

STALIN SEEKS PM HELP FOR COAL; MAHARASHTRA TO IMPORT STOCKS

Relevant for: Indian Economy | Topic: Infrastructure: Energy incl. Renewable & Non-renewable

Far off target: Tamil Nadu has asked for increasing coal supplies from 50,000 MT to 72,000 MT. File Photo-

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Friday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, requesting him to ensure adequate availability of coal for the power generation units in Tamil Nadu. Separately, Maharashtra's Deputy CM Ajit Pawar said the MVA government planned to import some coal in order to cope with the electricity crisis in the State.

Observing that the current daily receipt from the Talcher mines in Odisha was only 50,000 metric tonnes, Mr. Stalin requested Mr. Modi to direct the Union Ministry of Coal to ensure the supply of 72,000 metric tonnes a day, as per the Fuel Supply Agreement, at the Paradip and Vishakhapatnam ports.

"Even though the coal production is sufficient to meet the increased summer power demand, the coal is not getting transported to ports due to short supply of rakes by the Railways," Mr. Stalin wrote in his letter. "This, in turn, has resulted in the coal stocks of our State's generation plants reaching critical levels," he added.

While TANGEDCO required 22 rakes a day for moving 72,000 metric tonnes, only 14 rakes a day were being provided by the Railways, Mr. Stalin pointed out.

With the resultant shortage of domestic coal, TANGEDCO had to import coal at the "current historically high prices" for maintaining uninterrupted power supply, he contended. Further, the gap in power generation was also being filled with the purchase of power at "high rates" from energy exchanges.

"Unfortunately, a sufficient quantum of power is not available in energy exchanges to meet the requirements of all buying utilities. This serious situation would significantly impact the nascent post COVID-19 economic recovery," Mr. Stalin stressed.

Speaking in Pune, Mr. Pawar, who is also the district's 'guardian minister', said that efforts were on to get a coal mine in Chhattisgarh allocated to the Maharashtra State Power Generation Company Ltd. (Mahagenco).

The ongoing power crisis in the State engendered by an acute shortage of coal has led to the ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) coalition and the Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) trading charges over the issue. The MVA parties have pointed fingers at the BJP-ruled Centre for poor management of the supply of coal, while the BJP has said it is the State government's fault.

Asked whether the Centre was playing "vendetta politics" by not providing coal, Mr. Pawar skirted a direct answer and remarked that the supply of coal to States was not happening in the desired manner.

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