

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF POWER

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.2552
ANSWERED ON 11.08.2025

EXEMPTIONS FROM INSTALLING FLUE GAS DESULPHURISATION SYSTEMS

2552 SHRI RITABRATA BANERJEE:

Will the Minister of **POWER** be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that majority of India's Thermal Power Plants (TPPs) has been exempted from installing Flue Gas Desulphurisation (FGD) Systems; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor?

A N S W E R

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER

(SHRI SHRIPAD NAIK)

(a) & (b): Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) notified emission standards [including Sulphur Dioxide (SO₂)] for coal / lignite based Thermal Power Plants (TPPs) vide its Notification dated 07.12.2015. Further, MoEF&CC vide notification dated 05.09.2022 has categorized TPPs as Category-A, B and C for compliance of SO₂ emission norms along with timelines for each category. Accordingly, then TPPs were classified as follows:

Sl. No.	Category	Location/Area	No. of TPPs	No. of Units	Capacity (MW)
1	Category A	Within 10 km radius of National Capital Region or cities having million plus population	17	66	20,577
2	Category B	Within 10 km radius of Critically Polluted Areas or Non-attainment cities	25	72	24,057
3	Category C	Other than those included in category A and B	149	462	1,66,885.5
Total			191	600	2,11,519.5

Note: As per 2011 census of India

To meet the SO₂ emission norms, Flue Gas Desulphurization (FGD) system is being installed in coal/lignite based TPPs. So far, a total of 57 FGD (i.e. 17 Units in Category-A, 04 Units in Category-B & 36 Units in Category-C) have been installed.

The SO₂ emission standards prescribed in MoEF&CC notification dated 07.12.2015 have been reviewed by the Central Government taking into consideration the various representations received regarding exemption or relaxation in timelines of these standards due to limited availability of technology providers, its techno-economic feasibility, negative impact of COVID-19 pandemic on supply chain, price escalation due to high demand and low supplies, low SO₂ concentration in ambient air and heavy burden on consumers due to increase in electricity price etc.

Besides the above, the scientific studies conducted by independent research institutions regarding effectiveness & rationale behind these standards and its role in overall ambient air pollution of the region were also considered to evaluate the need of universal applicability and enforcement of these standards.

In view of above, now MoEF&CC has issued a notification on 11.07.2025 regarding applicability of SO₂ emission standards for TPPs along with timelines and its details are given below:

- (i) thermal power plants declared to retire before 31.12.2030 shall not be required to meet specified standards for SO₂ emissions in case such plants submit an undertaking to Central Pollution Control Board and Central Electricity Authority for exemption on ground of retirement of such plant;
- (ii) the existing and under commissioning Category A thermal power plants shall comply with SO₂ emission standards by 31.12.2027. Other Category A plants to be commissioned after 31.12.2027 will operate only after ensuring compliance of these standards;
- (iii) for all Category B Plants or Units, whether existing or upcoming, the applicability of SO₂ emission standards, shall be decided by the Central Government based upon recommendations of the Expert Appraisal Committee in charge of thermal Power Projects as per the procedure laid in the notification dated 11.07.2025;
- (iv) the SO₂ emission standards shall not be applicable to all Category-C thermal power plants subject to compliance of stack height criteria notified by MoEF&CC on 30.08.1990 and timeline for compliance of stack height criteria is 31.12.2029.
