

## 70% POWER PLANTS WON'T MEET EMISSION STANDARDS BY 2022 DEADLINE: CSE

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

A report released by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) on Thursday said that with just two years to go, 70% of the country's power plants won't be able to meet the stringent emission standards that will come into effect in 2022.

The standards set by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change in December 2015 were based on global standards, it said.

CSE director general Sunita Narain said in a statement, "Our assessment finds that even after seven years since the notification and even after the agreed five-year extension given to this sector in 2017, most of the total installed coal-fired capacity will not be compliant with the crucial sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) standards by 2022."

The CSE said there was lack of information in the public domain about the compliance with particulate matter or nitrogen oxide standards.

"Coal-fired power plants are some of the most polluting industries in the country. They account for over 60% of the total PM emissions from all industry, as well as 45% of the SO<sub>2</sub>, 30% of oxides of nitrogen and over 80% of the mercury emissions. Therefore, even as we continue using coal, India's thermal power sector must clean up its act. This is absolutely non-negotiable," Ms. Narain said.

The CSE report said the implementation of the stringent standards would, according to rough estimates, reduce emissions of PM by 35%, SO<sub>2</sub> by 80% and NO<sub>x</sub> by 42%.

Power plants with 97GW capacity were compliant with the standards so far and 14GW was in the upgrade process, the report said. "Total compliance and non-compliance could not be ascertained as no information was available on the status of progress of an additional 69 GW capacity."

For SO<sub>2</sub>, 16GW capacity was compliant and tenders had been awarded with respect to 32GW capacity and preliminary work was on for 125 GW capacity, while there were no plans for 9GW capacity.

"It is highly unlikely for units still at preliminary stages or with no plan to meet the 2022 deadline even if they awarded the tenders now. It takes at least two years for a station to complete FGD (flue-gas desulfurisation) construction. Hence, a coal-based power project with a 2022 deadline should have begun construction by 2019," the report said. It recommended that the Environment Ministry issue directions and impose fines on the plants that won't meet the 2022 deadline.

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