Ministry of Coal Holds Stakeholder Consultation on ‘Mining for Future’; Urges Allottees to Bring Allocated Coal Blocks into Production Faster

Of 137 commercial mines allocated since 2020, 25 are producing; Ministry seeks industry inputs to close the gap

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The Ministry of Coal today held a Stakeholder Consultation on ‘Mining for Future’ in Panjim, Goa. The day-long consultation brought together allottees of captive and commercial coal blocks, representatives of State Governments, CGWA, DGH, MoEFCC and senior officials of the Ministry to discuss faster operationalisation of allocated blocks, the next set of policy reforms, and responsible mining.



Shri Vikram Dev Dutt, Secretary, Ministry of Coal, was the Chief Guest. Smt. Rupinder Brar, Additional Secretary & Nominated Authority and senior officials of the Ministry were present.

The main message of the consultation was that India's next gains in coal production will come from allocating new blocks as well as more from bringing already allocated blocks into production. Addressing the allottees, the Secretary said, "A block that is allocated but not producing is capacity the country has set aside and cannot use."

The Secretary said the past eight months had tested the sector. When the conflict in West Asia disrupted LNG and LPG supplies from late February, coal stocks at mines and power plants allowed the Government to assure the country of steady power, and he thanked the industry for that. He cautioned that the pressure has not eased. The International Energy Agency expects gas markets to stay tight through 2027. Asian spot LNG averaged US$17.5 per MBtu in the second quarter, 45% higher than a year earlier, global coal demand is forecast at a record 8.94 billion tonnes in 2026. "Each tonne we produce at home protects the economy from these swings," the Secretary said.

He added that domestic demand points the same way. NITI Aayog projects coal demand rising from about 1.25 billion tonnes in 2025 to over 2.6 billion tonnes by 2050 under current policies, and above 1.8 billion tonnes even on a net zero path, as steel, cement and power, the three largest consumers, expand several times over. India produced 1,041 million tonnes of coal in FY 2025-26, and coal still supplies more than 70% of its electricity.

Shri Dutt further elaborated that the Ministry's commitments span multiple dimensions, including sustainability, community welfare, and technological advancement. He emphasised the importance of scientific mine closure, highlighting the need to transform mined-out areas into co-created, vibrant habitats that promote a harmonious ecosystem, ensuring ecological restoration alongside community well-being and long-term social stability. He said that CSR initiatives have been instrumental in bringing positive change in coal-bearing regions and must continue to be strengthened so that communities feel included and benefit from development initiatives.



Smt. Rupinder Brar, Additional Secretary, took participants through the reforms carried out so far. The 2020 framework removed end-use restrictions, moved bidding to a revenue share linked to the National Coal Index, dropped technical and financial eligibility conditions, and allowed 100% FDI through the automatic route, with underground mines getting a waiver of the upfront amount, a lower floor price and lower performance

security. Scheduled operationalisation has since been cut from 51 to 40 months for fully explored blocks and from 66 to 52 months for partially explored ones. Mining plan approvals now average 4.5 months against 9 earlier, Mine Opening Permission is granted by the company Board, and 44 accredited exploration agencies no longer need a prospecting licence.

She thanked the efforts taken by different ministries for the reforms taken for faster operationalization of coal blocks. She called for accelerated coal production with a conscious approach, balancing growth with environmental stewardship and community well-being underscoring that sustainability must move in tandem with scale. Highlighting the transformational impact of coal sector reforms, she emphasised transparency, policy stability, and ease of doing business as key drivers attracting investment, fostering competition, and unlocking new economic avenues



The Ministry asked allottees to open mines ahead of the revised timelines, ramp up to peak rated capacity quickly, raise land, forest and State-level issues early, and mine responsibly. It also sought their suggestions on policy changes that would speed up operationalisation, clauses in coal mine agreements that need revisiting, and amendments required in Acts and Rules. On responsible mining, the Secretary said a mine takes land, draws on water and changes livelihoods. Families who give up land should know from day one what they will receive, where they will move and how their incomes will be restored, and companies should honour every commitment they make.

The stakeholder consultation witnessed insightful deliberations across key sessions covering critical dimensions of coal sector transformation. Discussions focused on future of mining like Underground Coal Gasification, technology adoption, innovation to drive efficiency and value addition; inclusive growth through rehabilitation, resettlement, land repurposing, worker welfare, CSR and just transition with communities and all

stakeholders at the centre; and sustainability measures promoting greener mining practices and environmental stewardship. Together, the sessions reflected a holistic roadmap for a modern, responsible, future-ready and self-reliant coal sector.

On technology, industry presented advances in AI, robotics and digital transformation, reducing ash in coal at the mine, underground coal gasification, modern exploration techniques and paste filling, along with global best practices. Officials of DGH, DGMS, MoEF&CC and CGWA spoke on the CBM framework, mine safety, environmental policy reforms and groundwater clearance, followed by an open house on policy enablement and the next generation of reforms. Participants also discussed mine closure, CSR and community welfare in mining regions, afforestation and environmental stewardship, and shared experiences on the impact of policy reforms, first mile connectivity and ways to increase coking coal production.

Following the deliberations, the session was opened for an interactive Q&A segment with stakeholders, providing a valuable platform for exchange.

The Ministry of Coal is steering the sector towards a future-ready, resilient, and globally competitive coal ecosystem. The Goa consultation is one of the successive consultations done by Ministry to further reflect the Ministry's commitment to continuous engagement, innovation, and sustainable practices, ensuring that the coal sector evolves in alignment with emerging global realities and national priorities. The Ministry will consolidate the suggestions received and take them up with relevant stakeholders and will continue to empower the country with responsible mining.

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