KHANIJ SAMACHAR

Vol. 7, No-24

(As appeared in National/Local Newspapers Received in Central Library, IBM, Nagpur)

The Central Library, IBM, Nagpur is providing the Classified Mineral News Service since many years on monthly basis in print form. To expand this service to the IBM Offices all over India i.e. H.Q., Zonal & Regional Offices and to take a call of time, the Controller General, IBM desired to make this service online on fortnightly basis. The library officials made sincere efforts to make it successful. This is the 24th issue of Volume -7 for the service named Khanij Samachar for the period from 16th -31st DEC ,2023 .The previous issue of Khanij Samachar Vol. 7, No. 23, 1st-15th DEC 2023 is already uploaded on IBM Website www.ibm.gov.in.

In continuation of this it is requested that the mineral related news appeared in the Local News Papers of different areas can be sent to Central Library via email ibmcentrallibrary@gmail.com (scanned copy) so that it can be incorporated in the future issues to give the maximum coverage of mining and mineral related information on Pan India basis.

All are requested to give wide publicity to it and it will be highly appreciated if the valuable feedback is reciprocated to above email.

Mrs. R. S. Wakode
Assistant Library & Information Officer
Central Library
ibmcentrallibrary@gmail.com
0712-2562847
Ext. 1210 , 1206

खनिज समाचार

KHANIJ SAMACHAR

A FORTNIGHTLY NEWS CLIPPING SERVICE

FROM

CENTRAL LIBRARY

INDIAN BUREAU OF MINES

VOL. 7, NO -24 , 16th-31st DECEMBER 2023

BUSINESS LINE DATE:16/12/2023 P.NO3

Coal demand to grow 3.5% annually to 1,397 million tonnes till 2026: IEA

Rishi Ranjan Kala
New Delhi

Coal demand in India, the world's second largest consumer of the critical commodity, is expected to rise by 3.5 per cent annually till 2026 topping 1,397 million tonnes (mt), the International Energy Agency (IEA) said on Friday.

"India becomes the driving force behind the upward pressure on global coal demand through to 2026, even if the global trend is decided in China. For the forecast period until 2026, we estimate Indian coal demand to rise by 3.5 per cent annually to 1,397 mt, with growth in every coal grade," IEA said in its latest coal report.

Coal demand in India, which accounted for 14 per cent of the global demand, increased by 9 per cent Y-o-Y, or 97 mt, totalling 1,162 mt. In 2023, the demand is expected to have increased by 8 per cent, or 98 mt.

STIL THE MAINSTAY. Coal for non-power purposes may surge significantly, with industrial production set to increase annually by 6% between 2024 and 2026 REUTERS

RELIANCE ON COAL

Despite having a target of achieving 50 per cent power generation through non-fossil fuel sources by 2030, India would require additional coal-fired generation capacity to meet the growth in electricity demand and ensure security of supply.

Against this background, India's latest National Electricity Plan foresees between 19 gigawatt (GW) and 27 GW of additional coal capacity up to 2027, depending on the scenario, despite about twice the capacity already being in the project pipeline.

"For the next three years, our model forecasts annual growth in coal consumption for power generation of 2.4 per cent, whereas renewable generation is forecast to grow by 12 per cent annually," IEA said.

It estimates a moderate increase in coal for power generation of 69 mt to 2026, the total reaching 1,006 mt.

NON-POWER SECTOR

Coal for non-power purposes is expected to surge significantly, with industrial production set to increase annually by 6 per cent between 2024 and 2026, the report said.

"Given the focus on infrastructure, we expect a strong increase in cement production, being one of the main drivers of growth in non-power thermal coal and lignite demand," it added.

For instance, IEA said that the Adani Group is aiming to double its cement production capacity by 2028 up to around 140 million tonnes per annum (mtpa). Similarly, UltraTech is currently running a cement capacity of about 132 mtpa and is seeking to reach 160 mtpa soon.

"Together with consistently increasing steel demand driving consumption of steam coal (direct iron reduction) and met coal (blast furnace route), we estimate non-power coal consumption of 391 mt in 2026, growing 21 per cent over the three-year period," the agency projected.

Aligned with the economic outlook, India's industrial output has also been rising strongly in 2023, pushing up demand for thermal coal and lignite in non-power applications, like cement and direct iron reduction.

"Accordingly, we estimate non-power thermal coal and lignite consumption to have risen by 12 mt in 2023, to 243 mt. "Met coal has the smallest share of Indian coal consumption, with an expected total of 81 mt in 2023," IEA said.

Like other coal grades, met coal consumption is growing as steel production surged through 2023, it added.

BUSINESS LINE DATE:16/12/2023 P.NO3

India in talks with World Diamond Council, G7 nations on Russia ban

SANCTIONS IMPACT. Once diamonds are processed in India, there should not be further checks, says govt

Amiti Sen
New Delhi

India is in talks with the World Diamond Council and G7 countries to limit the impact of the grouping's ban on direct import of non-industrial diamonds from Russia from January 2024 announced recently, officials said.

The G7 countries, which include the US, the UK, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and Canada, have announced a ban on direct import of non-industrial diamonds, mined, processed or produced in Russia from January 2024. The move is part of the economic sanctions that the West is imposing on Russia for continuing its war against Ukraine.

Restrictions have also been imposed on the import of Russian diamonds processed by third countries, including India, from March 2024, which has the Indian industry worried. "There is this issue of looking at the Russian diamonds coming into the diamond value chain. So, there was a visit by a team from the World Diamond Council. Of course, there should be controls on the rough diamond coming from Russia. But, when the diamonds are processed in India, there should not be any further checks on them because you can always maintain tracing and tracking of the rough damage," the official said.

India's proposal has been agreed to and is a big relief for the Indian diamond industry, the official added. Talks between India and the G7 will continue to ensure that Indian diamond industry is not unduly hurt.

India is an important stakeholder in global diamond trade, with about 90 per cent market share in cutting and polishing natural diamonds and exporting $23 billion annually.

CHECKMATE PUTIN. The move is part of the economic sanctions that the West is imposing on Russia for continuing its war against Ukraine VIJAY SONEJI

KEY STAKEHOLDER

The Gems and Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC) of India recently stated the interests of SMEs and marginal diamond units should be kept in mind by the G-7 nations that when regulating the sanctions . Their active contribution to this industry and the millions of livelihoods which are dependent on it should stay in focus, the council said.

The G7 is working on a traceability-based verification and certification mechanism for rough diamonds and wants to introduce it by September next year. Once it is in place, a diamond could be tracked through the entire supply chain- right from when it is mined to when it reaches the consumer.

BUSINESS LINE DATE:16/12/2023 P.NO11

Mines Ministry to directly sanction projects for critical mineral exploration

IT'S TIME. Move will ensure faster sanction of projects, quicker release of funds to exploration agencies

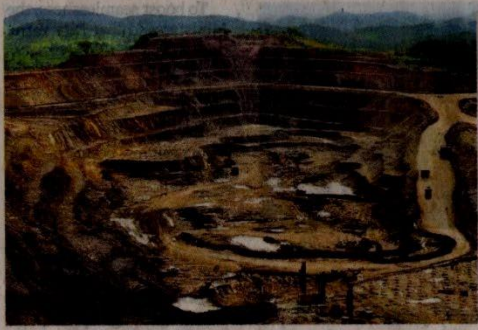
Abhishek Law
New Delhi

In a major policy shift, the Mines Ministry will directly sanction exploration projects to notified private exploration agencies (NPEAs) for critical and deep-seated minerals.

The new approach, aimed at giving an impetus to exploration of critical and deep-seated minerals, is expected to streamline the process, ensure faster sanction of projects, and quicker release of funds to these agencies.

"The decision to allow NPEAs to directly submit projects willcut delays in sanction of projects, as well as help in faster execution of projects," a Ministry official said.

According to the official, besides stepping up the "pace of exploration" of critical minerals, the new approach could also help bring in international firms and new tech.



NEW APPROACH. The proposed policy changes are expected to encourage junior mining companies from around the world to take up exploration projects with NMET funding REUTERS

AUCTION MECHANISM

"Further, these agencies will be allowed to bid in the auction of mineral blocks explored by them, which was not allowed earlier," the official explained.

The proposed policy changes are expected to encourage junior mining companies from around the world to take up exploration projects with National Mineral Exploration Trust (NMET) funding in India. The new scheme is expected to draw many players to the exploration arena, including international ones, besides inducting new technologies in the field of exploration.

AMENDMENTS MADE

Incidentally, the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957, MMDR Act, was amended through the MMDR Amendment Act, 2021, w.e.f. 28/3/2021 which, inter alia, empowers the Central Government to notify entities, including private entities, that may undertake prospecting operations.

The interested private exploration agencies are required to obtain accreditation in accordance with the existing rules of the Mines Ministry, and then apply for their notification.

Beginning March 2022, the Ministry has notified 16 private exploration agencies to take up projects through State Governments, funded by the National Mineral Exploration Trust.

So far, only 17 projects worth ₹15.88 crore have been sanctioned to five NPEAs from NMET funds. Of the 17 projects sanctioned, 11 are of critical minerals.

A further amendment of the MMDR Act in August saw 24 minerals, including, graphite, nickel, PGE (platinum group of elements), REE (rare earth elements), and potash, among others, notified as Critical and Strategic minerals.

Post the amendment, the Centre can grant mineral concessions and prioritise auction. "Authorising the Central Government to auction concession for these critical minerals would increase the pace of auction and early production of the minerals," the Mines Ministry said in a statement.

THE HITAVADA DATE:16/12/2023 P.NO2

Cops arrest 3 transporting illegally excavated sand worth Rs 71 lakh

■ **Staff Reporter**

SPECIAL Squad of Nagpur (Rural) Police nabbed four alleged sand smugglers and seized two tippers landen with 10 brass illegally excavated sand collectively worth Rs 71 lakh from them.

Acting on a tip off, the Special Squad formed by Superintendent of Police (Rural) Harssh Poddar intercepted two tippers (MH-40/CM-8186 and MH-40/CM-3361) near Reliance Petrol Pump on Mansar-Tumsar Road in the small hours of Thursday. During the searches, the squad found that the tippers were carrying illegally excavated sand as the drivers of both the vehicles failed to furnish the royalty receipts.

Cops seized the vehicles and handed over the accused Rajesh Awadh Baghel and Aaju Sawant Kaushik and two others to Ramtek Police who registered a case under Sections 379, 109, 34 of the Indian Penal Code, read with Section 48(8) of the Maharashtra Land Revenue Code, against them. Khushal Vinayak Dhote, owner of the tippers, is at large.

Special Squad of Nagpur (Rural) Police with the arrested accused and the tipper.

The arrests and seizure of sand-laden tippers were made by API Amit Pandey, PSI Thamke and constabulary staff under the supervision of SP Poddar and Additional SP Dr Sandip Pakhale.

THE HITAVADA
DATE:16/12/2023 P.NO6

Govt asks steel makers to enhance use of AI in plants

THE Government on Friday asked steelmakers to enhance the application of artificial intelligence (AI) at their respective plants, as its usage can improve the value chain and energy management, according to an official statement.

As the world looks at data-driven decision-making, the Indian steel industry needs to be at the forefront in implementing artificial intelligence technology in their operations, Union Steel Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said, addressing a Chintan Shivir event here.

The minister urged the stakeholders in the steel sector to enhance the application of artificial intelligence (AI) in their respective steel plants, the steel ministry said in a statement.

"We in the steel sector need to understand that it is our responsibility to safeguard Mother Earth by embracing the concept of green steel and the latest technologies," Scindia said.

Minister of State (MoS) for Steel Faggan Singh Kulaste said the usage of AI and automation can strengthen the value chain system of the players, besides improving the energy management in the steel sector.

On the EU's CBAM mechanism, Steel Secretary Nagendra Nath Sinha said, "As the concept of CBAM is fast evolving and emerging, it is important to understand its impact across the value chain of operations for the sector, which will be severely impacted". The AI concepts need to be applied in exploring, identifying, and developing new mines by applying the vast available data from the Geological Survey of India (GSI).

NAVBHARAT DATE:16/12/2023 P.NO1

माइनिंग पॉलिसी अब तक 'लटकी'

CM, DCM ने 1 वर्ष पूर्व की थी घोषणा, अधिकारी बैठे हाथ पर हाथ धरे

आ गई सरकार

38,844 करोड़ का मैंगनीज ओर | **57,183** करोड़ रुपये का लाइमस्टोन ओर लाखों करोड़ के अन्य कई खनिज भी शामिल | **72,194** करोड़ रुपये का लौह अयस्क

■ नीरज नंदन @ नवभारत.

नागपुर. सदर में मुख्यमंत्री एकनाथ शिंदे ने और विविध अवसरों पर उपमुख्यमंत्री देवेंद्र फडणवीस ने माइनिंग पॉलिसी लाने का ऐलान किया था. दोनों की घोषणाओं पर अधिकारियों की 'लेटलतीफी' भारी पड़ गई है. इस सत्र में विदर्भ के लोगों को काफी उम्मीद है कि पॉलिसी अस्तित्व में आ जाएगी. विदर्भ में खनिज संपदा का अकूत भंडार है. लाखों करोड़ों रुपये की खनिज जमीन के अंदर दबी हुई है. माइनिंग पॉलिसी से इनका भला होगा, तो विदर्भ ग्रोथ पथ पर आगे बढ़ सकेगा. विदर्भ को आगे बढ़ता हुआ अधिकारी देखना पसंद नहीं कर रहे हैं. माइनिंग पॉलिसी का डॉफ्ट बनाकर एक वर्ष पूर्व ही दे दिया गया था लेकिन ड्राफ्ट अब तक 'फाइलों' में बंद है. ऐसा प्रतीत हो रहा है मानों माइनिंग पॉलिसी की फाइलें अधिकारियों ने 'गायब' कर दी हैं. पॉलिसी को जानबूझकर नहीं लाने दिया जा रहा है. जानकारों का कहना है कि 'समय की बर्बादी' ही विदर्भ को पीछे धकेलने के लिए पर्याप्त है. 'न फाइलें देखो और न ही आगे बढ़ाओ' की तर्ज पर अधिकारी काम कर रहे हैं. विदर्भ को विकास पथ पर आगे बढ़ता देखने वाले माइनिंग पॉलिसी का इंतजार भी बेसब्री से कर रहे हैं ताकि बंद पड़ी माइंस को चालू किया जा सके या नई माइन खोल सकें. इससे निवेश और रोजगार दोनों सेक्टर में लाभ होता परंतु अधिकारियों को इसे लेकर कोई परवाह नहीं है.

बेकार पड़ा है अकूत खजाना : राज्य सरकार ने 2014 में यह अनुमान लगाया था कि नागपुर, भंडारा में ही 20 लाख मीट्रिक टन मैंगनीज ओर का खजाना है जिसकी कीमत मोटे तौर पर 38,844 करोड़ रुपये आंकी गई है. इसी प्रकार गड़चिरोली, चंद्रपुर, भंडारा, सिंधुदुर्ग में 72,194 करोड़ रुपये मूल्य का लौह अयस्क का खजाना है लेकिन दोहन के अभाव में ये जमीन के अंदर ही पड़े हुए हैं. आंशिक रूप से इन खनिजों का उत्खनन हो रहा है जो अपर्याप्त है. प्रोसेसिंग उद्योग आने से इन खनिजों की कीमत कई गुना बढ़ जाती है, वहीं युवाओं को रोजगार भी मिलता है. वर्तमान में इन खनिजों को कच्चे रूप में विदेश या देश के अन्य राज्यों में भेजा जाता है जहां प्रोसेस के बाद यह सोना बन जाता है. इसके साथ ही जिंक ओर की 8.30 लाख मीट्रिक टन संपत्ति भी विदर्भ में है और यह मुख्य रूप से नागपुर जिले में है.

मेजर मिनरल्स के लिए 76 लाइसेंस

उपरोक्त के अलावा 76 लाइसेंस और जारी किए गए हैं जिसमें मैंगनीज ओर के लिए 24 लाइसेंस है. 24 में से केवल 7 को आवश्यक मंजूरी मिली है. 7 में से केवल 1 में ही उत्पादन हो रहा है. 24 में से 17 लोग खदान चालू कराने में नाकाम रहे हैं.

राज्य में 195 लाइसेंस

राज्य में कुल 195 लाइसेंस जारी किए गए हैं. इनमें से 49 विदर्भ से बाहर के हैं और विदर्भ में 146 लाइसेंस हैं जिनमें भी वेकोलि के पास कोयले के लिए 33 लाइसेंस हैं. मॉयल को मैंगनीज ओर के लिए 20 लाइसेंस है. एमएसएमसी के पास 8 और सीमेंट कंपनियों को लाइमस्टोन के लिए 9 लाइसेंस दिए गए हैं.

लौह अयस्क के 14 लाइसेंस : 14 लाइसेंस में से केवल 3 में काम चालू है और केवल 1 लाइसेंसी उत्पादन कर पा रहा है. 4 लाइसेंस लैप्स हो चुके हैं. असाधारण परिस्थिति के कारण 7 लोग काम को आगे नहीं बढ़ा पाएं.

क्लस्टर भी गायब

एमएसएमई के अध्यक्ष आशीष जायसवाल ने रामटेक में माइनिंग क्लस्टर के लिए प्रयास किए थे. जगह भी फाइनल कर ली गई थी लेकिन इसके बाद काम रूक गया. क्लस्टर लाने का उद्देश्य ही यही था कि कच्चे माल की प्रोसेसिंग यहीं हो, ताकि राजस्व बढ़े और रोजगार का सृजन भी हो सके.

लाइमस्टोन का हो रहा उपयोग

मैंगनीज और लौह अयस्क को छोड़ दें तो लाइमस्टोन के कारण सीमेंट कंपनियां विदर्भ में आकर्षित हुईं हैं. इन कंपनियों द्वारा खुद खदानों का सदुपयोग हो रहा है और युवाओं को रोजगार भी मिल रहा है. विदर्भ के चंद्रपुर, गड़चिरोली, यवतमाल, नागपुर में ही कम से कम 57,183 करोड़ रुपये के लाइमस्टोन होने का अनुमान राज्य सरकार ने लगाया है. सहज अंदाज लगाया जा सकता है कि इतने बड़े पैमाने पर कच्चा माल होने के बाद भी उद्योगों के आने की रफ्तार कितनी है.

NAVBHARAT DATE:17/12/2023 P.NO3

बगैर रॉयल्टी की रेत से लदा ट्रैक्टर पकड़ा

■ **देवलापार** (सं.). देवलापार थाना क्षेत्र में सावरा नाला परिसर से अवैध रूप से चोरी की रेत का परिवहन कर रहे ट्रैक्टर ट्रॉली को पुलिस पथक ने पकड़कर आरोपी चालक को गिरफ्तार कर लिया. यह कार्रवाई बुधवार की सुबह करीब 8 बजे के दौरान की गई. प्राप्त जानकारी अनुसार बुधवार को देवलापार पुलिस थाने के पुलिस हवलदार राहुल रंगारी, प्रमोद मड़ावी, शिवा नागपुरे, कांतिचंद हराल यह पेट्रोलिंग कर रहे थे. इस बीच सावरा नाला परिसर से अवैध रूप से रेत परिवहन करने की गुप्त जानकारी पथक को मिली. जानकारी के आधार पर पथक ने मौके पर पहुंचे तो ट्रैक्टर क्रं. एमएच 40 / बीजे 5509 व बगैर नंबर की ट्रॉली दिखाई दी. पुलिस पथक ने ट्रैक्टर को रोककर तलाशी लेने पर उसमे रेत भरी हुई नजर आई.

इकोनॉमी का दम निकाल रहा सोना

एक महीने में ही इंपोर्ट हुआ करीब दोगुना

■ **दिल्ली, नवभारत न्यूज नेटवर्क.** भारत में सोना का मोह कुछ ज्यादा ही है. सभी सोना खरीदना चाहते हैं. शादी-ब्याह हो या छठी-जन्मोत्सव, हर शुभ अवसर पर सोने का उपहार दिया ही जाता है. दिवाली और धनतेरस पर भी इस बार खूब सोना खरीदा गया. भारतीयों का सोने से यह प्यार इकोनॉमी का दम निकाल रहा है. पिछले महीने सोना आयात बीते सितंबर महीने के मुकाबले बढ़कर लगभग दोगुना हो गया है. इस चक्कर में अक्टूबर 2023 के दौरान व्यापार घाटा बढ़कर 31 अरब डॉलर से भी ऊपर चला गया.

7.2 आरब डॉलर का सोना खरीदा

बीते अक्टूबर महीने में सोना का आयात बढ़कर करीब-करीब दोगुना हो गया. इस महीने देश में 7.2 अरब डॉलर का सोना विदेशों से खरीदा गया जबकि इससे एक महीने पहले यानी सितंबर 2023 के दौरान 4.1 अरब डॉलर का सोना आयात किया गया था. यह 95.4 फीसदी की बढ़ोतरी है.

दिल्ली बुलियन एंड ज्वेलर्स वेलफेयर एसोसिएशन के अध्यक्ष विमल गोयल का कहना है कि यह आयात त्योहारी तैयारी के लिए हुआ था. नवंबर में धनतेरस और दिवाली का त्योहार था, इसलिए अक्टूबर में खूब सोना मंगाया गया. गोयल का कहना है कि इसी महीने 23 तारीख से शादी-ब्याह का मौसम शुरू हो रहा है.

इस अवसर पर सोना की खूब खरीदारी की जाती है. अब नवंबर में जेवरातों की खरीदारी होगी तो उसे बनाने में भी समय लगेगा, इसलिए लगन की खरीदारी के लिए भी बाहर से सोना अक्टूबर में ही मंगवा लिया गया.

व्यापार घाटा रिकॉर्ड ऊंचाई पर

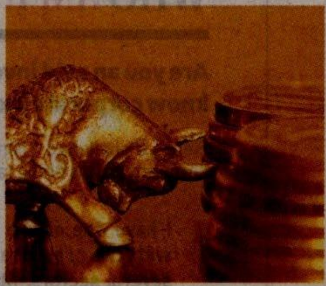
बीते अक्टूबर में भारत का वस्तु व्यापार घाटा अक्टूबर में 31.5 अरब डॉलर की रिकॉर्ड ऊंचाई पर पहुंच गया. त्योहारी मांग के कारण न सिर्फ सोना बल्कि चांदी के आयात में भी जबरदस्त वृद्धि हुई. इसी से व्यापार घाटा भी खूब बढ़ा. एक साल पहले इसी महीने में देश का व्यापार घाटा 26.31 अरब डॉलर रहा था. हालांकि बीते अक्टूबर में वस्तु निर्यात पिछले 11 महीनों में सबसे तेज गति (6.2 फीसदी) से बढ़कर 33.6 अरब डॉलर हो गया.

BUSINESS LINE DATE:17/12/2023 P.NO6

Bulls turnaround

BULLION CUES. Gold and silver to add to gains

Akhil Nallamuthu
bl. research bureau



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

The precious metals posted gains last week. Gold and silver were up 0.8 per cent and 2.8 per cent, as they closed the week at $2,018.2 and $23.8 per ounce respectively.

Similarly, on the MCX, gold futures went up 0.8 per cent and silver futures rallied 2.8 per cent. They had closed the week at ₹62,192 (per 10 gram) and ₹74,525 (per kg) respectively.

MCX-GOLD (₹62,192)

Gold futures (February contract) declined in the first half of last week. But then, it found support at ₹61,000, where the 50-day moving average lies, and rebounded sharply.

From here, the contract is expected to rally and touch ₹64,000 in the near term. A breakout of this can trigger another leg of upswing towards ₹65,000.

But if gold futures fall from here, it can find support at ₹62,000 and ₹61,000. A decline below ₹61,000 is less likely.

Trade strategy: We suggested buying gold futures at ₹61,719 with a stop-loss at ₹59,900 last week. Since the contract rallied above ₹62,500 intraweek, the revised stop-loss would be at ₹61,800. Hold this trade and exit at ₹63,800.

MCX-SILVER (₹74,525)

Silver futures (March series) fell and marked an intraweek low of ₹71,234 on Wednesday before recovering to ₹74,525 on Friday.

The rebound in the second half indicates that the bulls are gaining traction. This can lead to a rally to ₹78,000 soon. Resistance above this is at ₹80,000.

On the other hand, if there is a decline from here, silver futures can find support at ₹72,500 and ₹71,300. Subsequent support is at ₹70,000.

Trade strategy: Last week, we recommended going long on silver futures at ₹72,518. Stop-loss at ₹69,800. Retain this trade.

Going ahead, when the contract rallies above ₹75,000, tighten the stop-loss to ₹73,000. Book profits at ₹77,500.

THE ECONOMIC TIMES DATE:18/12/2023 P.NO10

Cement Emission Tech

Akshat Rathi

World leaders showed up at COP28 in Dubai to extort all countries to do more to tackle climate change. The list of things to work on is long. But few things are harder than reducing emissions from the industrial sector.

The quickest way to think about the emissions challenge is split them into four equal parts:

- Electricity.
- Transport.
- Industry.
- Agriculture.

We already have the major solutions for electricity, with solar panels, wind turbines and lithium-ion batteries. Those batteries can also power EVs. There's still a lot to do. But the puzzle is starting to fall in place. The same can't be said about the industrial sector. 'Those are the unsexy parts,' Eric Toone, technical lead of the Bill Gates-led Breakthrough Energy Ventures (BEV), told me.

Making stuff like cement and steel produces a lot of CO_2 emissions. The value of those commodities is not enough to instal expensive green technologies. So, it doesn't attract people dreaming big. But reducing emissions is vital if the world is to halt warming the planet.

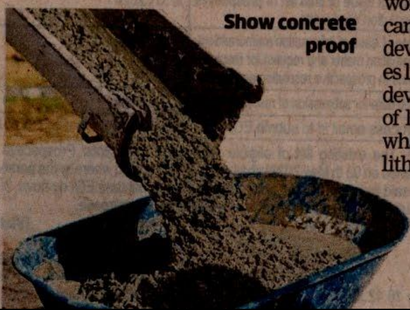
Let's focus on cement. The industry emits 8% of the world's CO_2 emissions. Once built, cement plants can last 50 years or more. That means if new technologies are to be introduced to make the process greener, then, quite often, they have to retrofit. That makes the challenge harder.

Then there's the fundamental challenge of chemistry. 'Cement has been around since antiquity. But it hasn't been the subject of significant scientific study,' said Toone. Cement is made by heating limestone, typically by burning coal. The use of coal produces CO_2. But so does the conversion of limestone into lime. Thus, green cement production has to not just phase out use of fossil fuels in heating limestone but also find ways to trap CO_2 that would be produced when lime is created.

There are several companies trying to find innovations to solve the problem. One innovation is to create kilns that can be heated to about 1,400° C using electricity. With RE powering more and more grids, that would ensure heating to be achieved without emissions.

One such company is Australian startup Calix. It has built a kiln where the fuel doesn't mix with limestone. Instead, electric heaters are on the outside of a vertical cylinder. Finely powdered limestone is dropped from the top, and by the time it falls to the bottom many metres below, it's been turned into lime by the heat. The resulting pure stream of CO_2 exits from the top, where it is collected, compressed and then buried back deep underground where oil and gas were extracted from.

Another idea is to use a different material instead of limestone. BEV has invested in US-based Solidia and France-based Ecocem. They each use different techniques to reduce the amount of limestone to make cement. After reaching its chemistry, they found that cement's binding properties are not fully used when mixed with gravel and water to make concrete. So, they found ways to enhance that using low-carbon materials. Those interventions can cut cement emissions by half or more.



Show concrete proof

FILE PHOTO

None of these companies has yet built large cement factories. The few major cement companies in the world tend to be quite conservative when dabbling with new technology. Partially because the profit margins on cement are often slim. But also because there isn't enough innovative thinking.

However, as the push to reduce emissions bites harder, shareholders are demanding from all companies they invest in to become greener. It's getting to cement companies too, with major companies such as Heidelberg and Holcim starting to invest in new technologies. It's also true of big Indian companies, such as UltraTech, Dalmia and Ambuja, which have set science-based targets to reduce emissions.

At COP28, industrial sectors got a boost with the Industrial Transition Accelerator (ITA). The group will work with cement and steel companies to help deploy green technologies at scale. Getting it all to work will require governments and financiers to work closely.

The world isn't making enough progress on climate goals. However, the work needed to cut emissions also cannot come at the cost of economic development that's necessary in countries like India. The best way out is to develop solutions and create a position of leadership in deploying them. That's what China did with solar panels, lithium-ion batteries and EVs. There's huge room for India to lead in other sectors, including cement and steel.

The writer is author of Climate Capitalism: Winning the Global Race to Zero Emissions

चंद्रपुरातून अवैध रेती वाहतुकीचा मार्ग पुन्हा झाला खुला

घाटावरून रेतीचा साठा उचलण्यास दिली प्रशासनाने परवानगी

लोकमत न्यूज नेटवर्क

नागपूर : ३० सप्टेंबरपासून चंद्रपुरातून बंद झालेली अवैध रेती वाहतूक पुन्हा सुरू होणार आहे. घाटावर असलेला रेतीचा शिल्लक साठा उचलण्याची परवानगी प्रशासनाने घाटमालकांना दिल्यामुळे पुन्हा रेतीची अवैध वाहतूक चंद्रपुरातून सुरू होणार आहे. विशेष म्हणजे, २८ सप्टेंबर रोजी अपर जिल्हाधिकाऱ्यांनी रेती घाटावरील शिल्लक साठा १० दिवसांत उचलला नाही तर तो शासनाच्या मालकीचा होईल, त्यावर रेती घाट मालकास कोणताही हक्क दाखविता येणार नाही आणि शासनाविरुद्ध दावाही करता येणार नाही, असे पत्र काढले होते. तरीही आता शिल्लक साठा उचलण्याला परवानगी दिल्याने आश्चर्य व्यक्त केले जात आहे.

'लोकमत'कडे असलेल्या माहितीनुसार, ब्रह्मपुरी तालुक्यातील ९ रेती घाटांवर अजूनही २० हजार ब्रासपेक्षा जास्त रेती साठा उपलब्ध आहे. विशेष म्हणजे, एकट्या ब्रह्मपुरीतून वर्षभरात ५ ते ६ लाख ब्रासवर रेतीची उचल झाली असून, ३०० ते ४०० कोटींच्या रेतीची विक्री झाल्याचा दावा जाणकारांनी केला आहे. तरीही ब्रह्मपुरी तहसीलदारांनी ९ रेती घाटांवर ३० सप्टेंबरनंतर शिल्लक असलेल्या २० हजार ब्रासच्या जवळपास असलेल्या साठ्याची माहिती पाठविली होती.

२०२२-२३ या आर्थिक वर्षात चंद्रपूर जिल्हा खनिकर्म विभागाने ३८ रेती घाटांचा लिलाव केला होता. रेती घाटांतून उत्खनन करण्याची मुदत १० जून २०२३ पर्यंत होती. तर रेती साठ्यावरून उचल करण्याची मुदत ३० सप्टेंबरपर्यंत देण्यात आली होती. त्यानंतरही रेती घाटांवर साठा शिल्लक राहिला होता. घाटमालकांनी त्यासाठी जिल्हाधिकाऱ्यांकडे परवानगी मागितली होती. त्यासाठी ३१ डिसेंबरपर्यंत मुदत देण्यात आली आहे.

ब्रह्मपुरी तालुक्यातील रेती घाटांवर शिल्लक साठा (ब्रासमध्ये) (तहसीलदाराचा अहवाल)

रेती घाट	मंजूर परिणाम	उचल केलेली रेती	शिल्लक साठा
कोलारी	५८१९	२८१९	३०००
बेलगाव	१०००४	८००४	२०००
अहरेनवरगाव (आवळी)	६१९०	५३९०	८००
अहेरनवरगाव (चिखलधोकडा)	३५२५	७२५	२८००
हळदा	८४८१	७४८१	१०००
आवळगाव	१७३८५	११६४८	५७३७
सोंद्री	३८१६	१८१६	२०००
बोढेगाव	७०६७	४६३७	२४३०
रणमोचन	७०६७	५१६७	१९००

सरपंचाच्या तक्रारी

कोलारी घाटातून ५८०० ब्रास रेतीची उचल करण्यास परवानगी दिली होती. परंतु ५० हजार ब्रासच्या जवळपास रेतीची उचल झाली आहे. सध्या घाटावर १०० ब्रासच्या जवळपास साठा असेल; पण ३००० ब्रास रेती साठा शिल्लक दाखविला आहे. अजूनही रात्रीला ट्रॅक्टरद्वारे उत्खनन सुरु आहे. अवैध उत्खननाची तक्रार करूनही कारवाई होत नाही. उलट सरपंचालाच घाटमालक धमक्या देतात.

- कांचन सोमेश्वर तुपटे, सरपंच, कोलारी

सोंद्री घाटावर अडीच एकरमध्ये रेतीचे उत्खनन करण्याची मंजुरी घाटमालकाला दिली होती. परंतु त्याने २० एकरवर उत्खनन केले. यासंदर्भात आम्ही विभागीय आयुक्तांकडे तक्रारी केल्या आहेत. रेती घाटांची मुदत संपल्यामुळे त्यांचे परवाने रद्द करून कुठल्याही प्रकारची मुदतवाढ न देता शिल्लक साठे जप्त करावे, अशी आमची मागणी होती. कोट्यवधी रुपयांच्या रेतीची उचल झाल्यानंतरही गावाला वर्षभरापासून खनिज निधीही मिळालेला नाही.

- केवटराम पारधी, सरपंच, सोंद्री

शिल्लक साठ्यावरून उचल करण्यासंदर्भात ३१ डिसेंबरपर्यंत मुदत दिली आहे. कायद्यात असलेल्या तरतुदीनुसारच परवानगी दिली आहे. ज्यांच्याकडे वाहतूक पास शिल्लक आहे, अशा घाटांनाच परवानगी दिली आहे. आम्ही महाखनिज ॲपवरून घाटावरील शिल्लक साठ्याची माहिती घेतली, त्या आधारे परवानगी दिली आहे. ही परवानगी फक्त साठ्यावरून रेतीच्या विक्रीची आहे. घाटातून रेतीचे उत्खनन करता येणार नाही.

- किशोर गाडगे, अपर जिल्हाधिकारी

THE ECONOMIC TIMES DATE:19/12/2023 P.NO6

'Incentives to Boost Underground Mining in Works'

ET Q&A **PRALHAD JOSHI**
coal, mines and parliamentary affairs MINISTER

Critical minerals supply is essential for advancement of many sectors, including high-tech electronics, telecommunications, transport and defence, and roll-out of auctions for their mining in the country was a crucial step in that direction, said minister for coal, mines and parliamentary affairs Pralhad Joshi. In line with the country's strategy for critical minerals, the Centre will launch the next tranche of bids in February, he told **Twesh Mishra** in an interview. The Centre is also working on incentives to boost underground coal mining, he said. Edited excerpts:

What is the plan for critical minerals after the first auction? India has also made a pitch at global forums for equitable access to critical minerals...

The availability of critical minerals or technologies for their extraction and processing are concentrated in a few geographical locations which may lead to supply chain vulnerabilities and even disruption of supplies. India has consistently advocated for equitable global supply chain security of critical minerals and that all countries should have access to their processing technologies. They are also vital to power the transition to a low-emission economy, and the renewable technologies that will be required to meet the 'Net Zero' commitment of India by 2070. Tenders for the first tranche of auction of 20 critical minerals was launched in November 2023. The next tranche will be launched by February 2024. The thinking behind this is to ensure self-sufficiency in supply of critical minerals which are essential for the advancement of many sectors, including high-tech electronics, telecommunications, transport and defence.

What is the government's plan for underground coal mining and mineral exploration?

Underground (UG) mines are being bid out under commercial auction regime. This idea is to produce at least 10% of India's coal production from UG mining by 2030. The coal ministry is also considering rebate in revenue share, upfront amount and performance bank guarantee for UG coal blocks to be auctioned for commercial mining in order to promote sustainable mining. Coal India Limited (CIL) has formulated its UG Vision plan, aiming to produce 100 MT from its underground mines by 2027-28 and beyond. CIL has already identified the mines that shall contribute to achieve this. Plans have also been drawn up to introduce more mass production technology by using continuous miners, longwall and highwall miners wherever feasible.

How will the amendments to the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act help?

Deep-seated minerals such as gold, silver, copper are difficult to explore and mine as compared to surficial or bulk minerals and the country is mostly dependent on imports for them. A new mineral concession, namely exploration licence, has been introduced for 29 deep-seated and critical minerals. This will help create an enabling mechanism wherein the junior mining companies will bring in expertise from across the world.

In addition to this, six minerals, including lithium and titanium bearing ones, have been delisted from the list of atomic minerals. Exploration and mining of these minerals has been opened up for the private sector after this decision.

BUSINESS LINE DATE:19/12/2023 P.NO9

UK to implement carbon tax on imported goods like steel

Press Trust of India
London

The British government announced plans on Monday to charge a carbon levy on imported raw materials such as aluminum, iron, steel and cement from 2027, in an attempt to prevent firms being undercut by overseas producers.

However, the plan has come under criticism from the body representing British steel as being too sluggish, as it will come into effect one year after similar proposals from the European Union (EU) are implemented.

Announcing its plan, Britain's Treasury said the proposed new tax will level the playing field, helping greener domestic producers compete against higher carbon, but cheaper, foreign rivals.

For years, fears have been expressed that efforts to cut greenhouse gases in the UK are not being matched overseas, meaning that emissions are just being displaced to other countries without ambitious net-zero targets, leading to little global benefit.

"This levy will make sure carbon-intensive products from overseas — like steel and ceramics — face a comparable carbon price to those produced

in the UK, so that our decarbonisation efforts translate into reductions in global emissions," Treasury chief Jeremy Hunt said.

Britain's Conservative government has come under criticism over the past few months after Prime Minister Rishi Sunak watered down some of Britain's environmental commitments and said he was "not in hock to ideological zealots." While the implementation of the so-called Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, or CBAM, has been widely welcomed, its start-date has raised some concerns as the EU's similar proposal will come into effect in 2026.

Though Britain fully left the EU at the end of 2020, more than four years after the Brexit referendum, it often shadows policy from its former partners on an array of policies.

Ambuja Cements plans to invest ₹6,000 cr in green power projects

GREEN SIGNAL. Solar and wind power projects to come up in Gujarat and Rajasthan

Our Bureau
Mumbai

Ambuja Cements, an Adani Group company, has committed an investment of ₹6,000 crore in green power projects of 1,000 MW by FY26. The investment includes a diverse portfolio of solar and wind power projects, strategically positioned across Gujarat and Rajasthan.

The new project line-up includes a 600 MW solar power project and a 150 MW wind power project in Gujarat, and a 250 MW solar project in Rajasthan.

Of the planned capacity addition, 200 MW will be achieved by next March, in addition to the existing 84 MW of solar and wind power.

The investment not only demonstrates commitment to environmental sustainability, but also promises compelling economic advantages to Ambuja's planned larger capacity of 140 MPTA, said the company.

SOLID CHANGES. The company is setting the stage for a transformative shift in the cement industry

With the planned investment, power cost will come down from ₹6.46 per kWh to ₹5.16 per kWh, a ₹1.30 per kWh (20 per cent) reduction, which translates to ₹90 per tonne of cement, for a targeted capacity of 140 MTPA by FY28. Additionally, green power will assist in enabling increased supply of green cement, making it possible for the infrastructure and housing industries to go green, it said.

Ambuja Cements is also enhancing its Waste Heat Recovery Systems capacity from the current 103 MW to 397 MW over five years (134 MW by March'24), which will further reduce the power cost.

> **With the planned investment, power cost will come down from ₹6.46 per kWh to ₹5.16 per kWh**

LEADING SHARE

These initiatives will help Ambuja achieve a leading share of green power among its peers, and reach 60 per cent for the planned capacity of 140 MTPA, from the current 19 per cent.

Ajay Kapur, CEO, Cement Business, said the company is not just aiming for a substantial increase in green power capacity, but is also setting the stage for a transformative shift in the cement industry.

With all requisite approvals in place, the company will exceed the committed ESG targets before initial timelines, he said.

BUSINESS LINE DATE:19/12/2023 P.NO10

Aluminium futures: Wait for dips to go long

Gurumurthy K
bl. research bureau

Aluminium prices have recovered sharply last week. The aluminium futures contract on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX) made a low of ₹193.20 per kg on Wednesday and then rose back sharply recovering all the loss. The contract surged to a high of ₹204.70 before closing the week at 202.85 on Friday. It is currently trading at ₹202.90 per kg.

COMMODITY CALL.

Support will now be in the ₹201-200 region. As long as the aluminium contract trades above ₹200, the outlook will remain bullish. As such, a rise to ₹208-209 looks possible in a week or two. A break above ₹209 can take it further up to ₹210-211 in the coming weeks.

This bullish outlook will go wrong only if the contract breaks below ₹200. Such a break can take it down to ₹197-196 and even lower.

TRADE STRATEGY

We see high chances for the aluminium contract to sustain above ₹200 and rise to ₹209-210.

Traders can wait for dips. Go long at ₹201.50 and ₹200.50. Keep the stop-loss at ₹198. Trail the stop-loss up to ₹202 as soon as the contract moves upto ₹203.50. Move the stop-loss further up to ₹204 when the price touches ₹205.50. Exit the long positions at ₹207.

BUSINESS LINE DATE:20/12/2023 P.NO11

Copper climbs on hopes of tight supplies

London: Copper prices climbed as supply concerns fuelled by mine closures, a sliding dollar and falling stocks in warehouses approved by the LME triggered buying. Benchmark copper was up 1.3 per cent at $8,595 a tonne. Aluminium was down 0.7 per cent at $2,268. Zinc gained 1.3 per cent to $2,571; lead firmed by 0.7 per cent to $2,073; tin added 1.4 per cent to $25,170 and nickel was up 1.2 per cent at $16,705. REUTERS

BUSINESS LINE DATE:20/12/2023 P.NO11

India drags global demand for silver in 2023

LOSING SHINE. Total global consumption likely to drop by 10%; physical investment in the white metal also falls

Subramani Ra Mancombu
Chennai

Global demand for silver will likely decline 10 per cent in 2023 with offtake of silver jewellery and silverware declining by 22 per cent and 47 per cent, respectively, with India being the prime factor behind the dip.

Key findings reported by Philip Newman, Managing Director at Metals Focus, and Sarah Tomlinson, Director of Mine Supply, during the Silver Institute's Annual Silver Industry Dinner showed that globally, total silver demand is forecast to ease by 10 per cent to 1.14 billion ounces in 2023.

INDUSTRIAL USE GAINS

Gains in industrial applications will be offset by losses in all other key segments. Global jewellery demand is expected to edge slightly higher in 2023, while silverware will fall by a notably smaller 12 per cent in view of the setback in India, the findings said.

Physical investment in 2023 is projected to fall by 21 per cent to a three-year low of 263 million ounces. While most markets have seen weaker volumes, losses have been concentrated in India and Germany.

"In India, record high local prices both deterred new investor purchases and led to profit taking, resulting in a 46 per cent decline," the findings said.

ROLE OF $

"The demand for silver jewellery has been down, primarily owing to various economic factors, including the geo-political situation, the fluctuation of dollar against the rupee, and implications of the downtrend in the Chinese economy as the country struggles to come out of the pandemic," said Colin Shah, MD, Kama Jewelry. "This has led to a freefall of 55 per cent from April to November 2023 in silver exports, thus leaving a massive dent in the overall demand-supply dynamics of the white metal. This led to multiple instances where the silver price plummeted," he said.

SLACK DEMAND. Since March, domestic prices have been compressed in the range of ₹78,000-66,000 a kg, denting purchases from rural areas

Hareesh V, Head of Commodities at Geojit Financial Services, said silver prices throughout this year traded higher and posted a record high in December.

"Usually, the demand for jewellery in the country peaks during the key festive and wedding season which starts in October. This year during this period prices of silver were comparatively higher than in previous years," he said.

HIGHER THAN 2022

Since March, domestic prices have been compressed in the range of ₹78,000-66,000 a kg, denting purchases from rural areas from where silver in the form of jewellery is mostly consumed.

Silver prices on an average were much higher than last year in 2023 and even the bottom prices of silver were significantly higher compared with 2022.

"The demand for silverware and silver jewellery has always been price elastic which is why we have seen that in the years when silver prices are lower, we usually see robust demand but when silver prices are higher, we see lower demand, said Amit Goel, Co-Founder and Chief Global Strategist at Pace 360 said.

On lower investments, Harish said higher prices and increased investment opportunities in other asset classes such as equities, currencies, and gold reduced the appeal of the white precious metal. "Also, nowadays, silver being largely considered an industrial commodity rather than an investment asset fected investor se ments," he said.

Goel said: "We have s that when the prices low, investors tend to inv more in silver and when prices are high they tenc invest less. This year pri were high compared w 2022 on average. Hence vestors' demand has b lower."

Shah said the worst now over for silver. Multi indicators such as the pr able ceasefire between countries in conflict and favourable growth and in tion estimates by the Fed are expected to em ate into a rise in overall c sumption of commodit including silver.

"We foresee a str comeback in demand both international and mestic markets," he said.

BUSINESS LINE DATE:20/12/2023 P.NO3

Thermal coal imports at over two-year high in Nov

Rishi Ranjan Kala
New Delhi

According to the energy intelligence firm Kpler, India imported a total of 17.51 mt of thermal coal, lower than the 15-month high of 18.66 mt recorded in October 2023.

Alexis Ellender, Kpler's Lead Major Dry Bulks Analyst said that India imported 23.27 mt of sea-borne coal last month, down from a five-month high of 24.37 mt in October 2023, but still up by 6.92 mt y-o-y. At 222.43 mt, the combined January-November 2023 shipments were up by 11.39 mt on an annual basis.

"Although easing from the 15-month peak recorded in October, thermal coal imports still reached 17.51 mt last month, a new November high," Ellender told *businessline*.

LONG HAUL CARGOES

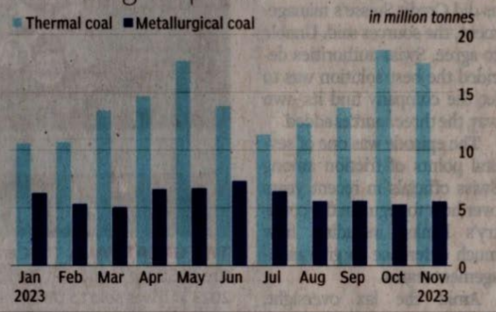
"Of particular note was the jump in long haul cargoes from the US, which hit the highest level in more than two years at 1.40 mt, as the country sought to ship surplus domestic supply," he said.

The US had supplied a total of 12.03 mt of coal — thermal and metallurgical — to India in FY18, which rose to 14.18 mt in the next fiscal year. In FY20 and FY21, import of the crucial commodity was lower at 12.16 mt and 12.20 mt, respectively. In FY22, India imported higher volumes at 14.37 mt from the US, which again fell to 13.69 mt in FY23.

In 2022, Indonesia was India's largest overseas supplier of thermal coal, which grew at the expense of Australia and South Africa. On the other hand, Russia overtook the US to become the fourth-largest supplier.

However, the US is India's second biggest supplier of coking coal after Australia as of October 2023. Russia is the third biggest supplier.

Straddling the peaks



Source: Kpler

During April–October 2023, Australia remained the largest supplier of coking coal with 20.17 mt, down 12 per cent y-o-y. Shipments from the US rose 9 per cent y-o-y to 4.97 mt. Russia, the third largest supplier, saw a 210 per cent growth to 3.46 mt.

IMPORTS STABLE

Ellender pointed out that monthly imports from other suppliers remained largely stable or experienced a modest m-o-m fall.

"Indonesia remained by far the largest thermal coal supplier in November at 10.46 mt. This easing in thermal coal imports occurred alongside a seasonal upturn in domestic coal production, which reached the highest monthly level since April at 84.52 mt. Domestic coal dispatches also increased," he added.

The combination of annual growth in imports, a seasonal upturn in domestic supply, and reduced power demand for cooling as temperatures fall, has supported restocking efforts at some Indian power stations, he explained.

"By the end of November, coal stockpiles at major power plants monitored by the Central Electricity Authority (CEA) had risen to 27.09 mt, up from 21.15 mt a month earlier and marking the highest level since mid-September. However, stockpiles were still down by 3.85 mt on the end November 2022 level and only 47 per cent of normative stocks. Restocking endeavours should support further seaborne imports," Ellender said.

Kpler expects the coal imports to decline in December on a monthly basis.

"With domestic supply expected to climb higher still in December, we expect a further m-o-m fall in seaborne thermal coal imports this month; however, shipments should still exceed the year-ago level in December and into the Q124," he said.

BUSINESS LINE DATE:20/12/2023 P.NO3

GMDC to spend ₹900 crore on first underground copper mine in Gujarat

Avinash Nair
Ahmedabad

State-run Gujarat Mineral Development Corporation (GMDC) is planning to spend ₹900 crore on developing its first underground copper mine in North Gujarat. Expected to come up near the temple town of Ambaji and a sloth bear sanctuary, the company expects to commission the mine in the next three years.

"This will be the only copper mine to be developed in the country in the near future. It has more than 7 lakh tonnes of reserves, which primarily consist of copper, zinc and lead. Our exploratory drilling and sampling have revealed the presence of gold and silver. These base metals occur together," Roopwant Singh, Managing Director, GMDC, told *businessline*.

"We are currently solving the technical challenges. Given the nature of the deposits and its proximity to Ambaji town and Balaram Ambaji sanctuary, we have to undertake underground mining operations, which are fairly challenging and need extensive planning. It will be our first underground mine," said Singh. GMDC is one of the largest lignite producers in India. The proposed mine, spread over 184 hectares, is located about 3 km from Ambaji town.

GMDC plans to on-board agencies from Australia and South Africa that have the expertise to develop underground mines. "The proposed underground copper mine is expected to come up at a depth, which will be on a par with the Hindustan Zinc mines at Zarwar in Rajasthan," the IAS official added.

Concentrator plant

The metals found in the mining concentrate extracted from the mine will be separated in a concentrator plant set up near the mine. The extracts will then be sold to entities in the smelter business.

GMDC got this asset in 1973. A pilot plant set up in the 1990s never progressed to commercial production. The testing plant, which operated for 10 years, was closed after it failed to make the necessary downstream tie-ups.

A recent geo-magnetic survey conducted by GMDC revealed that the mineral concentration of copper reserves near Ambaji is more than 11.5 per cent of the total ore.

Zinc futures: Go long on dips, stop-loss at ₹219

Gurumurthy K
bl. research bureau

After hitting a low of ₹214.95 per kg early last week, the zinc futures contract on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX) has bounced back sharply. The contract is currently trading at ₹227 per kg.

The bounce that has been in place since last week has happened from very strong trendline support, turning the outlook bullish for the zinc contract. Strong support is in the ₹222-220 region. A fall below ₹220 looks less likely now. Intermediate dips are likely to get fresh buyers at lower levels. Moving averages indicate that the downside could be limited, strengthening the case for bullishness.

Zinc futures contract can rise to ₹235-240 over the next 3-4 weeks. The short-term outlook will turn negative only if the zinc contract falls below ₹220. In that case, ₹217-215 levels can be revisited.

TRADE STRATEGY

Traders can wait for dips. A short-term trade with a holding period of four weeks can be considered at this point in time.

Go long at ₹225 and ₹223. Keep the stop-loss at ₹219. Trail the stop-loss up to ₹227 as soon as the contract moves up to ₹230. Move the stop-loss further up to ₹231 when the price touches ₹233. Exit the long positions at ₹235.

BUSINESS LINE DATE:21/12/2023 P.NO3

Steel Ministry seeks to tighten import control

UPPING THE VIGIL. Mulls setting up lab-testing facility and other safeguard measures

Abhishek Law
New Delhi

The Steel Ministry, in a bid to control imports, especially from China, may consider setting up a quality testing lab at the JNPT port, off Mumbai.

Other safeguard measures mooted include reconsideration of the 'lesser duty rule', and imposition of tariff quotas on the lines of the European Union. The Ministry has also reached out to industry bodies and user industries seeking justification for such safeguard measures.

At a recent meeting between ministry officials and industry top brass, including representatives from industry bodies, it was pointed out that the imports, which largely arrive at JNPT Mumbai, have surged by over 40 per cent during April to October 2023, compared to the corresponding period a year ago.

"For implementation of mandatory quality control order for steel and steel product also, the lab testing facility are required to be developed so that random samples get tested. Arresting misclassification and misdeclaration by exporters/importers should also be a priority. Hence, a port-based scrutiny would be a quick way to check imports," it was reportedly suggested, as per the minutes of the meeting reviewed by *businessline*.

GROWING CONCERN. Government data show that steel imports from China have increased by 47%

NET IMPORTER

India became a net importer of steel during the April-November period (eight months of the fiscal) due to a continued fall in export orders and stiff competition from imports. Finished steel imports stood at 4.3 million tonnes (mt), exceeding exports (4mt) for the eight-month period. This marks a drastic change for India, the second largest producer of crude steel globally, from its position as a net exporter. Government data show that steel imports from China increased by 47 per cent, while an internal review by the Ministry raised concerns about imports from Vietnam, Korea and Japan, which are up by 13 per cent.

Industry bodies pointed out at the meeting that import of non-prime material was another matter of concern.

Non-prime steel imports into India during April-October included cold-rolled offering, which constituted 13 per cent of imports, while coated steel was 10 per cent, indicating a violation of quality control orders (QCOs). These non-prime steels are imported at abnormally low prices.

"Re-routing of imports was taking place. 'Rules of origin' in all trade facilitation agreements must be 'melt and pour' for steel, considering the advantageous position India has the in steel sector," it was mentioned.

MECHANISMS

During the meeting it was suggested that tariff rate quotas (TRQ) should be considered, on the lines of a similar response by the EU and the US.

It was also mentioned that while levying punitive duties, such as countervailing or anti-dumping duties, India follows the 'lesser duty rule', which needed to be reconsidered.

Incidentally, the Steel Ministry also asked industry bodies to decide on the "modalities" required for the removal of the 'lesser duty rule' with adequate justification.

It also sought justification for "designating specific ports of entry for clearly identified products".

THE HITCITYLINE DATE:21/12/2023 P.NO6

India's steel import to be elevated at 6MT in FY24 on strong demand: Crisil

■ **Business Reporter**

INDIA imported 4.26 MT finished steel in April-November 2023 and the import may touch 6 MT mark in the current fiscal mainly on account of strong domestic demand, according to a report by Crisil.

The report comes at a time when steel players are registering strong concerns of surging imports.

Global steel demand, which has been subdued since the onset of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, is expected to grow 1.6 per cent in 2023, after a sharp fall of 3.3 per cent in 2022, the global analytics company said.

The tepid rate of growth rides largely on a buoyant 13 per cent growth in demand in India, which has bucked the trend so far, Crisil said.

This fiscal, the steel sector in India is poised to clock its third consecutive year of double-digit growth at 11-13 per cent after growing 11.4 per cent and 13.4 per cent in fiscals 2022 and 2023, respectively.

"Strong domestic demand, supported by Government spending on infrastructure, building and construction segments, is expected to keep India's steel imports elevated around the 6 MT (million tonne) mark this fiscal even as the global steel industry battles a slowdown," Crisil said.

Chinese mills have started pushing volumes into the global market at highly competitive prices. Between January-November this year, exports from China increased 35.6 per cent to 82.7 MT - the highest since 2016.

Chinese exports to India have also surged.

As of November this fiscal, India imported 4.26 MT of finished steel, up 13.4 per cent on-year even as its exports declined 6.2 per cent to 4.03 MT, making the country a net importer of finished steel.

"Last fiscal, steel imports were around 5.6 per cent of domestic demand at 6.7 MT. We expect imports to be around 5.5 per cent mark this fiscal, too," Sehul Bhatt, Associate Director, Research, Crisil Marketing Intelligence and Analytics, said.

THE ECONOMIC TIMES DATE:21/12/2023 P.NO11

Steel Imports Set to Touch 6 mt

New Delhi: India imported 4.26 mt finished steel in April-November 2023 and imports may touch 6 mt mark in the current fiscal, mainly on account of strong domestic demand, according to a report by Crisil. The report comes at a time when steel players are registering strong concerns of surging imports.

Global steel demand, which has been subdued since the onset of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, is expected to grow 1.6% in 2023, after a sharp fall of 3.3 % in 2022, the global analytics company said.

The tepid rate of growth rides largely on a buoyant 13 per cent growth in demand in India, which has bucked the trend so far, Crisil said.

This fiscal, the steel sector in India is poised to clock its third consecutive year of double-digit growth at 11-13 per cent after growing 11.4 per cent and 13.4 per cent in fiscals 2022 and 2023, respectively.

"Strong domestic demand, supported by government spending on infrastructure, building and construction segments, is expected to keep India's steel imports elevated around the 6 MT (million tonne) mark this fiscal even as the global steel industry battles a slowdown," Crisil said.

Chinese mills have started pushing volumes into the global market at highly competitive prices. Between January-November this year, exports from China increased 35.6 per cent to 82.7 MT - the highest since 2016. Chinese exports to India have also surged. As of November this fiscal, India imported 4.26 MT of finished steel, up 13.4 per cent on-year even as its exports declined 6.2 per cent to 4.03 MT, making the country a net importer of finished steel. —**PTI**

THE ECONOMIC TIMES DATE:22/12/2023 P.NO15

Iron Ore May Be Pegged to Global Prices

OVERHAUL Move aims at plugging grade misclassification and making pricing mechanism more transparent

Twesh Mishra

New Delhi: India is eyeing an overhaul of the iron ore pricing mechanism that could include linking pegging domestically produced iron-ore to prices on global indices such as the London Metal Exchange or the Platts Iron Ore Index (IODEX) and develop a domestic benchmark in the form of the National Mineral Index.

The move, aimed at plugging misclassification of the grade of iron ore and making pricing more transparent and efficient, would impact iron ore producers and consumers. "It's a step towards trying to resolve the average price and monthly accounts-based system to an international indexing system," V L Kantha Rao, Secretary, Ministry of Mines, told **ET**.

These developments will also have wide ranging ramifications for states, including Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Karnataka, which produce around 96% of India's iron ore.

Iron Out

IRON ORE PRODUCTION IN INDIA

Financial Year	Quantity (mn tonnes)	Value (₹ crore)
2023-24*	127.79	42577.3
2022-23	257.85	79930.61
2021-22	253.974	96381.33
2020-21	205.042	52729.25
2019-20	244.083	49643.06
2018-19	206.495	45346.58

*April to September); **Source:** Ministry of Mines

CURRENT PRICING MECHANISM UNDER GLARE

At present the government accepts self-declaration of price by mining companies on the basis of sampling by authorised labs. Mining companies self-declare the rate at which they will sell the mined iron ore. The price declared is then used as a benchmark by the Indian Bureau of Mines (IBM) which announces the average sale price (ASP) for a particular grade of the ore. But the existing approach is said to be fraught with inefficiencies since there are wide variations in the sale price of similar ore grades. Moreover, the ASP is declared by IBM with a lag – September 2023 price was declared on December 5.

According to officials aware of the development, the move to revamp the pricing mechanism comes after instances of misdeclaration of ore grade by mining companies. They say there is a tendency to declare even the high grade iron ore as low grade to suppress royalty payments to the state government. Royalty from mining operations is pegged at 15% of the average sale price and it is credited to the state governments. Delay in declaration of price by the Indian Bureau of Mines also hurts the industry. "Mining companies have to pay higher royalty and district mineral fund (DMF) contributions if it is established that the declared sale price of an ore varies from the IBM published ASP for the grade during the month under consideration.

DMF is calculated as 2% of the royalty paid and is used for development activities in mining affected regions.

THE HITCITYLINE DATE:22/12/2023 P.NO6

MOIL 2023 production surpasses 16 lakh tonnes, records 21 per cent growth

- The city-based public sector enterprise has an ambitious vision of more than doubling its production to 3.50 million tonnes by 2030

Business Reporter

WITH production surpassing 16 lakh tonnes on December 20 in the calendar year, another remarkable feat was achieved by city-based public sector enterprise - MOIL Limited. This was 21 per cent higher than the previous best achieved in 2019.

Similarly, sales during the calendar year (up to December 20, 2023) has exceeded 14 lakh tonnes, breaking the multi-year record of 2007, says a press release issued.

MOIL Limited is a Schedule-A, Miniratna Category-I CPSE under the administrative control of Ministry of Steel, Government of India. MOIL is the largest producer of manganese ore in the country, contributing more than 45 per cent of the domestic production. It operates ten mines in the state of Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. The company has ambitious vision of more than doubling its production to 3.50 million tonnes by 2030.

MOIL is also exploring business opportunities in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Chhatisgarh and Odisha, besides other areas in Madhya Pradesh.

BUSINESS LINE DATE:23/12/2023 P.NO3

India's coking coal imports at 5-year high; Russia now among top three supplier

Abhishek Law
New Delhi

India's coking coal imports were at a five-year high during the April-November period (11 months) of this fiscal at 38.14 million tonnes (mt).

Imports were slightly higher on a Y-o-Y basis with nearly 38.12 mt of shipments coming in for the comparative period last year.

Buoyant steel demand in domestic markets continues to be a key reason for increasing demand in coking coal.

While Australia continues to be dominant supplier, accounting for 60 per cent of the shipments – a decline in share from a high 75 per cent some five years ago – India's steel mills are increasingly warming up to alternatives for the supply of the key feedstock material from Russia and the US. Supplies to these countries have more than doubled in the five-year period.

Russia is the third largest supplier, replacing countries such as Canada and Mozambique.

India, despite being the second largest producer of crude steel globally after China, remains short on coking coal supplies, especially at the domestic level. Mills rely primarily on imports, making the country the largest importer of coking coal.

GROWTH DRIVERS. Buoyant steel demand in domestic markets continues to be a key reason for increasing demand in coking coal. REUTERS

CHANGING DYNAMICS

Data from various ministries and trade sources, including from market research firm BigMint (formerly SteelMint), show that Australian hard coking coal supplies slid down to 22.78 mt in 11 months of FY24, down by 17 per cent over a five-year period. This incidentally is the lowest shipment from Australia in over five years. For the same period of FY20, it was 27.44 mt.

On a YoY basis, shipments of Australian coking coal were down 10 per cent from 25.16 mt in 11 months of FY23.

Against this, Indian mills continued to explore alternatives, primarily to counter price volatility arising out of dependence on a single country, namely Australia.

Russian supplies more than doubled in this half a decade period, from 1.75 mt in 11 months of FY20 to 3.9 mt in 11 months of FY24 (up 123 per cent). Interestingly data show that Russian coking coal supplies practically trebled on a YoY basis from just 1.4 mt in 11 months of FY23.

Over a five-year-period, coking coal supplies more than doubled from the US too. From 2 mt in 11 months of FY20, they rose to 5.8 mt in the 11 months of this fiscal, a near 200 per cent jump. On a YoY basis, supplies increased 10 per cent.

"So, Russian coking coal supplies have shot up specially with lenient buying norms, including discounts being provided. Indian mills are also managing the blend with Russian coal quite well. And right now, India is exploring alternatives beyond Australia. The numbers are already visible with the share of Austrian coal to total coking coal imports going down steadily," a Steel Ministry official told *businessline*.

Some other countries from where sourcing has begun including Poland and New Zealand, although numbers remain quite small. India is also exploring the possibility of tapping Mongolia, if infrastructure and supply lin put in place.

RISING STEEL DEMA

Increased coking coal de has so far been supporte rise in steel production domestic market. Prod of finished steel increas 13 per cent on YoY ba 88.9 mt for the period review (as against 78.5 Consumption stood at up 15 per cent YoY, as pe available from the Ministry.

Crude steel productio at 94 mt for 11 mont FY24, up 15 per cent Y compared to 83 mt in th ago period. Pig iron an metal production stood mt and 56.78 mt, up by cent and 8 per respectively.

THE HITCITYLINE
DATE:24/12/2023 P.NO6

GSI plans to instal AI for use in mineral exploration

GEOLOGICAL Survey of India (GSI) is planning to install advanced technologies like drones, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) for more efficient and accurate mineral exploration.

The move will also result in saving time and resources and discover hidden mineral deposits, according to a statement. GSI Director General Janardan Prasad said with the use of AI and ML technology in the field of mineral exploration, integration of various datasets using time-tested machine learning algorithms are gaining popularity because of their accuracy in delineating potential areas for mineralisation, according to a statement by the mines ministry.

"Especially AI has assisted the users for generation of 4D modelling by adding time component which allows reproducing the dynamic evolution of geological structures and reconstructing the past deformation history of geological formations," he said, while addressing a workshop hosted by GSI.

Mines Secretary V L Kantha Rao made a plea to all notified exploration agencies and startups working in the field of exploration to put special focus on critical minerals, potash and concealed deposits. He stressed upon the need for the use of new age technology, especially AI

THE HITAVADA DATE:24/12/2023 P.NO9

Coal Ministry

Domestic coal-based power generation rises 8.38% to 779.1 bu in Apr-Nov

- The overall coal-based power generation witnessed a y-o-y increase of 11.19 per cent during period on account of unprecedented rise in temperature

NEW DELHI, Dec 23 (PTI)

THE domestic coal-based power generation increased 8.38 per cent to 779.1 billion units (BU) in April-November FY24, an official statement said on Saturday.

In the year-ago period, the domestic coal-based power generation stood at 718.83 BU.

India's power generation increased 7.71 per cent in the period under review, the Coal Ministry said in a statement.

The overall coal-based power generation witnessed a year-on-year increase of 11.19 per cent during the period on account of unprecedented rise in temperature, delayed monsoon in the northern region of the country coupled with the resumption of full commercial activities post-COVID.

Coal import for blending decreased substantially by 44.28 per cent to 15.16 million tonne (MT) up to November in the current fiscal from 27.21 MT in the year-ago period, despite the escalating power demand.

"This shows the nation's commitment to self-reliance in coal production and minimising overall coal imports," the Ministry said.

The Government is persistent in its efforts to further enhance coal production, aiming to increase availability and reduce dependence on imported coal, thereby safeguarding foreign reserves.

THE HITAVADA DATE:24/12/2023 P.NO9

JSPL tie-up with RINL to secure supply of liquid steel to upcoming Angul plant

NEW DELHI, Dec 23 (PTI)

JINDAL Steel Power Ltd on Saturday said its partnership with Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd will ensure the supply of liquid steel to its upcoming hot strip mill at Angul in Odisha.

In a statement, JSPL said it has entered into a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with RINL for the operationalisation of the latter's blast furnace-3 (BF-3).

"The tie-up with RINL will release additional liquid steel for slab casting and onward rolling into hot rolled coils from JSPL's upcoming state-of-the-art hot strip mill at Angul which is slated for commissioning soon," it said.

The blast furnace BF-3 at the RINL plant in Visakhapatnam has been closed since January 2021. The restart of the BF-3 is planned for December 30,

2023, at a capacity of 2 lakh tonnes of hot metal per month.

"We extend wishes to the management and employees of RINL for embarking on this partnership," JSPL Managing Director (MD) Bimlendra Jha said.

On Friday, RINL said JSPL will provide working capital support or raw material supply of Rs 800-900 crore under a pact signed between the companies.

In return, RINL will ensure the supply of 90,000 tonnes of cast blooms to the private steel company, JSPL said in a statement. JSPL ramped up the capacity of its plant in Angul, Odisha to 11.6 million tonnes per annum (MTPA) from the existing 5.6 MTPA.

Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd (RINL), under the Ministry of Steel, is among the top six steel manufacturing companies in India. There are three blast furnaces of 2.5 million tonne (MT) each at its plant in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.

THE ECONOMIC TIMES DATE:25/12/2023 P.NO9

Steel Production Grows 11% in Nov

New Delhi: India has registered an increase of 11.4% in its crude steel production at 11.7 million tonne (MT) in November this year, according to World Steel Association (worldsteel). During January-November, the country's production was 12.1% higher year on year (y-o-y) at 128.2 MT, the global body said in its latest report.

The global steel production in November was at 145.5 MT, 3.3% up over same month in 2022.

The world output rose marginally by 0.5% to 1,715.1 MT in January-November 2023, worldsteel said.

The global steel output in November was at 145.5 MT, 3.3% up over same month in 2022

China produced 76.1 MT steel in November, up 0.4% over November 2022. It produced 952.1 MT in January-November, higher 1.5% y-o-y.

In November, Japan's output fell 0.9% to 7.1 MT, while the overall production was 2.8% lower at 80 MT during January-November 2023.

The US produced 6.6 MT steel in last month and 73.9 MT in the eleven-month period of 2023.

Russia produced 6.4 MT in November and 70.2 MT in January-November 2023. South Korea's production stood at 5.4 MT in November and 61.3 MT in the 11-month period of 2023.

In November this year, Germany produced 2.7 MT, Türkiye produced 3 MT, and Brazil 2.7 MT. —PTI

Global steel output rose 3.3% in November

Achuth Vinay
Chennai

Global crude steel production increased 3.3 per cent in November to 145.5 million tonnes (mt) against 139.5 mt in the corresponding previous month. For the January-November period, production in the 71 nations that account for 85 per cent of world steel output was pegged at 1,715.1 mt, up 0.5 per cent.

According to the World Steel Association, top producer China's output stood at 76.1 mt in November, up 0.4 per cent from the year-ago period. For the January-November period, China's output was 1.5 per cent higher at 952.1 mt. India reported a 11.4 per cent rise in production at 11.7 mt. Overall, for the January-November period, India's steel output increased 12.1 per cent at 128.2 mt.

PUMPED UP. For the January-November period, steel output was up 12.1% at 128.2 mt ISTOCKPHOTO

OTHER PRODUCERS

Russia's production surged by 12.5 per cent to 6.4 mt. While the output in the US increased by 6.1 per cent at 6.6 mt, South Korea's output went up by 11.9 per cent at 5.4 mt. Turkiye and Iran reported production jumps of 25.4 per cent and 7.6 per cent, respectively, at 3 mt each year-on-year. The steel output in Brazil too went up by 3.8 per cent at 2.7 mt.

Steel production in Japan and Germany tumbled by 0.9 per cent and 2.4 per cent, respectively, to end at 7.1 mt and 2.7 mt.

Region-wise, Africa and Asia-Oceania saw their output go up by 3.1 per cent and 2.2 per cent, respectively. The EU's output wen up by 3.2 per cent while Europe (Others) saw a surge in production by 22.2 per cent.

The Middle-East region's production went up 4 per cent while North America's output increased by 3.1 per cent. South America's steel production dipped a tad, going down by 0.6 per cent compared with November 2022.

THE HITAVADA DATE:26/12/2023 P.NO9

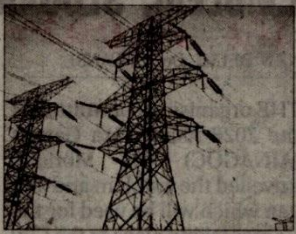
2024 Coal-fired generation capacity in focus for energy security, 24x7 electricity supply

NEW DELHI, Dec 25 (PTI)

INDIA will focus on setting up more coal-fired power projects as well as keep adding renewable generation capacity to achieve 24x7 electricity supply for all in 2024 amid economic expansion and the need to ensure energy security in these times of rising geopolitical uncertainties.

In a reflection of ambitious plans, the Union Power Ministry has planned a whooping 91 GW of coal-based thermal power generation capacity entailing an investment of Rs 7.28 lakh crore over the next few years.

Talking to PTI, Union Power and New & Renewable Energy Minister R K Singh said, "24X7 supply of power is right of the consumer. Similarly, energy security is of paramount importance for us. You have seen what happened in Europe



due to the Russia-Ukraine war."

At present, average power supply across India is 23.50 hours in urban areas and 22 hours in rural areas, he said.

Singh also said that the coal-based thermal power capacity will insulate the country from any geopolitical disruption and ensure energy security for the country at a time when our economy is expanding rapidly. The coal-based capacity addition is also important in view of rising demand of electricity in the country as peak power demand was at an all-time high of 243.27 GW in September 2023.

India has installed power generation capacity of about 426 GW, including more than 213 GW of coal and lignite-based projects. Earlier this month, President Droupadi Murmu said the dependence on fossil fuels is definitely decreasing but fossil fuel-based energy is also essential for the country.

India has always worked as a responsible country in the field of clean energy. India is promoting clean coal technologies so that the processes of coal extraction and use become more efficient and environment friendly, she had said at an event.

According to the 20th Electric Power Survey (EPS) report published in November 2022, peak power demand in the country will touch 366.39 GW in 2031-32, 465.53 GW in 2036-37 and 574.68 GW in 2041-42.

THE HITCITYLINE DATE:27/12/2023 P.NO6

MECL holds awareness event

Business Reporter

CITY-BASED CPSE, Mineral Exploration And Consultancy Ltd. (MECL), recently conducted a pivotal exploration 'Bidders Awareness Programme' here in city. This initiative aimed to fortify ties with potential stakeholders / bidders, offering insights into mineral exploration, auction policies, and the current status of mineral block auctions in Maharashtra.

Indra Dev Narayan, Chairman cum Managing Director, MECL welcomed and addressed the gathering in the esteemed presence of guest officials comprising of Naresh Zurmure, IFS, Addl. PCCF and Nodal Officer PCCF Maharashtra, Dr Gajanan Kamde, Director DGM Maharashtra, Dinesh Ganvir, ADG NMH-II, GSI, Dr Dilip Ranjan Kanungo, Director (Ore Dressing), IBM, Pankaj Pandey, Director (Technical) MECL, Dheeraj Kumar, Dy. Secretary, MoM, P Ravindran, GM (Exploration) MECL and Varun Gupta of SBI CAP.

The event was hosted by Sanidhya Shahane, Asst. Manager (Geophysics) with a concluding note by Pradeep P Kulkarni, Dy. GM (Exploration), MECL.

BUSINESS LINE DATE:28/12/2023 P.NO3

At 24.75 mt, iron ore exports to China zoom 400% y-o-y in April-Nov

Abhishek Law
New Delhi

China has emerged the highest buyer of iron ore from India with nearly 24.75 million tonnes (mt) being exported for April-November period (eight months), a 400 per cent year-on-year rise, sources across different Ministries told *businessline*. This is the highest export to China in absolute terms in over the last three years, and second highest since FY20.

Iron ore is a key feedstock, with China using the bulk commodity only for steel-making. Incidentally, India competes with China in global markets in finished steel offerings like hot rolled coils.

EXPORTS RISE

So far this fiscal, nearly 95 per cent of India's iron ore shipments have gone to China, data show while small stocks went to Indonesia, Malaysia and South Korea.

The country's steel-makers have raised concerns over rising steel shipments coming in, thereby impacting domestic market dynamics, including prices. India is now a net importer of steel, reversing a three-year record.

Over the last five years, exports to China (from India) have gone up sharply.

From 18.15 mt for 8 months of FY20 or 76 per cent of total shipments, it shot up to 92 per cent at 35.19 mt in FY21 — the highest in absolute numbers.

Shipments dropped to 90 per cent-odd at 17.23 mt in FY22 in view of Covid-led restrictions impacting trade and supplies.

Last fiscal, supplies from India were at just 5 mt, but even that accounted at 72 per cent of the total exports of 7 mt, for the period under review, data from consultancy firm BigMint (formerly SteelMint) show.

Sources said imposition of export duty had dragged down Indian numbers last year, while FY21 was seen as one of the best years in view of high steel demand globally.

"Iron ore prices continue to be on the higher side this year driven by Chinese demand. And a good rally is being witnessed since August," a trade source said.

Buying of the commodity, by China, from Australia and Brazil are also up in high single digits, sources said.

THE CHINA STORY

Iron ore prices have defied investors' expectations and climbed significantly, by almost two-fifths since May, primarily because China - despite global anticipation - has not gone ahead with production cuts in steel-making.

Market speculation was non-recovery in the property sector and a slowing government infra project pipeline would finally bring down iron ore prices. But that has not happened.

Prices for the bulk commodity, a crucial ingredient in steel, climbed 30-35 per cent over the past seven months to $130-135 a tonne, Argus and other trade level data show.

Right now, China faces a situation where it has excess steel stocks (collaborated with high iron ore purchases) that it is exporting / pushing abroad, including in countries like India. A slide in the yuan to the dollar have only helped push steel exports there.

THE ECONOMIC TIMES DATE:28/12/2023 P.NO8

So, Is Copper the New Lithium?


Dhiraj Nayyar & Gouranga Sen

In the world of minerals and metals, copper doesn't attract the headlines or excitement that lithium, cobalt, nickel and rare earths do. Perhaps that is because, unlike the 'new age' metals, copper is almost as old as civilisation. Even the Bronze Age, when copper was first blended with tin, occurred 5,000 years ago. Yet, copper is as much a critical mineral for the economies of the future as lithium is. It deserves a significant focus in discussions on mineral supply and supply-chain security.

For long, copper has been the most preferred metal for electrical conduction due to its unique features like strength, ductility, corrosion resistance, and safest conduction of electricity and heat. It has now emerged as a critical metal in the energy transition technologies.

▶ **Riding on EV** On average, an EV requires around 83 kg of copper compared to 23 kg for a conventional vehicle. Not only is copper usage fourfold but, as per IEA, EV sales are projected to grow from 10 million units in 2022 to 37 million units by 2030.

▶ **RE hunger** Wind and solar photovoltaic energy systems are significant consumers of copper. While an onshore wind installation uses around 3.8 tonnes of copper per MW, offshore windmills use nearly 10.5 tonnes of copper per MW in cable, wiring, turbine components and transformers. Similarly, one MW of solar power systems contains about 5.5 tonnes of copper.

Global RE generation capacity is projected to more than double from 3,600 GW in 2022 to 8,600 GW in 2030, and over five times to 19,000 GW in 2050. The demand for copper will grow rapidly as the world acts on climate change. But there are several challenges:

▶ **Supply hurdles** The global lead time of any greenfield mining project has increased to an average of 12-15 years due to substantial delays in getting regulatory clearances. A prolonged bear market in copper from 2011 until Covid struck also weighed down on the exploration of copper. Major discoveries almost dried up.

Let it glow

▶ **Quality cuts** The quality of copper ore has also been falling. For example, the grade of copper ore in Chile, the world's leading producer, has declined by 30% in the last 15 years. Issues relating to resource nationalism and trade restrictions are also on the rise.

▷ Chile has passed a bill to set a maximum tax rate of around 47% on companies producing over 80,000 tonnes of fine copper yearly.

▷ Indonesia, another major producer, will stop the export of copper concentrate once its two domestic copper producers complete the building of smelters and commence production in 2024.

The bottom line is that the copper market is likely to face a supply shortage.

▶ **Rebound expected** A recent McKinsey report predicts that the copper market will be in a deficit of 6.5 Mt in 2031 as demand (36.6 Mt) will outstrip supply (30.1 Mt). Currently, copper prices are down by 30% from the peak of $10,466 per tonne in early 2022, mainly due to rising interest rates and the slowdown in China. But as the interest-rate cycle is close to its peak, the possibility of a rebound in copper price looks likely, and that may encourage exploration and investment.

▶ **Wider application** Despite the 'gold rush' for lithium, nickel, cobalt and rare earths, copper may have an edge from a long-term investment point of view due to its wider application. This future-proofs demand against changes in the technology landscape, unlike the new-age metals, which rely heavily on demand from battery manufacturing.

As per an IEA estimate, by 2050, nearly 80% of lithium demand will be tied up with battery manufacturing, and 35-40% of demand for nickel will be dependent on EV batteries. On the other hand, exposure of copper to battery manufacturing is likely to be limited to 4% in 2050 — not much of a change from its current level.

This is important because the relative importance of, and demand for, lithium, cobalt or nickel may fall if newer technologies like sodium-ion batteries or zinc-air batteries become commercially successful — early signs of which are visible. Green hydrogen could be another disruptor. This is not the case for copper, which is used in all parts of the energy transition technologies, not just batteries.

We may yet be heading for a new 'Copper Age'. Governments and investors must adequately prepare for it.

Nayyar is chief economist, and Sen is head, economic and policy analysis, Vedanta

THE HITAVADA DATE:29/12/2023 P.NO9

Gold JUMPS Rs 450; silver CLIMBS Rs 400

NEW DELHI, Dec 28 (PTI)

GOLD prices surged Rs 450 to Rs 64,300 per 10 grams in the national capital on Thursday amid strong global cues, according to HDFC Securities.

This is at least the second time the precious metal prices have touched a record high of Rs 64,300 per 10 grams on December 4. In the previous trade, the yellow metal had ended at Rs 63,850 per 10 grams.

Silver also climbed Rs 400 to Rs 79,500 per kilogram, while it had closed at Rs 79,100 per kg in the previous close. In the international markets, gold and silver were quoting higher at USD 2,080 per ounce and USD 24.31 per ounce, respectively.

"The Comex spot gold surged to a three-week high following a fall in US Treasury yields and the dollar index, while traders anticipate aggressive Federal Reserve interest rate cuts by next year," Saumil Gandhi, senior analyst of commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

The US jobs data, to be released on Thursday, will give more cues on the macro front and provide further insights into the potential shifts in the US Fed's monetary policy, Gandhi added.

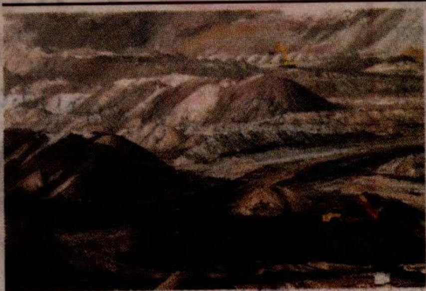
DAINIK BHASKAR DATE:29/12/2023 P.NO12

उपलब्धि • 664 मिलयन टन तक पहुंचा, कोयला मंत्रालय ने दी जानकारी

देश का कोयला उत्पादन 12.29 फीसदी तक बढ़ा

ब्यूरो | नई दिल्ली

देश का कोयला उत्पादन चालू वित्त वर्ष 2023-24 (1 अप्रैल से 25 दिसंबर 2023) के दौरान बढ़कर 664.37 मिलियन टन पर पहुंच गया है। यह पिछले वित्त वर्ष की समान अवधि के दौरान उत्पादित 591.64 मिलियन टन से 12.29 फीसदी अधिक है।



91.05 मिलियन कोयले का स्टॉक

मंत्रालय के मुताबिक, 25 दिसंबर तक खदानों, थर्मल पावर प्लांटों, पारगमन आदि सहित कुल कोयला का स्टॉक 91.05 मिलियन तक पहुंच गया है, जो 21.57 फीसदी की सराहनीय वृद्धि को दर्शाती है। मंत्रालय ने बताया कि इसके अतिरिक्त 25 दिसंबर तक कोल इंडिया लिमिटेड में पिटहेड कोयले का स्टॉक 47.29 मिलियन है, जो पिछले साल 25 दिसंबर को 30.88 मिलियन के कोयला स्टॉक की तुलना में 53.02 प्रतिशत की उल्लेखनीय वृद्धि दर्शाता है।

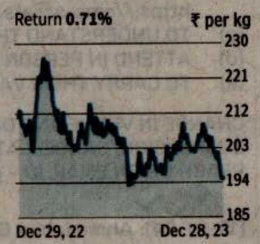
कोयला मंत्रालय ने गुरुवार को जारी आंकड़ों में बताया कि चालू वित्त वर्ष 2023-24 में 25 दिसंबर तक कोयला उत्पादन 664.37 मिलियन टन तक रहा है। आंकड़ों के मुताबिक कोयला का प्रेषण इस अवधि के दौरान 692.84 मिलियन टन था, जो पिछले वर्ष की इसी अवधि के 622.40 मिलियन टन की तुलना में 11.32 फीसदी की वृद्धि दर्शाती है। इसके अलावा 25 दिसंबर 2023 तक बिजली क्षेत्र को कुल कोयला डिस्पैच 8.39 फीसदी बढ़कर 577.11 मिलियन टन तक पहुंच गया। पिछले वर्ष की समान अवधि के दौरान यह 532.43 मिलियन टन रहा था। यह वृद्धि बिजली क्षेत्र की ऊर्जा जरूरतों को पूरा करने के लिए निरंतर और मजबूत कोयला आपूर्ति सुनिश्चित करती है।

BUSINESS LINE
DATE:29/12/2023 P.NO10

COMMODITY CALL.

Accumulate aluminium longs on declines

Gurumurthy K
bl. research bureau



Aluminium prices have been rising well since the middle of December. Although there was a correction in prices last week, the strong rise on Friday last week had ended that. The aluminium futures contract (January) on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX) is currently trading at ₹212 per kg. The contract has surged about 8 per cent over the last couple of weeks.

The outlook is bullish. Strong support is now in the ₹210-209 region. Intermediate dips are likely to be short-lived. Strong buyers are likely to enter in the ₹210-209 region and limit the downside.

As long as the contract trades above this support zone, the rising trend will continue. MCX aluminium futures can rise to ₹219-220 over the next couple of weeks.

But from the price action on the charts, the momentum appears strong. As such, we see a high chance for the contract to sustain above the ₹210-209 support zone.

TRADE STRATEGY

Traders can go long now. Accumulate on dips at ₹210. Keep the stop-loss at ₹207. Trail the stop-loss up to ₹213 as soon as the contract moves up to ₹215. Move the stop-loss further up to ₹216 when the contract touches ₹218. Exit the long positions at ₹219.

DAINIK BHASKAR DATE:29/12/2023 P.NO7

चालू वित्त वर्ष में अब तक कोयला उत्पादन 12.29 प्रतिशत बढ़ा

एजेंसी|नई दिल्ली

देश का कोयला उत्पादन चालू वित्त वर्ष 2023-24 में अप्रैल से 25 दिसंबर तक सालाना आधार पर 12.29 प्रतिशत बढ़कर 66.43 करोड़ टन हो गया है। एक आधिकारिक बयान में यह जानकारी दी गई। पिछले साल की समान अवधि में कोयला उत्पादन 59.16 करोड़ टन था। आधिकारिक बयान के अनुसार, 'कोयला मंत्रालय के नवीनतम आंकड़ों के अनुसार, वित्त वर्ष 2023-24 में अप्रैल, 2023 से 25 दिसंबर, 2023 तक कोयला उत्पादन सालाना आधार पर 12.29 प्रतिशत बढ़कर 66.43 करोड़ टन पर पहुंच गया, जो पिछली साल इसी अवधि में 59.16 करोड़ टन था।' वहीं अप्रैल से 25 दिसंबर तक कोयले की आपूर्ति बढ़कर 69.28 करोड़ टन हो गई, जो पिछले साल समान अवधि में 62.24 करोड़ टन थी। कोयला मंत्रालय ने कहा कि यह वृद्धि बिजली क्षेत्र की बढ़ती ऊर्जा जरूरतें पूरी करने के लिए निरंतर तथा मजबूत कोयला आपूर्ति सुनिश्चित करती है। मंत्रालय ने कहा, 'अप्रैल से 25 दिसंबर, 2023 तक बिजली क्षेत्र को कुल कोयला आपूर्ति 8.39 प्रतिशत बढ़कर 57.71 करोड़ टन रही।

Gold zooms on hopes of US Fed rate cut

Our Bureau
Mumbai

Gold prices touched three-week high at ₹63,452 per 10 gm on Thursday against the previous close of ₹63,223 after the US dollar and bond yields hit multi-month lows.

On the MCX, gold for February delivery was down ₹198 to ₹63,480 and April contract lost ₹180 to close at ₹63,800.

In the US, spot gold was up 0.5 per cent at $2,086.69 per ounce hitting its highest since December 4, when prices raced to a record high of $2,135.40.

Gold prices surged on market expectations of an early cut in US interest rate by the Federal Reserve in the first quarter of next year. The surge in gold prices was prompted by a significant decline in the US core Personal Consumption Expenditure price index in November, reinforcing hopes of imminent rate cuts by the Fed.

GAINING GLITTER. Weaker US dollar and bond yields with markets betting on rate cuts early next year aided the price rise

CHANGE IN FED STANCE

Ajay Kumar, Director, Kedia Commodities, said investors are currently pricing in the first rate cut in March, followed by a second cut in May, marking a shift from the central bank's recent trend of historically rapid rate-tightening.

The expectation of rate cuts is influenced by a change in Fed policymakers' stance, as they may now support an early reduction in borrowing costs to address the prolonged tightening of interest rates. This shift is seen as a potential driver for overall employment and economic conditions, he said. The buoyant sentiment around rate cuts has also contributed to a rise in home prices, which had remained subdued from February 2022 until June. Additionally, the stronger-than-expected 5.4 per cent growth in new orders for durable goods in November, compared to a contraction of 5.1 per cent in October, adds to the positive economic indicators.

The yellow metal has gained nearly 15 per cent this year, particularly over the past few weeks on hopes of the US Fed rate cut.

BUSINESS LINE DATE:29/12/2023 P.NO3

Steel trade deficit widens to ₹2,400 cr as Chinese imports flood the markets

Abhishek Law
New Delhi

India saw a surge in steel shipments from China, up 50 per cent on a year-on-year basis at 1.34 million tonnes (mt), and a 500 per cent surge in offerings from Vietnam at 0.5 mt.

Imports from China and Vietnam are already at multi-year highs, with the former accounting for a third of the imports in value and 31 per cent in volume terms.

Incidentally, India is among the largest suppliers of iron ore, a key steel-making component, to China. Apart from becoming a net importer of steel, reversing a three-year-trend, India's steel trade deficit widened to ₹2,400 crore (approximate) for the period under review as imports continued to exceed exports.

China is already saddled with excess steel stocks, considering its depressed property market and slow moving infra projects, and the country continues to push offerings in export markets at lower than production costs.

It has also routed offerings through Vietnam, say Indian traders.

In November, China's finished steel exports rebounded to the fourth highest position in 2023 at 8.005 mt, up 0.3 per cent on the month and 43.2 per cent on the year, China's customs data showed.

In the January-November period, steel exports increased 35.6 per cent, or 21.7 million mt, on the year, at 82.658 million mt.

According to a report of the Union Steel Ministry, accessed by *businessline*, finished steel imports during the eight-month-period was valued at ₹36,813 crore ($4,455 million), whereas exports stood at ₹34,420 crore ($4,165 million).

China is already saddled with excess steel stocks, considering its depressed property market and slow moving infra projects

In volume terms, imports exceeded exports by 0.3 million tonnes (mt). Imports were at 4.3 mt, up 14 per cent y-o-y, outpacing exports at 4.0 mt, down six per cent.

TRADE DYNAMICS

China emerged as the highest seller of steel, displacing Korea and Japan, the traditional markets. While there was a 15 per cent y-o-y drop in imports from Korea at 1.28 mt, Japan managed to increase imports by 35 per cent at 0.6 mt.

A 50 per cent increase in volume sales notwithstanding, Chinese shipment of the alloy (finished steel) saw only a six per cent jump in prices (in dollar terms) y-o-y at $1,453 million (₹12,000 crore) versus $1,374 million (₹11,000 crore).

Semi-finished imports from China, although relatively small, saw a 388 per cent jump y-o-y at $21.3 million.

"This indicates shipments came in at prices lower than the existing trade / international price or even the domestic market price, after adjusting for the dollar, which stood at ₹82 this year against ₹80 last year," said a trade source.

In fact, overall steel prices remained depressed, down 17 per cent at $4,455 million (despite rise in volumes) on a y-o-y basis, for the eight-month period, the Ministry report showed.

BUSINESS LINE DATE:29/12/2023 P.NO4

Domestic steel demand to stay strong

POSITIVE PICTURE. Though sector is grappling with import-induced headwinds, outlook looks promising

Abhishek Law
New Delhi

Backed by government spending on infrastructure, building and construction, domestic steel demand is expected to stay strong in 2024. Realisations in the domestic market are expected to remain strong, though imports could be elevated. Exports will be stretched across key markets beyond Europe, in view of the global slowdown in demand.

Market sources peg domestic demand to be in the double-digit range, while research firm Crisil expects Indian imports to be "elevated around the 6 million tonne (mt) mark this fiscal."

Crisil said in a report that steel imports were around 5.6 per cent of domestic demand at 6.7 mt. "We expect imports to be around 5.5 per cent mark this fiscal year.

Ranjan Dhar, CMO, ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India (AM/NS India), told *businessline*, that the Indian steel sector is currently grappling with import-induced headwinds, "but the long-term outlook looks positive."

ROLE REVERSAL. India, currently the second largest crude steel producer globally, turned net importer of steel this November

RISING IMPORTS

Reversing a near-three-year trend, India, currently the second largest crude steel producer globally, turned net importer of steel in November this year by 0.3 mt.

Traders primarily imported 4.3 mt across categories like coated steel, etc. (up 14 per cent y-o-y) between April and November, compared with exports for the period that stood at 4 mt (declined by 6 per cent y-o-y). This marked a drastic change in India's competitive landscape.

According to Dhar, for the past one to two months, market prices have been trading at a discount to mill prices. "However, with global prices on the rise, we expect market correction, leading to price hikes in the coming weeks," he said, adding that the influx of imports from China, Vietnam, and Indonesia is hampering India. Most of the imports came in from China, as per initial data available with the Steel Ministry. Vietnam, once a key export market for India's mills, is now one of the largest sellers to Indian traders.

"If we remain open to imports and the domestic demand is good, then exporting countries will continue to participate, a challenge for Indian mills," Dhar said, adding that "to ensure sustainable growth and expand capacity, maintaining healthy margins remains crucial for domestic producers."

The changing market dynamics have also made the Ministry and Centre take note, as they have begun initiating discussions with the industry on the imposition of possible safeguards and their legal tenability — tariff rate quotas, portside surveillance and testing, removal of the lesser duty rule, among others.

THE CHINA FACTOR

China, the world's largest producer of the commodity, is yet to pick up on expected lines post pandemic.

However, oversupply has led to subdued prices. Over the past few months, Chinese mills have been facing margin pressure, mainly due

ports play a crucial role on domestic steel prices by balancing supply with demand, this development has been keeping domestic mills on tenterhooks.

DOMESTIC DEMAND

Strong growth momentum has supported steel prices in India.

Coking coal, a key feedstock for steel making, shipments coming in are at a five-year high at 38.14 mt, indicating improved steel demand here.

"India has clearly bucked global trends," said a senior Steel Ministry official, pointing out that capacity utilisation across India's steel mills are a high 83 per cent.

Production of finished steel (April–November) increased by 13

'Steel industry seeks govt policy support'

Abhishek Law
New Delhi

Steel demand in India has been an outlier, bucking global headwinds and growing in double digits. Expectations for 2024 are that it will be another year with domestic demand, driven by the government's thrust on infras.

According to Ranjan Dhar, Chief Marketing Officer, ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India (AM/NS India), the steel industry is also expecting favourable government policies, apart from price stability.

In an interview with *businessline*, he talks about the outlook for 2024 and the way forward for AM/NS India, among others. Excerpts:

> The steel industry looks forward to supportive govt policies that address challenges such as raw material availability and pricing, predatory imports
>
> **RANJAN DHAR**
> Chief Marketing Officer
> ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India

What is the sector outlook for 2024?

Steel players are anticipating a surge in demand driven by domestic consumption and revivals in global economy, such as the EU and China. In India, expectations are for increased demand across infra projects, automobile production, and overall construction activities.

Additionally, the steel industry looks forward to supportive government policies that facilitate growth and address challenges such as raw material availability, predatory imports, and raw material pricing.

Is there any overhang in 2023 that you hope will be resolved in 2024?

Enhanced imports into India were a major challenge in 2023.

The year saw steel mills grapple with economic fluctuations and supply chain disruptions. Most companies navigated them through agile strategies, investing in research and development, and fostering resilient supply chains.

In 2024, the steel industry hopes for stable and predictable market conditions. The industry desires a conducive policy environment that supports innovation, addresses infrastructure needs, and ensures a fair global trade landscape.

What are AM/NS India's goals for 2024?

AM/NS India experienced growth despite market uncertainties in 2023, and this was attributable to its strategic investments in technology and efficient supply chain management.

The company aims to further consolidate its position as a leading steel producer by focusing on technological advancements that include optimising production processes, enhancing product quality, and expanding the product portfolio.

2024 will be the first year when our new and marquee products will be launched, including 'Magnelis' that finds usage in solar applications.

THE ECONOMIC TIMES DATE:30/12/2023 P.NO7

Cement Stocks Outperform on Strong Volume Growth Prospects

Nikita Periwal

Mumbai: Shares of major cement producers outperformed the broader market this week on prospects of robust volume growth and improved profitability due to lower input costs in the second half of the current fiscal.

UltraTech Cement, ACC, Shree Cements, Ambuja Cements, Ramco Cements and Dalmia Bharat ended 2-6% higher for the week. Benchmarks Nifty 50 and Sensex gained up to 2% each, testing record highs during the week.

"We upgrade our view on India's cement industry on account of potential stronger sales volume growth, better pricing discipline, and roll forward our valuations to FY26F," Nomura India said in a note to its clients on Wednesday.

Demand between October and March is likely to be 11% higher compared to April-September, and 13% higher compared to the same period of the previous year, the brokerage said, raising target prices for the companies under its coverage by 11-28%.

Shares of most of these companies, except for ACC and Ambuja, have had a strong run in 2023, gaining around 23-51% so far in the year helped by demand from infrastructure and housing projects. The brokerage said that sales volume for the industry is likely to grow at a compounded annual growth rate of 5% during 2023-26 (Apr-Mar), 100-basis points higher than the 4% growth seen over the last decade. During April-Sep, the industry saw a 17% growth in sales.

While FY24 is set to conclude on a strong note for cement makers, both in terms of earnings and share prices, demand is expected to grow slower from FY25 onwards, as infrastructure project launches typically come down in a general election year, Nomura said. The improvement in profitability that cement makers have been seeing since earlier this year is set to continue with operating profit per tonne seen improving by Rs200-250/tonne in the December quarter.

For FY25, Nomura sees strong volume momentum, better pricing discipline and relatively lower cost," helping improve profitability by Rs150-200 per tonne.

On technical charts, most of the shares in this space are showing an uptrend, said Sahaj Agrawal of Kotak Securities. "The gains are driven by more momentum than value, so if investors are looking for long-term bets, it would be best to do it in a staggered manner, using any meaningful correction to buy these shares," he said.

nikita.periwal@timesgroup.com

On Solid Grounds

(Dec 29, 2023)

Company	Rating	Target Price (in ₹)	Closing Price (in ₹)
UltraTech Cement	Buy	11,500	10,503.05
ACC	Reduce	1,950	2,211.55
Ambuja Cement	Reduce	480	520.90
Dalmia Bharat	Buy	2,900	2,275.20
Ramco Cements	Buy	1,250	1,020.00
Shree Cement	Buy	33,400	28,653.30

Source: Nomura India

HEMANT L

BUSINESS LINE DATE:30/12/2023 P.NO3

76 mineral blocks auctioned in 2023: Govt

Press Trust of India
New Delhi

The government on Friday said that as many as 76 mineral blocks have been auctioned in the current year.

Of the 76 mineral blocks, 30 mineral blocks were auctioned for mining lease and the remaining 46 were sold as a composite licence.

Mining lease means a lease granted for the purpose of undertaking mining operations, while, composite licence is a two-stage operating right granted for the purpose of undertaking exploration followed by production operation.

"During 2023, 76 mineral blocks have been successfully auctioned till December.

"Out of these, 30 mineral blocks were auctioned for mining lease and the remaining 46 were auctioned as composite licence," the Mines Ministry said in a statement.

Of the total 335 blocks auctioned since 2015, 46 are operational and 43 are in production.

BUSINESS LINE DATE:30/12/2023 P.NO3

Coal production rises over 12% to 664.37 MT this fiscal

Business Reporter

THE country's coal production increased 12.29 per cent to 664.37 Million Tonnes (MT) from April to December 25 this fiscal over the year-ago period, according to an official statement.

The country's coal output was 591.64 MT in the same period last year.

"As per the latest statistics of the Ministry of Coal, the cumulative achievement in coal production during FY 2023–24, from April 2023 to December 25, 2023, has touched 664.37 MT, indicating a substantial 12.29 per cent growth compared to the corresponding period last year at 591.64 MT," according to an official statement.

The coal dispatch from April to December 25 increased to 692.84 MT over 622.40 MT in the year-ago period.

The increase ensures a consistent and robust coal supply to meet the energy needs of the power sector, the coal ministry said.

"Furthermore, the overall coal dispatch to the power sector from April to December 25, 2023, increased by an impressive 8.39 per cent, reaching 577.11 MT compared to 532.43 MT during the corresponding period of the previous year," the ministry said.

THE HITAVADA DATE:31/12/2023 P.NO6

Steel prices soften by Rs 5,000/tonne on weak demand, flood of imports

■ Business Reporter

THE locally produced steel TMT bar prices have corrected by Rs 5,000 per tonne in the last 4 months because of weak demand in the market.

The local or secondary steel producers are in a dilemma these days as they are facing lower demand for their products by the builders, wholesalers and retailers.

In the current situation, steel TMT bar prices are witnessing steep drop in demand in the secondary market as they have crashed by Rs 5,000 per tonne (excluding GST) in the last four months.

From its peak of Rs 50,500 per tonne (excluding 18 per cent GST) in August-September, the prices of 8 mm steel TMT bars slipped to Rs 46,500 per tonne (excluding GST), 10 mm steel TMT bars dropped to Rs 45,500 per tonne (excluding GST) and 12 mm to 25 mm steel TMT bars were at Rs 45,000 per tonne (excluding GST) on Saturday.

Rajesh Sarda, President of Steel and Hardware Chamber, said that there is weak demand for products manufactured by secondary steel producers which is affecting prices. To make matters worse, China and other Asian countries are dumping their products in the domestic markets due to which the supply demand ratio has got disturbed," he said.

Sarda said the Government is investing heavily in building infrastructure, but the entire steel is purchased from primary steel producers like Tata Steel, SAIL and Jindal Steel.

He suggested that the Government intervene and boost demand in the domestic markets by reducing interest rates and lowering GST on steel TMT bars.

LOCAL STEEL PRODUCER PRICES

TMT Bar	prices per tonne + GST
8 m	Rs 46,000 to Rs 46,500 + 18% GST
10 mm	Rs 45,000 to Rs 45,500 + 18% GST
12 mm, 25 mm	Rs 44,500 to Rs 45,000 + 18% GST

++