

Rationalise rail freight, port charges, House panel tells Coal Ministry

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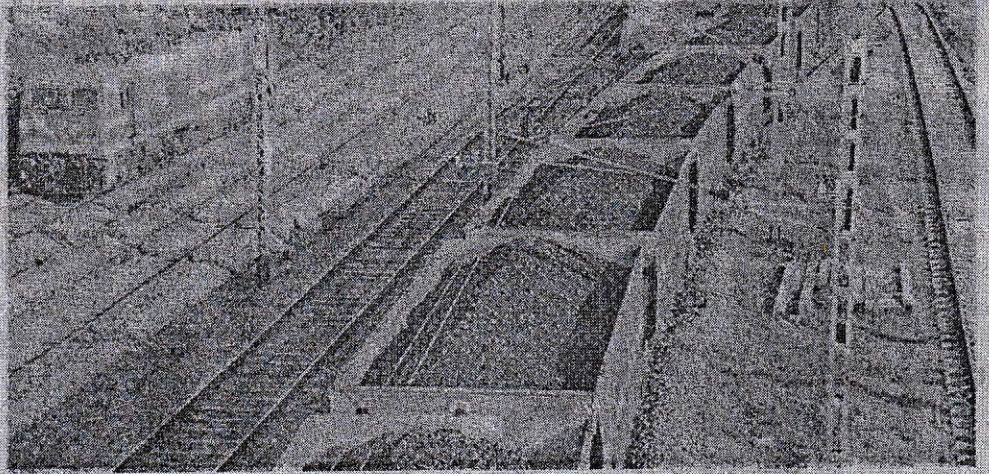
New Delhi

A parliamentary standing committee has suggested to the Coal Ministry to take steps to rationalise railway freight and port handling charges to bring down the cost of the key commodity.

The report by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Coal, Mines, and Steel was placed in Parliament on Thursday. It observed that coal companies have opted for mechanisation, optimisation of resources, technological advances and minimising non-essential expenditure to contain coal prices considering its impact on inflation and the power sector.

"The committee also desires that the government pursue rationalisation of railway freight charges and port handling charges with the concerned ministries," it said.

The panel also directed the Coal Ministry to apprise it of



THE COST FACTOR. Panel also directed the Coal Ministry to dispatch lower-priced coal to power plants in the South and West

the steps taken to ensure that lower-priced coal is dispatched to power plants and other customers in the southern and western parts of India.

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"Considering the existing coal resources in the country, the committee would like the Coal Ministry/CIL to explore the acquisition of coal blocks abroad," the committee added.

The panel said that given the limited availability of

high-quality, low-ash coking coal in the country, there is no option but to import the commodity to bridge the demand-supply gap through imports.

The Ministry has launched the coking coal mission, under which the objective is to increase production from 45 million tonnes in FY21 to 140 mt in FY30, which includes 105 mt from CIL. "The committee would like to be apprised of the year-wise perspective plan to achieve the ambitious target," the panel added.