

# FM launches biggest coal mine auction; 141 blocks up for grabs

Our Bureau  
New Delhi

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday launched the sixth tranche of commercial coal mines auction, under which the government is offering 141 blocks across 11 States—the biggest auction so far of the key fuel for power generation.

The Coal Ministry has offered 133 blocks for auction, of which 71 are new mines and 62 are roll over from earlier tranches. Besides, eight blocks from the second attempt of the fifth round of commercial auctions have also been included.

## 'LANDMARK EVENT'

Emphasising that coal is an important asset for India's economic development, Sitharaman termed Thursday's auction a landmark event.

"Eleven States can directly benefit from today's (Thursday) auction. This will open up their capacities. The sixth tranche takes a very big step forward in releasing greater resources," she added.



**BIG STEP FORWARD.** Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman with Coal Minister Pralhad Joshi at the launch of sixth tranche of auction for commercial coal mining, in New Delhi on Thursday PTI

Coal Minister Pralhad Joshi said that under commercial coal mining, India has auctioned 67 blocks so far, and some of them are set to start production this year. Madhya Pradesh has the highest number of 30 blocks, followed by Chhattisgarh with 28 and Odisha (27).

## PRODUCTION TARGET

"This year (FY23), we are hoping for 5 million tonnes (mt), and next year, a minimum of 10-15 mt production will come from commercial coal mines," said Joshi.

The Minister acknow-

ledged that there was a shortage of around 12 mt of coal but commercial mines will fill a gap of 5 mt in FY23. Fuelled by the reforms in FY22, captive coal blocks have produced over 89 mt, which is a first, he added.

"All put together, total coal dispatch in 2014 was 572 mt, and in FY22, India achieved 817 mt.

"In the ongoing year (FY23), the total production put together, I am very confident, is going to be 900 mt, including of commercial, captive, abundant mines and Coal India," the Minister said.