

Coal Imports Decline by Nearly 13% in April 2026, Reflecting Steady Progress Towards Import Substitution

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India's coal import basket has registered a significant decline in April 2026, with total coal imports falling to 21.13 Million Tonnes (MT) from 24.27 MT in April 2025 - a reduction of 3.14 MT (about 12.95%). The decline reflects the sustained impact of the Ministry of Coal's continuing push for import substitution and enhanced domestic coal availability, particularly for the power sector.

Key Highlights

- **Power Sector Imports Down Sharply:** Coal imports by power plants fell by 24.89%, from 4.67 MT in April 2025 to 3.51 MT in April 2026, driven by improved domestic linkage supplies and reduced dependence on imported coal for blending.
- **Imported Coal-Based (ICB) Plants:** Imports for plants designed to run on imported coal declined by 27.45%, from 3.97 MT to 2.88 MT, the steepest reduction among all categories tracked.
- **Domestic Coal-Based (DCB) Plants for Blending Imported Coal:** Coal imported for blending purposes by domestic plants fell by 11.26%, from 0.71 MT to 0.63 MT, underscoring the success of efforts to ramp up assured domestic supply and reduce reliance on the blending mandate.
- **Overall Import Dependence Narrows:** Coal imports as a share of total coal consumption fell from 21.69% in April 2025 to 19.68% in April 2026, a decline of over 2 percentage points.
- **Coking Coal Imports Remain Steady:** Coking coal imports, which cater primarily to the steel sector where domestic coking coal reserves remain limited, rose marginally by 1.34% (5.93 MT to 6.01 MT), consistent with continued growth in domestic steel production and reflecting that this category is driven by resource-specific requirements rather than availability gaps.

The consistent decline across ICB, DCB and overall import categories reflects the Ministry of Coal's sustained focus on ramping up domestic coal production and offtake, strengthening First Mile Connectivity, close monitoring of thermal power plant stock positions, and coordinated efforts with Ministry of Railways, Coal India Limited (CIL) and its subsidiaries to ensure assured supply to power utilities. These measures have progressively reduced the need for imported coal, including for blending purposes, while maintaining healthy stock levels at thermal power plants across the country. The Ministry of Coal remains committed to further strengthening domestic coal production, evacuation infrastructure and quality-based grading to sustain this trend of reduced import dependence in the coming months.

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