

Union coal ministry expecting 15 pc growth in coking coal production

NEW DELHI, DEC 29: The Union coal ministry is expecting a 15 per cent growth in coking coal production in 2025-25 at 77 million tonnes, crossing the half-way mark to the 140 million tonnes goal by 2030.

The domestic raw coking coal production in 2023-24 was 66.82 million tonnes.

India is a major importer of coking coal, which is required by the steel industry to meet the gap between their own requirement and indigenous availability. Its share in the overall coal imports has been consistently above 20 per cent in the last 10 years.

In a bid to cut down on imports, the government has undertaken a mission to step up domestic availability of coking coal, including setting a goal for domestic production.

Of the 140 million tonnes coking coal production target by FY30, Coal India is expecting to produce 105 MT, which is a significant increase from 60.43 MT during FY24.

Among the steps taken by the ministry to step up coking coal production is modernisation and renovation of existing aging washeries of Coal India subsidiaries — Bharat Coking Coal Limited



(BCCL) and Central Coalfields Limited (CCL) which has surpassed designed lifespan for its optimal utilisation.

The government is also looking at monetisation of old washeries of BCCL for operational efficiency through the washery-developer-cum-operator route.

The coal ministry has also auctioned 14 coking coal blocks to the private sector.

These blocks are expected to start production by 2028-29. Further, the government is also encouraging the supply of coal to the steel sector

through the Non-Regulated Sector (NRS) linkage auction route.

Additionally, three new coking coal washeries by BCCL (cumulative capacity of 7 MT) and five new by CCL (cumulative capacity of 14.5 MT) are planned. Of these, two are under construction.

The coal ministry has set a goal to produce 1.3 billion tonnes of domestic coal by FY27 and 1.5 billion tonnes by FY30 and logistics would play a crucial role in increasing the offtake of coal.

"In view of this, 102 FMC

(first mile connectivity) projects costing nearly ₹30,000 crore with a capacity of 1040 MTPA are planned. Currently, 37 projects with a capacity of 360 MTPA have been commissioned. The remaining 66 projects are scheduled to be commissioned by FY28," the coal ministry said in a statement.

Moreover, an additional wagon requirement of 100,000 has been projected to meet the coal evacuation requirement, keeping in view the goal of 86 per cent rail evacuation of coal by FY30.

POCO launches M7 Pro 5G with segment's brightest AMOLED display

MUMBAI, DEC 29: Wrapping up an eventful year with a bang, POCO, one of India's most dynamic consumer tech brands, proudly announces the launch of two groundbreaking smartphones—POCO M7 Pro 5G and POCO C75 5G. Designed to push boundaries in their respective segments, these devices redefine what's possible in display brilliance, performance, and affordability.

"At POCO, we've always believed in crafting tech that empowers everyone," said Himanshu Tandon, Country Head of POCO India. "The M7 Pro 5G is a powerhouse that reimagines the mid-range category with the segment's brightest AMOLED display, immersive audio, and flagship-grade cameras."

Meanwhile, the C75 5G is the most affordable 5G smartphone, with Only Sony sensor. With these launches, POCO stays true to its mission of delivering more innovation and more value to our fans."

POCO M7 Pro 5G – The Ultimate Entertainment Beast Unmatched Visual Brilliance Set your sights on the segment's brightest AMOLED display, offering a dazzling 2100 nits peak brightness on a 6.67" GOLED FHD+ screen. With HDR10+ and a 120Hz Adaptive Refresh Rate, every frame comes to life with stunning clarity and fluidity.

Immersive Audio Dive into a cinematic experience with Dolby Atmos-powered speakers, featuring a 300% volume boost for immersive sound.

Reliable Battery Life A massive 5110mAh battery with 45W fast charging ensures you're always powered up.

Photography Redefined Featuring a 50MP Sony camera, this segment-first device captures stunning photos with 4-in-1 Pixel Binning and advanced aperture



Graphite Cooling system, this device delivers smooth multitasking and lag-free gaming.

Reliable Battery Life A massive 5110mAh battery with 45W fast charging ensures you're always powered up.

Available in Lunar Dust, Lavender Frost, and Olive Twilight, the M7 Pro 5G is as beautiful as it is powerful.

Future-Ready Connectivity At an incredible price point, the C75 5G brings dual 5G SIM support, ensuring you're always connected to the latest network technology.

Elegant Design Meets Durability Crafted with a slim 7.99mm premium dual-tone finish and Corning Gorilla Glass 5, the M7 Pro 5G seamlessly blends style and strength.

Power-Packed Performance Driven by the MediaTek Dimensity 7025 Ultra chipset and 7,820.5mm²

settings. Classic film filters add a nostalgic charm to your shots.

Lag-Free Powerhouse Powered by the Snapdragon 4s Gen 2 processor, the segment's only 4nm chip, the C75 5G offers seamless performance for gaming, multitasking, and more.

Largest, Smoothest Display The 6.88" HD+ screen with 600 nits brightness and 120Hz refresh rate promises vibrant visuals. With TÜV-certified eye care, enjoy long hours of entertainment comfortably.

Built to Last A 5160mAh battery with 18W fast charging, IP52 splash resistance, and ergonomic design ensure the C75 5G stands the test of time.

Available in Enchanted Green, Aqua Blue, and Silver Stardust, this device is all about blending style, utility, and durability.

Special Launch Offers • The POCO M7 Pro 5G is available at a special launch price of ₹13,999 by applying ₹1,000

Bank Discount (SBI/HDFC/ICICI) or ₹1,000 Exchange + 3 Months No-Cost EMI (NCE) • The POCO C75 5G can be yours for just ₹7,999 during the launch period.

Both devices will be available on Flipkart, with sales starting December 19 for the C75 5G and December 20 for the M7 Pro 5G.

Peanut seller turns out to be operator of Rs 2,000 banknote exchange racket, 4 held

MUMBAI, DEC 29: Nagpur Police investigating a racket involved in converting the Rs 2,000 denomination banknotes on commission, which were withdrawn from circulation by RBI, were baffled when the trail stopped with a peanut seller, leading to his arrest along with three others.

One of the accused, Nandalal Maurya, sells peanuts and other snacks on a pushcart in the Samvidhan Square area where the Reserve Bank office and Maharashtra Vidhan Bhavan are situated.

Maurya used to hire poor men and women on commission to exchange bank notes of Rs 2,000 denomination. They used to submit their Aadhaar card details to RBI for legally exchanging these banknotes with Rs 500 currency, an official said on Sunday.

Three other arrested persons are identified as Rohit Bawne (34), Kishore Bahoriya (30), and Anil Jain (56), who hails from Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh, believed to be the kingpin of the crime.

On May 19, 2023, the RBI



announced the withdrawal of Rs 2,000 denomination banknotes from circulation.

The official said the police acted on a tip-off that Jain engaged Maurya in operating the racket after collecting the Rs 2,000 denomination bank notes from various "customers" based in different locations.

"Jain promised Maurya Rs 200 each for converting 10 notes of Rs 2,000 into Rs 500 currency notes," he said.

Maurya visited the RBI office at Samvidhan Square and successfully exchanged 10 notes of the Rs 2,000 currency. After learning the process, he began hiring poor men and women and offered them a daily commission of Rs 300 for exchanging the banknotes at the RBI.

Police raided Maurya's place on Saturday and recovered Rs 60,000 cash, including 120 notes of Rs 500 denomination.

Police also found Rs 62,500, including a Rs 2,000 note and 120 notes of Rs 500 denomination, in Bawne's possession, and Rs 80,000, including 160 notes of Rs 500 denomination from Bahoriya.

According to the initial investigation, the accused were operating under the instructions of Anil Jain, who allegedly possessed a large amount of demonetised currency, the official added.

Tata, Buddhadeb, Manmohan, Zakir, Rashid, Benegal - dignitaries India lost in 2024

NEW DELHI, DEC 29: History books will remember the year 2024 as it has bid farewell to many eminent personalities, including Zakir Hussain, Dr Manmohan Singh, Ameen Sayani, Shyam Benegal, Fali S Nariman, Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee and A Ramachandran, all luminaries in their respective fields.

The fields of politics, business, law, and economics lost stalwarts such as Communist leaders Sitaram Yechury, businessman-philanthropist Ratan Tata, legal baron AG Noorani, and economist Bibek Debroy. Here is a look at some of the dignitaries India has mourned this year.

Manmohan Singh: Architect of India's economic reforms

The year ended on a sour note as one of India's tallest leaders and architect of economic reforms, former prime minister Manmohan Singh, breathed his last on December 26.

The Congress leader changed the shape of the nation by ushering in policies that marked the end of an economic crisis in the 1990s.

Bhattacharjee: Comrade, march on

Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee, who served as the 7th chief minister of West Bengal from 2000 to 2011, passed away on August 8. With a political career of over 50 years, Bhattacharjee shall always be regarded as one of the finest leaders of the Communist Party of India (Marxist).

Ratan Tata: Veteran industrialist

Earlier, Ratan Tata's death left an irreplaceable void in India Inc. The former chairman of Tata Group led the salt-to-software conglomerate to new heights by expanding its global footprint.

Prominent political leaders such as Sushil Kumar Modi, Natwar Singh, Om Prakash Chautala and SM Krishna were also among those who breathed their last in 2024.

Rashid Khan: Notes that bloomed love

The year also registered a



great loss in the field of performing arts, as singers Pankaj Udhas, Prabha Atre and Ustad Rashid Khan, Bharatanatyam dancer Yamini Krishnamurthy, and tabla maestro Zakir Hussain bid adieu to the world.

The year began with the passing of classical vocalist Rashid Khan in January. Khan, who gained critical as well as commercial success, immortalised songs like "Aaoge Jab Tum" from "Jab We Met" and "Bhor Bhayo" from "Morning Walk".

Prabha Atre: On the banks of Yamuna

India also mourned the death of legendary classical singer Prabha Atre, one of the oldest practitioners of Kirana Gharana. Her hit "Jamuna kinaray mora gaon" still evokes a thousand emotions.

The Padma Bhushan awardee from Maharashtra had exceptional command over various musical genres, including khyal, thumri, dadra and ghazal.

Pankaj Udhas: Ghazal king

Remembered for his timeless ghazals, Pankaj Udhas popularised the genre with songs like "Chandi Jaisa Rang Hai Tera", "Phir Hath Mein Sharab Hai", and "Ahista". His voice added to the charm of Hindi film songs like "Chitthi Aayi Hai", "Naa Kajre ki Dhaar", and "Jeeye to Jeeye Kaisa".

Yamini Krishnamurthy: A muse to the rhythm

The multi-feted Yamini Krishnamurthy, who excelled in Bharatanatyam, Kuchipudi, carnatic vocals and the veena, is credited for having popularised Bharatanatyam in north India.

She received Padma Shri (1968), Padma Bhushan

(2001) and Padma Vibhushan (2016) for her contributions to the world of performing arts.

Zakir Hussain: Beauty with the beats

The nation also lost one of the most important artists of his generation in the death of Zakir Hussain. The tabla maestro, following the footsteps of his father Alla Rakha, not only became a household face, but also popularised the instrument globally and earned four Grammy awards in his career.

Sharda Sinha: The voice of 'Chhath Puja'

Another towering figure in the field of music, Sharda Sinha, also died this year.

Credited for popularising Bhojpuri and Maithili folk music, Sinha became the voice of 'Chhath Puja' for her devotional numbers, besides adding her inimitable touch to Hindi film songs like "Kahe Toh Se Sajna" and "Taar Bijli".

The literary world lost noted big names like poet Munawwar Rana, Keki N Daruwalla, Usha Kiran Khan, Surjit Patkar, and Malti Joshi.

Munawwar Rana: One poem can change the world

Rana, who wrote in Awadhi and Urdu, made poetry accessible to audiences unfamiliar with Persian and Arabic vocabulary. The poet was also known for his political views which were more often than not contrary to the popular opinion.

Imtiaz Qureshi: Matchless taste, unparalleled spark

The death of chef Imtiaz Qureshi, who revived the 'dum pukht' cooking tradition, sent shockwaves in the culinary world.

A pioneer in Awadhi cuisine, Qureshi popularised,

and in some events invented, dishes like 'dal bukhara', 'dum pukht biryani', 'kakori kebab', 'garlic kheer' and 'warqi paratha'.

Hanif Kureshi: Art for everyone

Another pioneer of his form, Hanif Kureshi, took art to the place where it belonged - in public places. Kureshi revolutionised the street art movement and was the driving force behind public art projects, including the Lodhi Art District in Delhi, the Sassoon Dock art project in Mumbai, and the Bangalore Metro.

The world of films and fashion too bid goodbye to some of its brightest stars.

Shyam Benegal: Life through lens

Shyam Benegal and Kumar Shahani, perhaps two of the most important figures in parallel Indian cinema, created a vacuum in their deaths.

The two contemporaries were the leading figures in the parallel cinema movement and are remembered for cinematic gems like Shahani's "Maya Darpan" and "Kasba", and "Ankur" and "Manthan" by Benegal, among others.

Rohit Bal: Audacious grace

One of the first and most recognised Indian fashion designers Rohit Bal also lost his life in 2024.

Director Sangeeth Sivan, and actors Rituraj Singh and Atul Parchure were also among those who bid goodbye this year.

Ameen Sayani: Radio will never be the same

While the world of visual arts lost painter A Ramachandran, radio presenter Ameen Sayani, whose voice was synonymous with public broadcast in India, too passed away in 2024.

Education loan provider Credila Financial Services files IPO papers with Sebi

NEW DELHI, DEC 29: Education loans-focused lender Credila Financial Services Ltd, formerly known as HDFC Credila Financial Services Ltd, has filed papers with markets regulator Sebi for an initial public offering (IPO) through a confidential pre-filing route.

The confidential pre-filing route allows the company to withhold public disclosure of details under the draft red herring prospectus (DRHP).

In a public announcement on Friday, Credila said it has "filed pre-draft red herring

prospectus with the Sebi and stock exchanges... in relation to the proposed initial public offering of its equity shares on the main board".

This development follows a significant change in the company's ownership during the financial year ended March 31, 2024.

A private equity consortium of EQT and Chryscapital acquired a 90.01 per cent stake in Credila for Rs 9,060 crore, including a fresh equity infusion of Rs 2,003.61 crore. Of this, Rs 700 crore was infused in June 2023 by

the erstwhile HDFC Ltd, while the remaining Rs 1,303.61 crore was contributed in March 2024 by EQT and Chryscapital entities.

The consortium valued Credila at a pre-money valuation of Rs 10,350 crore.

As of March 31, 2024, EQT holds 72.01 per cent Chryscapital owns 18 per cent, and HDFC Bank retains a 9.99 per cent stake.

The change of control came after the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) directed HDFC Bank to reduce its

shareholding in the company to less than 10 per cent after the merger of HDFC Ltd with HDFC Bank.

Credila recorded impressive growth during the fiscal year ended March 31, 2024 with total income rising sharply to Rs 2,771.04 crore from Rs 1,352.18 crore in the previous year and profit after tax nearly doubling to Rs 528.84 crore from Rs 275.92 crore.

Since its inception, the lender has supported over 1.24 lakh students with education loans.

The valuation of ITC jumped Rs 17,933.49 crore to Rs 5,99,185.81 crore, and that of ICICI Bank climbed Rs 15,254.01 crore to Rs 9,22,703.05 crore.

The market cap of Bharti Airtel soared Rs 11,948.24 crore to Rs 9,10,735.22 crore, and Hindustan Unilever rallied Rs 1,245.29 crore to Rs 5,49,863.10 crore.

However, the valuation of State Bank of India tumbled by Rs 11,557.39 crore to Rs 7,13,567.99 crore.

Mcap of 6 of top-10 most valued firms climbs Rs 86,847.88 crore; HDFC, RIL gain big

NEW DELHI, DEC 29: Six of the top-10 most valued firms together added Rs 86,847.88 crore in market valuation last week, with HDFC Bank and Reliance Industries emerging as the biggest gainers in line with an overall optimistic trend in equities.

Last week, the BSE benchmark climbed 657.48 points or 0.84 per cent, and the Nifty rose 225.9 points or 0.95 per cent.

While Reliance Industries, HDFC

Bank, ICICI Bank, Bharti Airtel, ITC and Hindustan Unilever were the winners, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Infosys, State Bank of India and Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) suffered erosion from their market valuation. The market capitalisation (mcap) of HDFC Bank surged by Rs 20,235.95 crore to Rs 13,74,945.30 crore.

Reliance Industries added Rs 20,230.9 crore, taking its valuation to Rs 16,52,235.07 crore.