



stoppwatch

A CAG Initiative

Monthly newsletter of Thermal Watch— an initiative to empower those impacted by thermal power plants

Initiative to empower local communities about EIA launched

SNEAK PEEK

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It is well known that asymmetry of information is a serious block to civic action. Coupled with non-availability of information is the problem of couching regulations in a language that cannot be understood by the layperson. Over the years, CAG has pushed for transparency in the functioning of the government and worked to demystify documents for greater and effective public participation.

In continuation of that, CAG is working to assist local communities and other stakeholders to respond effectively to the challenges of Thermal Power Plants (TPPs). With energy being a critical issue, governments have encouraged the setting up of TPPs. For several reasons, many of these are being setup along the coast - a recognized sensitive ecological area. Apart from affecting marine life, livelihoods are also impacted by them. Hence, there is an urgent need to evaluate, assess and monitor TPPs.

The Environment Impact Assessment process, as detailed in the EIA Notification 2006, is a tool designed by the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) to assess, along with

other industries, the impacts of TPPs. It gives an opportunity for the public to voice their concerns at several stages before TPPs are allowed to be setup. It guarantees communities the right to put forth their concerns, and obligates the project proponent to address and respond effectively to them. The right to redress has been provided through petitions to the National Green Tribunal. Even when TPPs are functioning, citizens have a right to seek redress if they do not adhere to the conditions of sanction.

Despite these procedures, sadly, it is not uncommon for local people to not know of public hearings being held in their backyard, thus losing an opportunity to voice their concerns. In a few cases, communities that have opposed a power plant have not known that the project had been granted clearance. This detail assumes significance because the National Green Tribunal takes appeals only within a time frame. Time is therefore of essence here, and it is imperative that grassroot organizations and local people are made aware of project developments at the earliest to design an effective campaign in response.

Clearly, the problem of information asymmetry cannot be addressed by merely supplying information. The local communities need to be guided about how they can use it. Often unfamiliar with how the plant will impact them, they restrict their concerns to land acquisition rates and employment promises, little realizing the other socio-economic impacts.

It is to empower communities and stakeholders that we at CAG are launching *St(a)ppwatch*, a monthly web newsletter. It will inform and educate interested public about existing and proposed TPPs in South India and how communities can effectively assert their rights and resort to redress mechanisms. Disseminating this information in the four Southern states is imperative, given that one in every five proposals submitted to the MoEF for a TPP is located here.

St(a)ppwatch is part of our Thermal Watch initiative to empower local communities about the EIA process, to mitigate the adverse environmental impact of the plant. As part of the initiative, we are developing

resource material for local communities and grassroot organizations in the four Southern languages and English, including a demystification of the EIA process, crucial ways for communities to intervene at different stages, case studies of successful interventions and recourse mechanisms available.

CAG has also formed a Professional Advisory Response Team comprising an EIA expert, environmental expert & a legal expert. Upon request from local communities, they will review the EIA procedures undertaken by the proponent and provide inputs that communities can use in the public consultation process, or for legal recourse.

A website dedicated to this initiative will soon go live, facilitating continuous sharing of knowledge and offer specific assistance when requested. The site will also feature a map of TPPs existing and coming up in South India giving their status and, where possible, provide access to documents relating to each of them.

We look forward to your response to this initiative! Please mail your feedback to tpg@cag.org.in

- Editorial Team

critically polluted areas

Centre lifts ban on Vizag, Manali industrial clusters

The MoEF has lifted the moratorium on industrial expansion in 10 industrial clusters under the Central Pollution Control Board's critically polluted areas. With this, only seven areas are now left under the regulations.

The ministry has cleared the moratorium on consideration of projects for environmental clearances in Bhivadi (Rajasthan), Dhanbad (Jharkhand), Manali (Tamil Nadu), Ahmedabad (Gujarat), Korba

(Chhattisgarh), Ansansol (West Bengal), Haldia (West Bengal), Howrah (West Bengal), Visakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh) and Kanpur (Uttar Pradesh).

The seven clusters remaining under the moratorium are Ankleshwar (Gujarat), Chandrapur (Maharashtra), Pali (Rajasthan), Vatva (Gujarat), Vellore (Tamil Nadu), Najafgarh Drain Basin (Delhi) and Jodhpur (Rajasthan).

In these places, the Comprehensive Environmental Pollution Index score

is either above 80 or is above 70 and showing either increasing trend or no change as compared with values observed in 2011.

The CPCB had put a ban on environment clearance of projects in these highly-polluting areas or those which are above 70 on the CEPI. Initially, a moratorium was imposed by the pollution control board on 43 clusters and in due course of time, it was lifted in 26 such areas. The fresh

clearance is conditional, stating that any expansion or modernisation of existing projects or any activity or change in the product mix is in line with the overall approved action plan of the concerned critically polluted areas.

It also states that the projects would be reviewed by the state pollution control board on a quarterly basis.

Full News Report

MOEF MANDATES INFO UPDATE IN WEBSITE

In order to improve the availability of information in public domain with respect to projects requiring Environment Clearance, the Ministry of Forests and Environment has issued an office memorandum stipulating that the EIA, EMP, minutes of the Public Hearing and the Expert Appraisal Committee's meeting, & the Environment Clearance be uploaded onto the MoEF site before the proponent is issued the clearance.

Likewise, the ministry has

also stated that before a project proponent is issued the Terms of Reference, the Form I, IA and Pre Feasibility Report of the project should be uploaded to the website. This order came into effect on September 1.

Ensuring the implementation of this has been made the responsibility of the concerned director/

Member Secretary of the Expert Appraisal Committee.

Read Memorandum

In order to facilitate quick uploading of documents related to thermal power plants, the MoEF had issued an order in April 2012 following a Central Information Commission decision asking State Environment Impact Assessment

Authorities (SEIAA) to process proposals from proponents only if soft copies of the same were also submitted. This applied to all documents in the EIA process, including Form I, Pre Feasibility Reports, draft TOR, EIA submitted by the proponent, public hearing proceedings and Site Inspection Reports of visits undertaken by the EAC members.

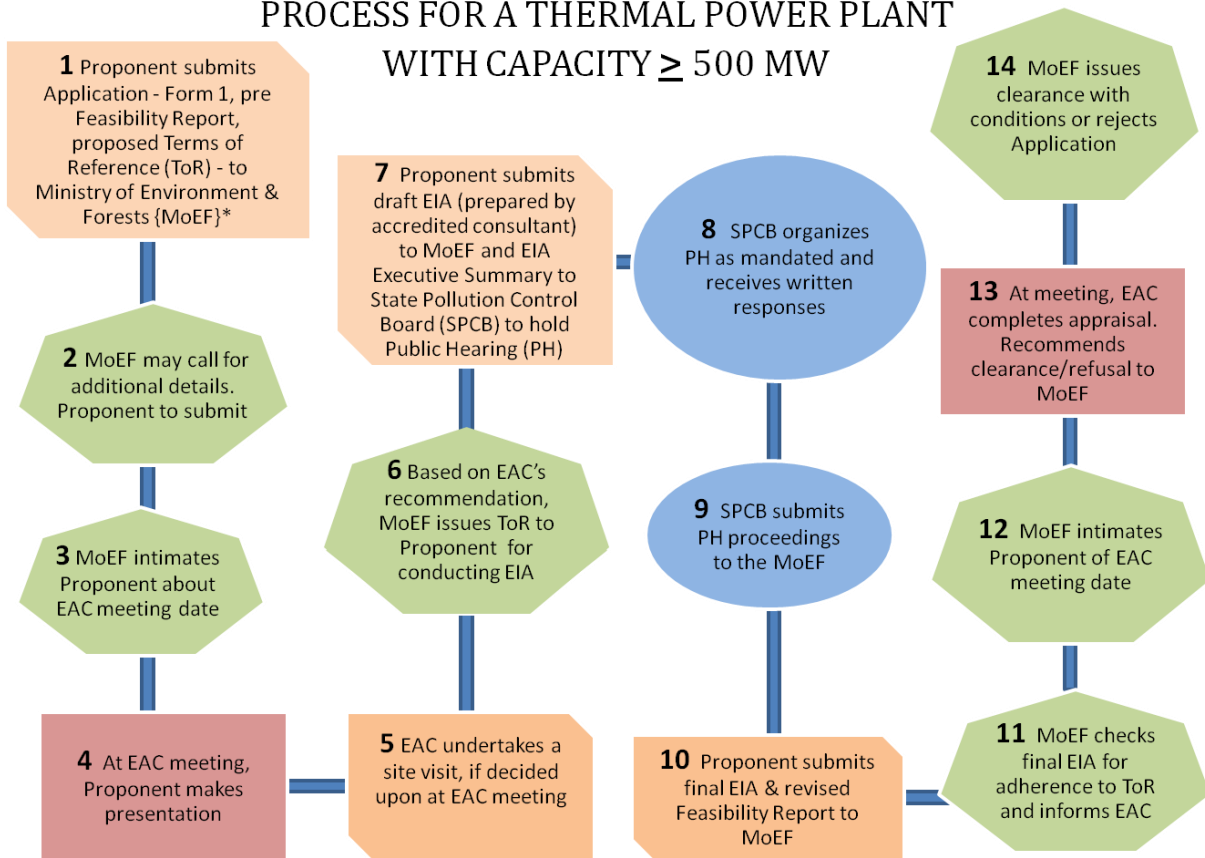
Apart from the MoEF, the order had also asked officials of the respective SEIAAs to upload these documents on their websites.

Read full order



The EIA, EC, EMP & minutes of the public hearing & EAC meeting should be uploaded before the project proponent is issued an EC

ENVIRONMENT IMPACT ASSESSMENT PROCESS FOR A THERMAL POWER PLANT WITH CAPACITY ≥ 500 MW



*For plants with lower capacity, the MoEF will be replaced by the State Level Environment Impact Assessment Authority, and the EAC by the State Expert Appraisal Committee

Red industries banned in one-third of Western Ghats

The Environment Ministry has decided to turn approximately 60,000 square kilometres of the Western Ghats across six States into an Ecologically Sensitive Area, banning mining, quarrying, thermal power plants and polluting industries over the entire range. All other projects would be allowed only with the prior consent of gram sabhas in the zone.

The decision, once formally notified, would make the identified region of the Western Ghats as the largest protected forests in India ranging over 1,500 km linear distance from the Tapi river in the north to Kanyakumari.

Going with the recommendations of the high-level panel that was headed by Planning Com-

mission Member Mr. Kasturirangan, the Ministry has decided to declare the ESA over 37% of the Western Ghats under the Environment Protection Act, 1986.

The type of industries banned would be those included in the 'red list' issued by the government under the Environment Protection Act. These are usually considered to be the most polluting of the lot.

Going against the recommendation of the Environment Secretary, the Minister retained the criteria to leave areas with high-density of population out of this regulated zone's ambit. The panel had recommended that the hill tracts with high population densities be kept out of the

ESA ambit. The report had said, "Close to 60 per cent of the Western Ghats region is under cultural landscape — human dominated land use of settlements, agriculture and plantations." It had advised against using the legal force that the ESA would provide to alter the economic practices in these areas, instead suggesting economic and other tools to incentivise more ecologically sustainable activities. Within the ESA prior consent from the gram sabhas and strict adherence to the Forest Rights Act would be made mandatory for any of the projects that are not on the negative list. The Ministry has drafted the notification and it will be put out soon for comments. [Full News Report](#)

MoEF – Coal Min to have quarterly meets for EC & FC

In order to facilitate green clearances to 241 projects of Coal India, the Coal Ministry has decided to hold meetings with environment ministry every quarter.

"MoEF is required to review the status of the proposal to provide environment clearances (EC) and forest clearances (FC) for expediting them," an official said, adding that in the absence of clearances, projects will not progress further, affecting demand and supply gap of fossil fuel in the country.

Coal India has said that it is awaiting environment and forestry clearances with regard to its 241 projects. "At present, 48 environmental clearance proposals, having a capacity of about 109 Million tonnes Per Year, are awaiting clearances at different levels," CIL said. 122 EC proposals for a capacity of 207 MTPA were approved by the MoEF during the 11th Five Year Plan. [Full News Report](#)

Crop loss assessment methods used for NTTPS plant questioned

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) made for the proposed 800 megawatt unit at the Narla Tatarao Thermal Power Station (NTTPS), earlier known as the Vijayawada Thermal Power Station, is fraudulent, according to noted environmental engineer Sagar Dhara. Mr Dhara is a noted environmental impact scientist, who has worked on several boards of experts.

The ATPI (Air Pollution Tolerance Indices) was not an instrument capable of assessing crop yield loss due to air pollution, he said. "Using ATPI to assess crop yield loss in the EIA study is like indulging in junk science," he explained.

Leading a team of volunteers armed with questionnaires, Mr. Sagar will conduct his own crop loss assessment in areas around Mulapadu and Kanchikacherla in Krishna district and some villages on the other side of the River Krishna in Guntur district. [Full News Report](#)

Potential investors for Cheyyur UMPP face protest

Prospective investors of the proposed 4,000 megawatt thermal power plant witnessed a high-voltage angry exchange of words between the police, district officials and locals on a day that saw the villagers hoisting black flags on beaches and boats.

The day began with lower-rung officials from the district administration visiting the villages to persuade them not to stage protests during the visit.

After the villagers failed to budge, a team of police officers and revenue officials landed in the villages around 10 am and insisted that they

remove all the black flags.

The villagers later agreed to take off the flags. But a large crowd of villagers stayed put, waiting for the investors, who arrived around noon.

The representatives of various companies, accompanied by officials of the Power Finance Corporation (PFC) – project promoters – first visited the beaches near Panaiyur Periakuppam where the port and coal jetty for the plant is to be situated. When they tried to leave after about 20 minutes, fishermen and villagers blocked the convoy comprising over 15 cars, demanding answers for what they termed as "misleading

information" being given by the Power Finance Corporation about the plant site that is abundant in natural resources.

It took an hour of dialogue with the protestors by senior officers before the police were able to make them clear the way. The villagers, however, made it clear to the officials that they will not allow the plant to come up in the area. The investors faced similar protests when they visited the proposed plant site 5 km away from Panaiyur Periakuppam before heading back to Chennai. [Full News Report](#)

leading the way

Twice the output & half the emissions in North Carolina's modernized plant

In mid-2006, Duke Energy filed an application with the North Carolina Utilities Commission to retire and replace Units 1 through 4 of its Cliffside Steam Station.

Although the air permit issued by the state included a first-of-its-kind carbon mitigation plan, the proposal to build a large new coal plant on the site sparked strenuous opposition from area environmental groups. Plant opponents were concerned primarily about mercury emissions from the new Unit 6, even though replacing the old units would result in a dramatic net reduction. Much of the dispute centered around what emissions levels were mandated under the Clean Air Act and state regulations.

Duke agreed in a settlement reached in early 2012 that it would retire 1,667 MW of coal-fired capacity and tighten pollution controls at Cliffside. The plant also includes advanced air quality control systems. The arrangement is an innovative combination of proven technologies that include a spray dryer absorber (SDA), fabric filter baghouse, and a wet flue gas desulfurizer (WFGD). The system removes 99.9% of fly ash,

99% of SO_x, and 90% of mercury to meet particulate emission limits for coals having up to 27% ash. Finally, Unit 6 was specifically built to accommodate future carbon-control technologies when they become available.

The new plant is efficient in other ways. Unit 6 has been designed to reuse and recycle resources as much as is practicable. While the old plant had relied on the Broad River for cooling, the new plant utilizes closed-loop cooling towers. That change reduces withdrawals from the river by almost 90%. Cooling tower blowdown is used as makeup for the WFGD, and the WFGD purge stream is used as makeup for the SDA. The combustion and WFGD by-products are recycled for use in the construction

industry. Because of the clean, efficient design of Unit 6, Duke received a \$125 million Advanced Coal Project tax credit from the Department of Energy.

The control systems for Unit 6 are as advanced as the power systems. Duke developed and implemented a digital monitoring and control strategy that integrated the operator human machine interface within an Emerson Ovation digital control system (DCS), eliminating almost all proprietary/standalone/third-party controllers. Bus technologies—in particular, Foundation Fieldbus in analog control loops—have been utilized to greatly reduce the quantity of hardwired instrumentation and control cabling and terminations.

Unit 6 entered commercial operation in December 2012. Emissions and performance testing were completed during the fourth quarter of 2012 and the first quarter of 2013. "Unit 6 has the flexibility to burn a wide range of coals with superior emissions removal, which allows us to purchase cost-effective coals," said Charlie Gates, Duke's vice president of Generation Operations. [Full News Report](#)



Compared to the original units, the modernized ones will produce twice the power while reducing emissions of Sox by 80%, and NO_x & mercury by half

watt's up?

4000 MW TPP announced in Sirgazhi

From the speech of Mr B Surendar Mohan, chairman of Neyveli Lignite Corporation, at its AGM-

"The Board of Directors of your Company has accorded 'in-principle' approval for setting up a coal based power project with an overall capacity of 4000 MW in two phases at Sirkali in the coastal district of Nagapattinam in the State of Tamil Nadu. The present cost estimate for the project is Rs 14482 crore for phase-I of 1980 MW.

Your Company has identified Thirumulaivasal as the site for locating the power plant. Government of Tamilnadu has been requested to issue "in-principle" approval for land for this project. Ministry of Coal has allocated Jilga-Barpali coal block (396 MT) in the State of Chhattisgarh for this project. Issue of tenders for preparation of Feasibility Report and EIA/EMP report are in process. Other preliminary project activities are in progress."

[Full Speech](#)

Kerala SEIAA to communicate to proponents by email

The Kerala State Level Environment Impact Assessment Authority has taken a step forward in processing applications for different projects quicker. To this end, it had announced in October that all project proponents should submit a valid email id along with their applications, as all communication by the SEIAA for applica-

tions requiring environmental clearance would henceforth be done electronically.

The Notification dated October 8, 2013, asked proponents to submit a valid email address and watch out for communication by Kerala SEIAA .

[Notification](#)



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About CAG:

Established in 1985, Citizen consumer and civic Action Group (CAG) is an advocacy and campaigning group that works towards protecting citizens rights in consumer and environmental issues and promotes good governance processes including transparency, accountability and participatory decision-making.

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