IRON ORE

China, the world's largest iron ore consumer, has received its first shipment of iron ore from the Simandou mine in Guinea in West Africa, in which Beijing has heavily invested to increase supply security. China, which imports 80% of its iron ore from Australia and Brazil, has been attempting to diversify its supply by expanding domestic output and investing in overseas mines. A vessel carrying nearly 200,000 metric tons of iron ore from Simandou arrived in Majishan port in East China's Zhejiang province on January 17 after a 46-day voyage, China Baowu Steel Group, the world's largest steel producer, said in a statement on its WeChat account on Saturday. Simandou has a planned yearly production capacity of 120 million tons and is made up of four mining blocks that yield a high-grade ore that is 65% iron. A second Simandou iron ore shipment departed Guinea in late December, according to China Baowu's statement. Beijing set up China Mineral Resources Group in 2022 to centralize iron ore purchases and get better terms from miners. (Mining.com)

BHP Group and Rio Tinto Group, the world's two biggest mining companies, are poised to join forces in Australia's Pilbara iron ore hub to produce up to 200 million tons of the steelmaking material from next decade. The two miners will consider collaboration on two projects — Rio's Wunbye deposit and BHP's Yandi — to boost production over the longer term, according two non-binding agreements announced in a joint statement. While the world's mining giants are increasingly pivoting to copper and other metals needed for the energy transition, they're still looking for ways to sustain iron ore revenues. Huge volumes of the steelmaking material are needed to feed demand from Asian economies that are expanding as China's infrastructure boom fades. (Mining.com)

COAL

India's coal-fired generation dropped for the first time in five years in 2025, underscoring a structural shift in the country's electricity mix that is reverberating across global coal markets. The country's coal-power generation declined by 3.4pc on the year to 1,247TWh in 2025, according to data from the Central Electricity Authority of India. This is the first decline since 2020, when coal-power output fell by 5pc to 914.74TWh from a year earlier, and is the second drop in at least half a century, according to think tank CREA. The coal power data does not include lignite-fired generation, which fell by 9.7pc to 31.32TWh in 2025. The decline comes as power output from hydro, renewable and nuclear energy rose to cater for an increase in power demand in 2025, highlighting the evolution of the country's generation mix as India aims to provide round the clock electricity to all households and industries and fuel its economic growth. The trend also underscores the weakness in coal consumption at utilities, one of the largest consumers of domestic and imported coal, impacting India's overall plans to boost local coal output. (Argus)

China is preparing to launch more than 100 new coal-fired power generation units in 2026. Of the 104 projects planned worldwide, 85 are in China, adding approximately 55 GW to the global total of 63 GW. Other countries, including India, Vietnam, and Indonesia, are also expanding capacity, with India contributing roughly 24 GW. As a result, China will account for 86% of all new coal-fired power capacity expected to begin operations in 2026. In 2025, China already represented 78% of newly commissioned coal power capacity, underscoring its central role in the global energy sector. This focus highlights China's efforts to ensure energy security and meet rising electricity demand, even as the global transition toward cleaner energy continues. (cleantechtimes.com)

OIL

Oil prices settled higher on Friday as some investors covered short positions ahead of the three-day Martin Luther King holiday weekend in the U.S. and lingering worries about a possible U.S. military strike against Iran. Brent crude settled at $64.13 a barrel up 37 cents or 0.58%. U.S. West Texas Intermediate finished at $59.44 a barrel up 25 cents, or 0.42%. Analysts expect higher supply this year, potentially creating a ceiling for the geopolitical risk premium on prices. (Reuters)

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