

# POLLUTION BODY BANS COAL USE IN DELHI

Relevant for: Environment | Topic: Environmental Pollution - Air, Water, Soil & E-waste

Coal dominates industrial fuels in the National Capital Region. File photo

The use of coal as fuel in industrial, domestic units will be banned in the National Capital Region (NCR) from January 2023 but the ban will not apply to thermal power plants — incidentally the largest users of coal, according to a notification on Wednesday by the Commission for Air Quality Management, which coordinates air pollution norms in Delhi and adjoining States.

“Restrictions/ban on use of coal shall come into force from October 2022 (for regions where piped natural gas infrastructure and supply is already available) and January 2023 (for other regions where the PNG supply is still not available). In full effect, use of coal as fuel shall be banned across NCR from 01.01.2023,” according to the notification.

Coal dominates industrial fuels in the NCR and current estimates indicate that approximately 1.7 million tonnes of coal is consumed annually for industrial applications in NCR, with about 1.4 million tonnes being consumed in six major industrial districts of NCR alone.

There isn't a standard figure for how much coal is used by thermal power plants in the Delhi-NCR. An analysis by environmental non-profit, Centre for Science and Environment, estimated in 2020 that Delhi alone sourced 33.6% of its power needs from coal-based thermal power plants with the rest from gas-fired plants. Coal is the mainstay of power across India accounting for over 65% of the electricity supplied. Shortage of coal in recent months have prompted periodic crises when stocks run critically low.

Concerned with levels of pollution from coal-fired plants, the Union Environment Ministry had ordered thermal plants in 2015 to retrofit and use technology that ensured minimal sulphur emissions.

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