

Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor ensures more coal supply to power plants as scorching summer spurs record power demand

Indian Railways transported 9.3 percent more coal in May compared to the same period last year to meet the rising power demand, and the Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor (EDFC) helped expedite the coal movement.



Richa Sharma

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Peak power demand hit a record high as temperature touched 50 degrees Celsius in several northern states this summer making the Indian Railways transport 9.3 percent more coal to thermal power plants in May compared to the same period in 2022.

According to monthly data from the Indian Railways, coal remained the most carried commodity on the national transporter clocking 72.01 million tonnes (MT) followed by iron ore at 14.61 MT.

What expedited the movement of coal from eastern coalfields to thermal power plants in the northern belt was the operationalisation of the Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor (EDFC).

The 1,337-km dedicated rail route for coal movement connects Son Nagar in Bihar to Ludhiana in Punjab, intersecting central, eastern, and northern coal fields and feeding coal to over two dozen thermal plants in the northern region. The corridor is expected to cut the transit time from coal mines in the east to power plants in the north by 24 hours on average.

“The days of blackouts due to coal shortages because of the inefficiency of Indian Railways are over. Some of the power plants in the north have cut down on coal reserve stocking, which has helped in releasing the required operational capital as coal is reaching faster due to the eastern DFC,” Nanduri Srinivas, former Director of Operations & Business Development at Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India Limited (DFCCIL), told Business Today.

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The western arm of the DFC, which spans 1,506 km and connects Dadri in Haryana with Mumbai, has reduced the transit time of export and import (EXIM) traffic by almost 50 percent, per rake. With the DFC, the Railways is looking to increase the share of rail in freight loading to 45 percent by 2050.

The Railways has pumped Rs 1.24 lakh crore into the two DFCs, which are likely to be fully commissioned by the end of 2024, to achieve that target. **BT**