

● CURRENT COAL STOCK SITUATION COMFORTABLE

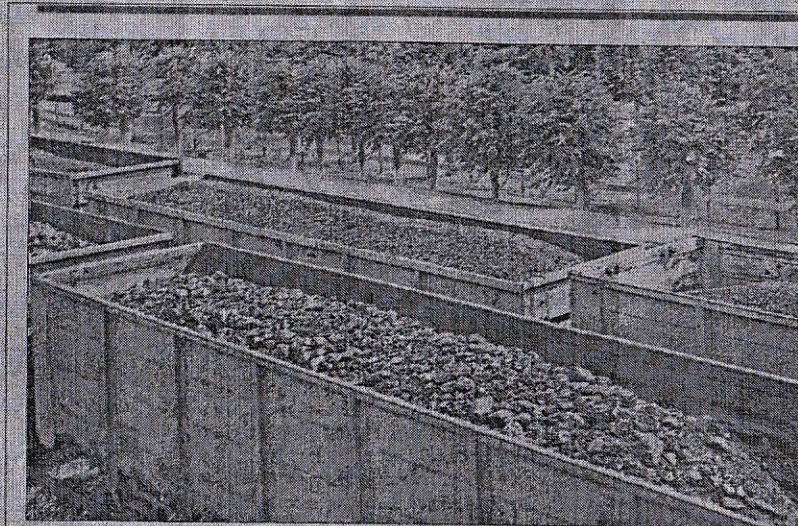
Coal import order to be relaxed, no change in blending norm

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ROYCHOWDHURY
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WITH COAL STOCKS at thermal power stations at a comfortable level, the power ministry is likely to relax the directive to gencos to step up coal imports. However, the stipulation that 10% of coal should be sourced via imports will remain unchanged.

A power ministry official told *FE* that blending is a technical requirement related to the boiler design and it has nothing to do with the stock position. The country's thermal power plants have been blending 10% imported coal with the total domestic coal required for years, he said. Cutting down on imports for blending would mean feeding the power plants with more domestic coal and the stock situation may not permit it, the official added.

Power plants of NTPC and DVC have already placed import orders of more than 75% of the estimated requirement of imports and many state gencos have done so. But state gencos with weak financial health have neither been able to place import orders nor have been able to build up enough stock with domestic coal, since those plants have not been able to clear Coal In-



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As of July 30 this year, total coal stock at CEA-monitored thermal power plants was at 29.6 million tonne. Coal inventory at CIL's pitheads stood at 36 MT at the end of July and around 11.5 MT of coal was

available at various loading points awaiting shipment. Higher supplies from CIL helped building stock at power plants to the tune of 1,04,000 tonne per day during July this year, the highest for this fiscal, a CIL executive said.

"The current coal stock situation is comfortable to meet the present trend of demand, if there is no sudden generation spike as witnessed in August last year, when stock at power plants plummeted by 11.2 MT in a

month. With 6 MT on tap, coal import orders in place, with scalable option up to 12 MT, CIL is closely monitoring the supply situation to power plants to handle any surge in demand," the CIL official said.

The PSU miner produced 207.1 MT of coal during April-July this fiscal, 40.5 MT more than what was produced a year ago during the same period. This has been a 24.3% growth compared to 166.6 MT of April-July.

For July, CIL produced 47.3 MT of coal, a 4.7 MT jump over 42.6 MT in the same month previous year, logging 11% output growth. The output growth has maintained the double digit streak for the fourth month this fiscal, despite the monsoon slowing down its production.

CIL supplied 199.4 MT to this sector progressively till July, posting 19.2% growth. This is a 32 MT increase in absolute terms, compared to 167.3 MT supplied in April-July last fiscal.

CIL's supplies to coal-fired plants during the referred period were at par with the enhanced requirement projected. The company logged a year-on-year supply growth of 19% in July to power plants at 47 MT, a CIL executive said.