

BUSINESS STANDARD
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Ore output peaks to 10-year high

The country's iron ore production rose to a decade-high of 220 million tonnes (mt) in FY19, growing 9.5 per cent year-on-year from 201 mt in FY18.

Analysts are betting on the growth momentum, pertaining to ore output, continuing in this fiscal year. Their positive sentiment springs from merchant miners looking to accelerate extraction from mines headed for expiry on March 31, 2020.

"We believe the production (of iron ore) is likely to rise 5-8 per cent this fiscal. Merchant miners, whose lease validity will cease by March 31, 2020, will be looking to ramp up output. On the import side, we expect moderation during FY20. Exports, on the contrary, should go up for iron ore pellets," said Vahishta M Unwalla, research analyst (iron ore), CARE Ratings.

Merchant miners are scrambling to maximise output and produce up to limits approved under environment clearance. **JAYAJIT DASH**