production (finished) registered a 7 per cent y-o-y increase.

Production reached 35.77 mt compared with 33.427 mt in the same period of the previous year. On a sequential basis, finished steel production increased by 1.2 per cent in June to 12.1 mt in June against 11.923 mt in May. The y-o-y growth was over 9 per cent, surpassing 11.1 mt in June 2023.

Finished steel consumption for Q1FY25 stood at around 35.4 mt, up 15 per cent y-o-y. It stood at 30.833 mt in the year-ago-period.

In June, finished steel consumption remained at May levels of 12 mt. Consumption grew y-o-y by 19 per cent over last year's June month

when it was around 10 mt. "Domestic steel demand continues to be good consumption is on the high side too. But cheap imports remain a concern and could have a negative impact on prices here or market dynamics," a market participant said.



# वेकोलिही कोल वॉशरीजला लाभ पोहोचविण्यात मागे नाही

एमसीएलचे शुल्क ३.९८ रुपये तर वेकोलिचे दर ८ रुपये प्रति मेट्रिक टन



सुपर एक्सक्लुझिव्ह

कमल शर्मा

लोकमत न्यूज नेटवर्क

**नागपूर :** कोल वॉशरीजला लाभ पोहोचविण्यात वेस्टर्न कोल फिल्ड्स (डब्ल्यूसीएल) देखील मागे नाही. वेकोलि अर्थात डब्ल्यूसीएलसाठी कोळसा धुलाईचा दर ८ रुपये प्रति मेट्रिक टन ठरविला आहे. एसईसीएलचा दर रु ५.६ आणि एमसीएलचा दर ३.९८ आहे. वेकोलिच्या कोळशात ओलावा व राखेचे प्रमाण जास्त असल्याने धुण्यासाठी अधिक खर्च होत असल्याचा युक्तिवाद केला जातो. मात्र तज्ज्ञ या तर्काशी सहमत नाहीत. हे दर

कोल वॉशरीचा गोलमाल



जाणीवपूर्वक जास्त ठेवल्याचे त्यांचे म्हणणे आहे.

हे लक्षात घेण्यासारखे आहे की महाजेनको त्यांच्या कोराडी, चंद्रपूर, खापरखेडा आणि भुसावळ या चार वीज केंद्रांसाठी धुतलेला कोळसा वापरत आहे. कोराडी थर्मल पॉवर स्टेशन त्यांच्या कामकाजात पूर्णपणे धुतलेला कोळसा वापरत आहे. एकूण १७५८ दशलक्ष मेट्रिक टन कोळशाची स्वच्छता केली जाते. (पान ७ वर)

■ या रॅकेटमध्ये व्यावसायिकांसह अधिकारी आणि नेतेही सहभागी असल्याने कारवाईची अपेक्षा कोणाकडून करावी, हा प्रश्नच आहे. ज्याला कारवाई करायची आहे, तोच संरक्षक आहे. मात्र या सगळ्याचा फटका सर्वसामान्यांना सहन करावा लागत आहे. कोळशाच्या नावावर जी लूट सुरू आहे ती सर्वसामान्यांच्या खिशातून जात आहे. अशावेळी राज्याला विकासाच्या वाटेवर नेण्यासाठी समर्पित आणि सक्रिय असलेले मुख्यमंत्री एकनाथ शिंदे आणि उपमुख्यमंत्री देवेंद्र फडणवीस ही लूट थांबवण्यासाठी कठोर पावले उचलतील का, गांधीयाने चौकशी होणार का, असे प्रश्न उपस्थित होत आहे.

## वेकोलिही कोल वॉशरीजला लाभ पोहोचविण्यात मागे नाही

(पान १ वरून ) यासाठी डब्ल्यूसीएलच्या धुतलेल्या कोळशाचा दर ८ रुपये प्रति मेट्रिक आहे. दुसरीकडे एसईसीएलचा दर ५.६ रुपये आणि एमसीएलचे दर ३.९८ रुपये ठरविला आहे. धुतलेल्या कोळशाच्या वापरामुळे उत्पादनात (पीएलएफ) वाढ झाल्याचा दावा डब्ल्यूसीएलद्वारे केला जात आहे. मात्र दुसरीकडे, सतत १०० दिवस वीज निर्मिती करणाऱ्या महाजेनकोच्या युनिट्समध्ये पारस ३, परळी ६ आणि नाशिक ४ यांचाही समावेश आहे, विशेष म्हणजे या युनिट्समध्ये धुतलेल्या कोळसाचा उपयोग केला जात नाही.



# Three die of asphyxiation at illegal coal mine in Gujarat

It is the fourth such incident reported this year and 10 people had lost their lives; the police in Surendranagar district have registered a case against four, including a BJP panchayat member

**Mahesh Langa**  
AHMEDABAD

**T**hree labourers died of asphyxiation inside an illegal coal mine in Surendranagar district of Gujarat on Saturday.

It is the fourth such incident reported this year in which a total of 10 people had lost their lives while digging for low-grade coal in illegal mines found in several parts of the district. The coal is used to fuel factories in the State and elsewhere.

The deceased have been identified as Lakshman Dabhi, 35, Khodabhai Makwana, 32, and Viram Keraliya, 35. They were working in a mine near Bhet village in Thangadh taluka without helmets, masks, or any other safety equipment, said officials.

The police have registered a case of culpable homicide not amounting to murder against four people, but are yet to make any arrests.

Kalpesh Parmar, a BJP taluka panchayat member, and Khimji Saradiya, whose wife is a district



The FIR said the accused failed to provide essential safety gear to the labourers, who died after inhaling toxic gas in the mine. AFP

panchayat member of the BJP, are among the accused.

The first information report (FIR) said the accused failed to provide essential safety gear to the labourers, who died after inhaling toxic gas in the mine.

In February, three workers had died after inhaling toxic gas that emanated after a blast triggered by gelatin sticks during an illegal mining operation in the district. As per the details, the workers were digging a pit for an illegal coal mine in Devpara village. All of them hailed from Rajas-

than. In January, three labourers died after being buried due to unstable soil conditions, while one labourer died last month.

Surendranagar District Collector K.C. Sampat acknowledged the recurring incidents in which workers had died.

"We had launched a special movement against such mining operations and as many as 2,100 such mines were closed and mining wells were completely buried. But it seems, some of them have been reopened," Mr. Sampat told *The Hindu*, adding

that "the local administration takes this issue very seriously."

"Our main concern is the unscientific method that's used for mining," Mr. Sampat added.

Revenue and police officials in the district are silent about the involvement of local politicians of the ruling party but privately admit about the nexus between the mining operators and local politicians.

"There have been frequent incidents of deaths in Surendranagar district where illegal mining of coal is rampant with involvement of local politicians of the ruling party," Gujarat Congress spokesman Manish Doshi said. On Sunday, AAP leaders held a press conference in Surendranagar, demanding strict action against those responsible for running illegal mines in the district.

Sources said the proliferation of unregulated coal mines has become a death trap for impoverished workers who get paid ₹500-₹700 a day to work in pits that are 80 to 100 feet deep to extract coal using gelatin sticks for blasting.