



stopwatch

A CAG Initiative

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

SPCB's monitoring of power plants in Tamil Nadu

State Pollution Control Boards are required to monitor industries for their emissions and effluent treatment mechanisms, so as to ensure that these are within permissible limits. This applies to power plants as well, which require periodic inspection by officials. The Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board has specified the frequency of inspection and sampling for every type of industry, classified Red, Green or Orange based on how polluting it is, and large, medium and small, based on the value of its Gross Fixed Assets. All Thermal Power Plants in the state are classified as Red Large industries, and so require inspection and sampling every month. But an RTI enquiry for the frequency of inspection by the TNPCB has revealed irregularities in the monitoring exercise. Tamil Nadu has a total of 31 power plants, the TNPCB has stated in an RTI response. It may be recalled that expansion of NLC TPS II, Cuddalore, was on a trial run last year, while the Basin Bridge Gas Turbine Project in Chennai, was not in continuous operation. Dates of inspection were not provided for the NTPC– TN Energy Company plant, Ponneri and the Lanco Project, Thanjavur. The table below presents the number of inspections conducted for every other plant in the state, revealing that most plants did not have monthly inspections.

–The Editorial Team

No	Name of power plant	Location	No of inspections in 2013
1	Basin Bridge Gas Turbine Power Project	Tondiarpet, Chennai	1
2	GMR Power Corporation	Basin Bridge, Chennai	9
3	North Chennai Thermal Power Station	Ponneri, Chennai	1
4	Ennore Thermal Power Station	Ernavur, Chennai	3
5	NTCP Tamil Nadu Energy	Ponneri, Thiruvallur	NA
6	TCP	Gumudipoondi, Thiruvallur	11
7	OPG Power Generation	Gumudipoondi, Thiruvallur	13
8	Samalpatti Power Company	Parandapalli, Krishnagiri	12
9	NLC TPS-1	Cuddalore	11
10	NLC TPS-1, Expansion	Neyveli, Cuddalore	12
11	NLC TPS-II	Virudhachalam, Cuddalore	11
12	NLC TPS-II Expansion	Virudhachalam, Cuddalore	1
13	ST-CMS Electric Co	Cuddalore	12
14	Kuthalam Gas Turbine Power Project	Mayiladuthurai, Nagapattinam	2
15	MMS Steel & Power Ltd	Nallur, Nagapattinam	2
16	PPN Power Generating Company	Pillaiperumanallur, Nagapattinam	3
17	OPG Energy	Maruthur, Nagapattinam	2
18	MMS Steel & Power Ltd	Narimanam, Nagapattinam	2
19	Kaveri Gas Power	Maruthur, Nagapattinam	2
20	Saheli Exports	Komal, Nagapattinam	2
21	Lanco Tanjore Power Company	Karuppur, Thanjavur	NA
22	Southern Energy Development Corporation	Tiruvarur	2
23	MMS Steel & Power Ltd	Mannargudi, Tiruvarur	2
24	Thirumakkottai Kovil Kalappal Gas Turbine Project	Thirumakkottai, Tiruvarur	2
25	Mettur Thermal Power Station	Mettur Dam, Salem	10
26	Coromandel Electric Company	Ramanathapuram	7
27	Pioneer Power Ltc	Ramanathapuram	7
28	Arkay Energy (Rameswaram)	Valantheravai, Ramanathapuram	9
29	Valuthur Gas Turbine Project (TNEB)	Ramanathapuram	6
30	Tuticorin Thermal Power Station	Thermal Nagar, Thoothukudi	1
31	Ind Bharath Power Gen Com Limited	Keezhavelayathapuram, Thoothukudi	1

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION PROCESS

1 Can I attend the Public Hearing and also send in a Written Response?

Yes, you can.

2 I am not residing near the proposed project site - can I still participate at a Public Hearing and voice my concerns?

Yes, you can, as long as you have valid social and environmental concerns to make!

3 I don't have a core environmental issue to be raised in Public Hearing meeting. Instead, I want to raise queries about social and employment-related issues. Can I do it?

Yes, the Public Hearing is intended to concentrate on the environmental impacts of a proposed project. However, the word 'environment' is to be interpreted broadly and issues concerning social as well as economic (including livelihood) impacts are part of EIA studies. They can, therefore, be raised during public hearings. Social Impact Assessment and Rehabilitation and Resettlement Plan are part of EIA studies and issues concerning these can be raised during the hearing.

4 Who can send Written Responses about a project?

Anybody who has a plausible stake in the environmental aspects of the project or activity, like activists and media personnel, apart from local communities, can send in written responses.

5 What should be done if a project has been awarded EC without holding a Public Hearing?

A petition has to be filed against the EC at the National Green Tribunal. This has to be done within 30 days of the communication of EC, extendable to 90 days if there is a justifiable reason.

6 Can the Public Hearing of two projects be held simultaneously at same time and venue?

No, this is not allowed, as per an Office Memorandum issued by the MoEF.

7 Can the government authorities postpone a Public Hearing?

Yes, but only when there is an emergency. Otherwise, the public hearing date, time and venue cannot be changed. A hearing can be postponed only on the recommendation of the District Magistrate/District Collector /Deputy Commissioner. The postponement should then be announced through advertisements in the same national and regional daily that the scheduled hearing was announced. It should also be prominently displayed at all offices identified by the SPCB. The fresh date, time and venue for public consultation should then be decided by the Member-Secretary of SPCB only in consultation with the District Magistrate/District Collector/Deputy Commissioner and notified afresh. Due to a local situation, if the public hearing cannot be held in the stipulated manner to get the views of the concerned local persons, the SPCB will then report it to the MoEF/ SEIAA which may, after due consideration, decide that the public consultation in that particular case need not include the public hearing. However, a recent NGT order has said that in a situation where the people are aggressive and agitated, the public hearing should be cancelled and held later in order to ensure that proper representation is made.

8 If the people want the Hearing to be postponed, how can that be done?

If there have been any procedural lapses in conducting the hearing - like the venue being too far or the Draft EIA not available in notified places - the people can make a joint representation to the District Magistrate/ Collector or Deputy Commissioner.

9 Is there a regulation on how many people can talk at a Public Hearing?

There is no limit to that! All those who are present at the hearing should be presented an opportunity to voice their views.

10 Is there a fixed time limit for the Public Hearing?

No! As long as there are public queries to be answered, the hearing should continue.

11 A project has been proposed in a highly polluted area. Can I then ask about the total impact of all the polluting projects in a Public Hearing for one project?

Yes, you can! The EIA study includes an assessment of the cumulative impact of projects- proposed and upcoming- in the project area. Issues related to the Cumulative Impact of these projects should be allowed in a public hearing

10 hard & soft copies each of the Draft EIA should be available one month before the public hearing at the offices of District Magistrate, Collector, Deputy Commissioner, Zila Parishad/ Municipal Corporation/ Panchayat Union, apart from the District Industries Office & MoEF Regional Office

NGT takes note of pollution from inferior coal in power plants

The Western Bench has issued a notice to the Maharashtra government about coal pollution in Vidarbha

The National Green Tribunal has taken serious note of the alarming pollution caused by thermal power plants in Vidarbha using inferior quality coal, in violation of Ministry of Environment and Forests' norms.

A division bench of NGT, Western Zone, comprising Justices V R Kingaonkar (judicial member) and Ajay A Deshpande (expert member) issued a notice to Maharashtra Chief Secretary, State Energy Department, Environment Department, Union Power and Coal Ministries, MoEF, MPCB, Coal India Limited and its subsidiary Western Coalfields and state-run power utility Maharashtra State Power Generation Company Limited (MahaGenco) seeking a reply.

A Public Interest Litigation in this regard has been filed by Ratnadeep Rangari, a social worker and resident of Mahadula village charging coal and power utilities with flouting MoEF norms, polluting the air, poisoning the water and reducing Vidarbha to a gas chamber by not using clean coal technology.

This has put the lives of about 20 million Vidarbhis in danger, the petition stated while urging NGT to direct coal and power utilities to follow MoEF notification and all other regulatory and supervisory institutions to ensure its compliance.

Quoting various news items and expert reports, the petitioner cited expert opinion which blamed use of inferior coal for over one lakh premature

deaths in coal-bearing areas and in vicinity of power generating units.

As on date, coal-fired power plants run by MahaGenco are located at Khaparkheda, Koradi, Chandrapur, Paras (Akola) in Vidarbha while various private players have proposed thermal power plants in Vidarbha with a total estimated production level of 41,195 MW, which is tremendously high, the petition said. The 132 plants will need around 1 lakh acre farm land and 3,600 cubic mm water, with which over 5.5 lakh hectare land can be irrigated. The proposed power plants will burn 18 lakh tonne coal per year, the petition said.

Full News Report

NTPC looks to acquire stranded power projects

NTPC has invited expressions of interest (EOIs) for acquiring coal-based thermal power plants, from state electricity boards, independent power producers (IPP), power plant developers and captive power producers.

The plants could be in any stage- either operational or synchronised or even under planning or construction stage. The projects would have to have requisite land, and firm fuel and water linkages, statutory clearances and power purchase agreements in place.

The company is said to be evaluating seven stranded power plants with an eye on a buy-out. It at present has an installed capacity of 42,464 MW through 22 coal-based and eight gas-based projects with capacity addition plans of 20,000 MW under implementation. However, like all players in this field, NTPC is stuck in the travails of setting up Greenfield projects, which have become time-consuming and frustrating. A case in point is the 1320 MW Katwa project that NTPC is trying to erect in West Bengal since mid-2011, mired in land tangles.

Power plant acquisition is not new for NTPC, which has turned around acquired properties such as Badarpur near Delhi which it bought in 2006, Uncharhar (bought from the UPSEB in 1992), Talcher (from erstwhile OSEB) in 1995 and Tanda.

Full News Report

Work launched for TN's first supercritical plant in Ennore

Work on the State's first super-critical thermal power plant of 660 megawatt (MW), to be set up on the premises of the Ennore Thermal Power Station (ETPS), was formally inaugurated. Estimated to cost Rs. 4,956 crore, the power plant is expected to be commissioned in 42 months. It is called super critical as its technology is associated with better heat rate, less coal firing, less CO₂ emission and more environment-friendly functions when compared to conventional plants using sub-critical technology.

To overcome the problem of drawing seawater from the polluted Ennore Creek, the authorities will use seawater to be drawn at a depth of 8.5 metres.

Lanco Infra Tech bagged the contract for the plant, using the mode of engineering, procurement and construction (EPC). For the first time, the Corporation has included a clause for the payment of incentive for commissioning of the plant ahead of the schedule. Besides, there is a penalty clause to be invoked in the event of delay, says an official.

The annual requirement of coal will be of the order of 2.5 millions a year which will be imported from Indonesia. A 5.5-km-long pipe conveyer will be used to bring coal to the plant site.

Full News Report

HCs of 18 states to examine coal-fired plants' compliance of safety standards

The Gujarat High Court today issued notices to the state government and 11 coal and lignite based thermal power stations, including those of Tata Power, Adani Power, Torrent Power and Essar Power, with regard to health and safety standards of workers in the units.

The notices were issued by the division bench of Justice Bhaskar Bhattacharya and Justice J B Pardiwala while taking suo motu cognizance of directions issued by the Supreme Court with regard to health and safety standards in thermal power plants.

Appearing on behalf of the state government

senior government pleader Prakash Jani informed the court that there were 11 thermal power plants in Gujarat that used coal or lignite as fuel.

The court issued notices to the State Government's health department and labour department, and the 11 power stations and asked them to file reply by March 11, when the next hearing is scheduled.

On January 31, the Supreme Court had directed High Courts of 18 states to examine whether the coal fired thermal power plants (CFTPPs) were complying with safety standards and regulations relating to health of their employees.

A Bench of Justices K S Radhakrishnan and A K Sikri relegated the issues to the high courts saying the CFTPPs are spread across the country and it would not be practical for the apex court to examine whether each of them were adhering to safety standards and rules. The high courts of Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa, Haryana, Rajasthan, Punjab, Delhi/NCT Delhi, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Jharkand and Assam have been asked to "initiate suo moto proceedings in the larger interest of the workers working in CFTPPs".

Full News Report

60 Gigawatts of coal-fired plants predicted to retire by 2016 in the US

Coal-fired power plants in the United States have been under significant economic pressure in recent years because of low natural gas prices and slow electricity demand growth. The Annual Energy Outlook 2014 (AEO2014) Reference Case projects that a total of 60 gigawatts (GW) of capacity will retire by 2020, which includes the retirements that have already been reported to the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

Coal-fired power plants are subject to the Mercury and Air Toxics Standards (MATS), which require significant reductions in emissions of mercury, acid gases and toxic metals. The standards are scheduled to take effect in April 2015, a deadline that is conditionally allowed to be extended by up to one year by state environmental permitting agencies. Projected retirements of coal-fired generating capacity in the AEO2014 include retirements above and beyond those reported to EIA as planned by power plant owners and operators. In these projections, 90% of the coal-fired capacity retirements occur by 2016, coinciding with the first year of enforcement for the Mercury and Air Toxics Standards.

To comply with MATS, it is assumed that all

coal-fired plants have flue gas desulfurization equipment (scrubbers) or dry sorbent injection systems installed by 2016. Retirement decisions are based on the relative economics and regulatory environment of the electricity markets. A

sensitivity cases will be released in the Spring.

At the end of 2012, there were 1,308 coal-fired generating units in the United States, totaling 310 GW of capacity. In 2012 alone, 10.2 GW of coal-fired capacity was retired, representing 3.2% of the 2011 total. The table to the left shows the progression of coal-fired generating unit retirements between 2010 and 2012. Units that retired in 2010, 2011, or 2012 were small, with an average size of 97 megawatts (MW), and inefficient, with an average tested heat rate of about

Coal-fired generating unit retirements

	existing coal-fired capacity (2012)	retirements		
		2010	2011	2012
total net summer capacity (MW)	309,519	1,418	2,456	10,214
number of units	1,308	29	31	85
average net summer capacity (MW)	239	49	79	123
average age at retirement	37	49	58	50
average tested heat rate (Btu/kWh)	10,168	11,094	10,638	10,353
capacity factor	56%	36%	33%	35%

Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, Form EIA-860, Annual Electric Generator Report
Note: Data for 2009 through 2012 represent actual retirements.

plant may retire if higher coal prices, lower wholesale electricity prices (often tied to natural gas prices), or reduced utilization make investment in equipment like scrubbers uneconomical.

The projections shown reflect EIA's baseline for comparing a number of different sensitivity cases exploring variations on these factors. The full Annual Energy Outlook 2014 including all

10,695 British thermal units per kilowatthour (Btu/kWh). In contrast, units scheduled for retirement over the next 10 years are larger and more efficient: at 145 MW, the average size is 50% larger than recent retirements, with an average tested heat rate of 10,398 Btu/kWh.

[Full Report](#)



CAG

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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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feedback at

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watt's up?

Public hearing for 1320 MW plant in Thoothukudi Dt

A public hearing has been scheduled for March 27, 2014, for the proposed 1,320 MW coal-based thermal plant by KU Thermal Power Private Limited in Ottapidaram and Sillanatham village in Ottapidaram Taluk in Thoothukudi District. The proposed plant will have two units of 660 MW each. The plant is being promoted by the New Delhi-based KU Group, which has five operational plants with a total capacity of 200 MW, and three upcoming projects with a capacity of 760 MW.

The public hearing will be held at office of the District Collector in Sangukoodam, Korampallam at 3 pm.

The ToR for the project, issued in Dec 2011, has been extended by a year in the EAC meeting held in December 2013. The project has not been issued coal linkage despite its application for the same to the Ministry of Coal in February 2012.

The EAC has asked the project proponent to ensure that the environmental impacts assessed in the draft EIA/EMP report are in consonance with the coal quality/characteristics proposed. Else, the EIA/EMP report should be amended accordingly, the committee has said. It also further recommended that additional ToR which were earlier not prescribed but relevant now may be prescribed while issuing the extension of validity.

Written responses to the project can be sent to:

District Environmental Engineer,
Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board,
C7 & C9, SIPCOT Industrial Complex,
Meelavittam, Thoothukudi-628008.
Phone : 0461 - 2324705
Email: tnpccb@md3.vsnl.net.in or
tnpcb@dataone.in

[Read EIA Summary](#)