



DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 25-03-2025

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Coal Production in India

Syllabus: GS-1: Resource Geography – Coal.

Context:

- India has achieved a historic milestone by surpassing 1 billion tonnes of coal production in FY 2024–25, a feat hailed by Prime Minister as a proud moment reflecting energy security and self-reliance.

Introduction

- India surpassed **1 billion tonnes of coal production** in **FY 2024–25**, marking a significant achievement in **energy security and self-reliance**.
- This milestone reflects India's growing **industrial demand** and efforts towards **domestic coal sufficiency**.

Historical Background

- **1774:** Commercial coal mining began at **Raniganj Coalfields** along the **Damodar River**.
- **Nationalisation of Coal:**
 - **1972:** Coking coal mines nationalised under the **Coking Coal Mines Act**.
 - **1973:** Non-coking coal mines nationalised under the **Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act**.

Categories of Coal in India

1. Gondwana Coal

- **Age:** Formed **250–300 million years ago** (Permian period).
- **Location:** Found in **peninsular India**.
- **Major States:** Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra.
- **Characteristics:**
 - **High carbon content** and **high calorific value**.
 - Contains **moisture and volatile matter**.
 - Mostly **bituminous and sub-bituminous** in nature.
- **Uses:**
 - Power generation.
 - Steel production.

- Industrial applications.

2. Tertiary Coal

- **Age:** Formed **15–60 million years ago** (Tertiary period).
- **Location:** Found in **northeastern states** and parts of **Jammu & Kashmir**.
- **Major States:** Assam, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Jammu & Kashmir, Rajasthan.
- **Characteristics:**
 - **Higher moisture content** and **lower carbon concentration**.
 - Mostly **lignite or peat** with **lower calorific value**.
- **Uses:**
 - Power generation.
 - Domestic heating.

Types of Coal in India

Type	Carbon Content	Major Locations	Characteristics	Uses
Anthracite	80-95%	Jammu & Kashmir	Highest carbon content, hardest coal	Industrial, metallurgy
Bituminous	60-80%	Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, MP	Most widely used, high heating value	Power plants, steelmaking
Sub-bituminous	Moderate	Various locations	Dull black, higher energy than lignite	Electricity generation
Lignite	40-55%	Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, Assam	High moisture, low carbon	Power generation

Major Coal Producers in India

- **Coal India Limited (CIL)** – Largest contributor, **773.81 MT** in FY 2023-24.
- **Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL)** – Key supplier in southern India, **70.02 MT** in FY 2023-24.
- **Captive & Private Players** – Increasing contributions post **coal sector reforms**.

Global Coal Production: Top Producers

Country	Global Rank	Key Features
China	1st	Largest global producer (~50% of world's coal)
India	2nd	Surpassed 1 billion tonnes in FY 2024-25
USA	3rd	Major producer, exporter, and consumer

Top Coal-Producing States in India (Rank-wise)

- **Jharkhand** – Largest reserves, major coking coal producer.
- **Odisha** – Large thermal coal contributor.
- **Chhattisgarh** – Key producer with **world's largest coal mines**.
- **West Bengal** – Historic **Raniganj** coalfields.



Conclusion

- India's **record coal production** strengthens **energy security** and reduces **import dependence**.
- Reforms in the **coal sector** and increased participation of **private players** will further boost production and efficiency.

Bridging the Gender Gap in the Judiciary

Syllabus: GS-2: Judiciary & Equality.

Context:

- The Indian judiciary has made progress in inclusivity at the entry level, but gender disparity remains stark in higher positions.
- As per the **Supreme Court's "State of the Judiciary" Report (2023)**:
 - Women constitute only 4% of High Court judges.
 - Only 9.3% of Supreme Court judges are women.
- Some states have **no women judges or just one in their High Courts**, highlighting an acute imbalance.

Barriers in Legal Careers

Structural Challenges

- Despite increasing female participation in legal education, only **3% of advocates** in India are women.
- Lack of representation in **senior advocate positions and Bar Councils** reduces the pool of women eligible for elevation to higher judiciary roles.
- The **"funnel effect"** describes how the number of women diminishes at higher levels despite strong entry-level participation.

Policy and Systemic Hurdles

Entry-Level Barriers

- Judicial service rules in many states require **continuous legal practice** for entry-level judicial posts.
- Women taking **career breaks for family responsibilities** face disadvantages due to these rigid requirements.

Retention Challenges

- **Mandatory transfers** discourage women from continuing in judicial services, especially without family or institutional support.
- Lack of **flexible work arrangements** forces many women out of legal careers prematurely.

Infrastructural Deficiencies

- Many district courts lack **basic amenities** like dedicated **washrooms, crèches, and nursing rooms** for women judges and lawyers.

- **Lack of safe spaces** discourages long-term engagement.

Cultural Pressures

- Women are expected to be **primary caregivers**, making it difficult to pursue demanding careers like law.
- Institutions often fail to **accommodate the dual roles of women** in work and family life.

Economic Disincentives

- Women entering legal practice often earn **less than their male counterparts**.
- **No maternity benefits, stipends, or financial support** discourages many from sustaining legal careers.

The Public-Private Divide

- Political theorist **Carole Pateman** explains how women's caregiving roles (private sphere) are undervalued when they try to enter public professions like law.
- Without **gender-sensitive policies**, women must adapt to a **system designed for male career trajectories**.

Why Representation Matters

Aspect	Impact of Gender Disparity
Judicial Decisions	Lack of gender-sensitive perspectives in cases related to domestic violence, sexual harassment, reproductive rights, and family law.
Public Trust	A judiciary that fails to represent societal diversity risks being perceived as elitist and disconnected.
Role Model Effect	Women in leadership encourage younger women to pursue judicial careers, breaking stereotypes.

The "Female Gaze" in Judicial Design

- **A female-centric approach** ensures that gender-sensitive policies are incorporated into legal institutions.
- Recognizes that **"neutral policies"** often overlook gender-specific challenges.
- Calls for reforms in **recruitment, evaluation, infrastructure, and promotions**.

Global Best Practices & Lessons for India

Country	Measures Implemented
UK & Canada	Gender quotas, flexible work hours, gender-sensitization training,

Country	Measures Implemented
	and balanced selection panels.
Adoptable Measures for India	Mentorship programs, gender-balanced appointment committees, women's legal associations.

Way Forward

Infrastructural Support

- Involve women in **judicial planning committees** to ensure gender-specific needs are met.
- Mandate **crèches, nursing rooms, and secure restrooms** in all court buildings.

Policy Overhaul

- Allow **career breaks without penalties** for women in recruitment and promotion.
- Reform **transfer and promotion policies** to be gender-sensitive.

Supportive Environment

- Integrate **gender sensitization** in judicial training.
- Provide **financial aid/stipends** to women from underprivileged backgrounds pursuing law.

Institutional Changes

- Implement **evaluation systems that recognize non-linear career trajectories**.
- Establish **family-friendly judicial workspaces** to ensure career continuity.

Conclusion

- Achieving **gender parity in the judiciary** is not just symbolic but essential for fairness, diversity, and public trust.
- A **more inclusive judiciary** ensures that legal decisions are empathetic, representative, and just.

Revision of MSME Definition

Syllabus: GS-3: Indian Economy – Industrial Policy.

Context:

- Announced in Union Budget 2025-26.

Introduction to MSME

- **Full Form:** Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises.
- **Significance:** Backbone of the Indian economy, contributing to employment, GDP, and exports.
- **Regulation:** Governed by the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development (MSMED) Act, 2006, with periodic revisions to definitions.
- **Objective of Revision:** To align with economic growth, promote ease of doing business, and enable MSMEs to scale up while retaining benefits.

Evolution of MSME Definition

- **Initial Definition (2006):**
 - Based solely on investment in plant and machinery (manufacturing) or equipment (services).
 - Separate criteria for manufacturing and service enterprises.
- **2020 Revision:**
 - Introduced composite criteria: Investment + Annual Turnover.
 - Removed distinction between manufacturing and service sectors.
 - Effective from July 1, 2020, under the Atmanirbhar Bharat package.
- **Latest Revision (2025):**
 - Announced in Union Budget 2025-26.
 - Further increased investment and turnover limits.
 - Effective from April 1, 2025 (as per available updates).

Revised Definition of MSME (Effective April 1, 2025)

- **Criteria:** Based on two parameters:
 - Investment in plant and machinery or equipment (excluding land and building).
 - Annual turnover.
- **Classification:**
 - **Micro Enterprises:**
 - Investment: Up to ₹2.5 crore (previously ₹1 crore).
 - Turnover: Up to ₹10 crore (previously ₹5 crore).
 - **Small Enterprises:**

- Investment: Up to ₹25 crore (previously ₹10 crore).
- Turnover: Up to ₹100 crore (previously ₹50 crore).
- **Medium Enterprises:**
 - Investment: Up to ₹125 crore (previously ₹50 crore).
 - Turnover: Up to ₹500 crore (previously ₹250 crore).
- **Key Changes:**
 - Investment limit increased by 2.5 times.
 - Turnover limit doubled across all categories.
 - Allows businesses to grow without losing MSME status and benefits.

Rationale for Revision

- **Economic Alignment:** Reflects inflation, market conditions, and growth in business scale since 2006.
- **Ease of Doing Business:** Higher thresholds reduce compliance burden and encourage formalization.
- **Global Competitiveness:** Enables MSMEs to expand operations, invest in technology, and compete internationally.
- **Support Growth:** Ensures businesses retain access to MSME schemes (e.g., subsidies, loans) during expansion.

Significance of MSME Sector

- **GDP Contribution:** ~30% of India's GDP (target to increase to 50% by 2025).
- **Employment:** Second-largest employer after agriculture (~120 million jobs).
- **Exports:** ~40-45% of India's total exports (e.g., textiles, handicrafts).
- **Rural Development:** Promotes industrialization in rural and backward areas, reducing regional disparities.
- **Innovation:** Fosters entrepreneurship and adaptability to market changes.

Government Initiatives Supporting MSMEs

- **Udyam Registration:** Simplified online registration for MSME certification.
- **Credit Guarantee Scheme:** Collateral-free loans up to ₹2 crore.
- **MSME Samadhaan:** Portal to address delayed payment issues.
- **PMEGP:** Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme for micro-enterprise setup.

- **SFURTI:** Scheme for regeneration of traditional industries.
- **ASPIRE:** Promotes innovation and entrepreneurship.
- **CHAMPIONS Portal:** Technology-driven platform for MSME support.

Challenges Faced by MSMEs

- **Access to Credit:** Despite schemes, many micro units face financing gaps.
- **Informalization:** ~94% of MSMEs unregistered, limiting benefits access.
- **Technology Adoption:** Small units lag in modernization.
- **NPAs:** Rising non-performing assets (9.6% of gross advances as per RBI).
- **Global Competition:** Pressure from imports and larger firms.

Conclusion

- The revised MSME definition reflects India's evolving economic landscape, aiming to bolster a sector critical for inclusive growth.

Stockholm Water Prize 2025

Syllabus: GS-3: Conservation efforts and Awards.

Context:

- Günter Blöschl, a renowned hydrologist, has been awarded the 2025 Stockholm Water Prize for his pioneering research on flood risks and climate change impacts globally.

Stockholm Water Prize 2025: Günter Blöschl's Recognition

- The **Stockholm Water Prize** is a prestigious international award that honors outstanding contributions in water science, management, and conservation.
- It is presented annually by the **Stockholm Water Foundation** in collaboration with the **Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences**.

Key Aspects of the Stockholm Water Prize

Established: 1991, as part of the Stockholm Water Festival

Presented by: King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden during **World Water Week** in August

Eligibility: Individuals or organizations excelling in water sustainability, conservation, and management.

Selection Process:

- Open nominations (self-nominations not allowed)
- Shortlisting by the Prize Committee
- Final selection by the Board of the Stockholm Water Foundation

2025 Laureate: Günter Blöschl

Recipient: Professor **Günter Blöschl**, Vienna University of Technology

Field of Work: Hydrology, Climate Change, and Flood Risk Assessment

Contribution:

- Pioneered **observation-based climate-flood linkages**, helping understand how climate change impacts flood patterns globally.
- Developed **advanced flood risk models**, aiding policymakers in disaster management.

Historical Reference

First Winner (1991): David W. Schindler (Canada) – Renowned for research on lake pollution and climate effects.

The **Stockholm Water Prize 2025** recognizes **Günter Blöschl** for his groundbreaking work in hydrology, shaping global strategies for flood management and climate resilience.

Inner Line Permit (ILP)

Syllabus: GS-3: Internal Security – Restricted Areas.

Context:

- **Definition:** An official travel document issued by the Government of India or concerned state governments to allow Indian citizens to enter and stay in protected areas for a limited period.
- **Purpose:** Regulates movement into sensitive regions, primarily near international borders, to protect indigenous cultures and demographics.
- **Legal Basis:** Rooted in the **Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873**, introduced by the British to safeguard commercial interests and tribal areas.

Historical Background

- **Colonial Origin:** Enacted under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873, to restrict "British subjects" (Indians) from entering tribal areas in Northeast India.

- **Post-Independence:** In 1950, "British subjects" replaced with "Citizens of India"; focus shifted to protecting tribal cultures from external influence.
- **Evolution:** Extended to additional states over time, reflecting security and cultural preservation needs.

States Under ILP Regime

- **Current ILP States:**
 - Arunachal Pradesh
 - Nagaland
 - Mizoram
 - Manipur (extended in December 2019, effective 2020)
- **Exceptions:** Dimapur (Nagaland), a commercial hub, is exempt from ILP requirements.
- **Demands for Expansion:** States like Meghalaya, Assam, and parts of the Andaman & Nicobar Islands have ongoing demands for ILP implementation.

Features of ILP

- **Applicability:** Mandatory for Indian citizens from outside the protected states to enter these regions.
- **Types:**
 - Tourist ILP: Short-term, for visitors.
 - Long-term ILP: For employment or extended stays (e.g., renewable annually).
- **Issuance:** Issued by the respective state government; can be applied online or in person.
- **Duration:** Specifies validity period and permitted areas; extensions possible in some cases.
- **Foreigners:** Require a separate **Protected Area Permit (PAP)**, not ILP.

Objectives of ILP

- **Cultural Preservation:** Protects indigenous tribal traditions and heritage from external exploitation.
- **Demographic Safeguard:** Prevents settlement of non-natives, maintaining tribal population balance.
- **Security:** Controls movement near international borders to address illegal migration and insurgency risks.

- **Economic Protection:** Limits land ownership and resource exploitation by outsiders.

Significance

- **Tribal Welfare:** Shields vulnerable communities from cultural erosion and economic displacement.
- **Border Management:** Enhances national security in sensitive frontier regions.
- **Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) Link:** ILP states (Nagaland, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur) are exempt from CAA provisions, preventing settlement of new citizens in these areas.
- **Conflict Mitigation:** Reduces tensions arising from influx of outsiders in Northeast India.

Challenges and Limitations

- **Illegal Migration:** Persists despite ILP, especially in border areas like Assam and Manipur.
- **Tourism Impact:** Regulatory barriers deter visitors, affecting local economies dependent on tourism.
- **Implementation Gaps:** Weak enforcement and corruption can undermine effectiveness.
- **Economic Isolation:** Restricts investment and development in ILP states.

Related Concepts

- **Protected Area Permit (PAP):**
 - For foreigners visiting ILP states (except Bhutanese citizens).
 - Issued under the **Foreigners (Protected Areas) Order, 1958**.
- **Restricted Areas:** Areas between the "Inner Line" and international borders, requiring special permits.
- **Sixth Schedule:** Autonomous tribal governance in Northeast complements ILP in states like Mizoram and Meghalaya.

Current Relevance for UPSC

- **Manipur Extension (2020):** Highlighted as a significant step by the Union Home Minister for protecting local interests.
- **CAA Protests:** ILP became a focal point during anti-CAA agitations in the Northeast, with demands for wider implementation.
- **Tourism Policy:** States like Arunachal Pradesh relaxed ILP norms post-COVID-19 to boost tourism (2021).

- **Manipur Review (2024):** Recent government review of ILP violations underscores need for stricter enforcement.

Criticism and Debates

- **Restrictive Nature:** Seen as limiting the constitutional right to free movement (Article 19).
- **Development Barrier:** Critics argue it isolates ILP states from mainstream economic growth.
- **Political Tool:** Often leveraged by local groups to resist central policies (e.g., CAA).

Conclusion

- **Balanced Approach:** ILP is a critical tool for protecting tribal identity and border security but needs reforms for economic integration.