

'Speed up coal loading to improve supply'

Will free up 10-15 rakes daily, Railways tells Coal Ministry

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Ahead of the peak power demand season, amidst indications of an impending coal supply shortage, the Railways has suggested the Coal Ministry reduce the loading time at collieries and avoid loading oversized coal boulders to enhance rake availability, which will help in releasing an additional 15-20 rakes per day, Railways has advised the coal ministry.

At present, the Railways is supplying 405 rakes per day (RPD) to the Power sector. During September 2021 to February 2022, the number of rakes to the sector rose from 373 to 396. This was to deal with the declining coal supply at power plants, which resulted in power shortage in several States. Sources said, for instance, around 56 rakes daily

are detained for more than five hours for loading. Besides, about 136 rakes per day are detained for more than three hours.

Focus on maintenance

"Cutting down this time to three hours will free an additional 3-4 rakes per day. Also if the PSU miners avoid loading boulders and over-sized coal on rakes, it will improve WTR (Wagon Turn Around) and help adding another 10-15 rakes per day. The ministry should also focus on servicing of tippers and hoppers as well as preventive maintenance to improve unloading of rakes," said one of the sources.

That apart, the Railways has identified 66 critical and 58 super critical capacity enhancement works and 14 coal evacuation projects, which are monitored at the highest level.

When contacted, Railways Executive Director (Information & Publicity) Gaurav Bansal said the ministry has improved



Railways has identified critical and super critical capacity enhancement works and evacuation projects

the WTR by 16 per cent during September 2021 to February 2022 and more efforts are underway.

Coal production

The Railways has plans to induct 1 lakh wagons with 40,000-45,000 of them coming in the next 2 years. Besides, condemnation on age basis has also been deferred. Coal production stood at 681.5 mil-

lion tonnes during April-February in last fiscal year, with a growth of 9.8 per cent compared to the same period in FY21 and 7.6 per cent compared to the same period of FY20.

The overall coal despatch stood at 71.3 mt in February 2022. The share of coal despatched to the power sector improved to around 83 per cent in FY22 from an earlier 79 per cent of the total coal des-

patched in FY21, CareEdge Research said. Coal-based power generation has registered a growth of 10.3 per cent in FY22 over FY21, indicating improved coal supply.

In addition to this, the share of coal-based generation in total power generated increased from 69 per cent in FY21 to around 70 per cent of the total power generated in FY22, it added.