

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF POWER

**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.2863**  
ANSWERED ON 18.08.2025

**COAL PLANT POLLUTION EXEMPTIONS**

**2863 SMT. PRIYANKA CHATURVEDI:**

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

- (a) directive under which coal-fired power plants in State of Maharashtra have been exempted from installing Flue-Gas Desulfurization (FGD) systems;
- (b) the number of these plants and their respective power generation capacities in State of Maharashtra;
- (c) whether any assessment was conducted by Government regarding the public health and environmental impact of such exemptions in non-attainment cities under the National Clean Air Programme, if so, the details thereof;
- (d) if not, the reasons for the same; and
- (e) whether Government has proposed measures to mitigate the pollution burden arising from continued SO<sub>2</sub> and PM emissions from these exempted plants?

**A N S W E R**

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER

(SHRI SHRIPAD NAIK)

**(a) :** Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) notified emission standards [including Sulphur Dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>)] 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 the Thermal Power Plants (TPPs) into the following three categories:

- (i) **Category-A** (Within 10 km radius of National Capital Region or cities having million plus population);
- (ii) **Category-B** (Within 10 km radius of Critically Polluted Areas or Non-attainment cities);
- (iii) **Category- C** (Other than those included in Category A and B).

To meet the SO<sub>2</sub> emission norms, Flue Gas Desulphurization (FGDs) systems are being installed in coal/lignite based TPPs.

Now, MoEF&CC has issued a Notification on 11.07.2025 regarding applicability of SO<sub>2</sub> 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 SO<sub>2</sub> emissions in case such plants submit an undertaking to Central Pollution Control Board(CPCB) and Central Electricity Authority(CEA) for exemption on ground of retirement of such plant;

- (ii) the existing and under commissioning Category A thermal power plants shall comply with SO<sub>2</sub> 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 SO<sub>2</sub> 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 SO<sub>2</sub> 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.

**(b):** As per categorization of TPPs based on MoEF&CC Notification dated 05.09.2022, there are 04 TPPs [14 units (4910 MW)] under Category-A, 03 TPPs [11 units (4840 MW)] under Category-B, and 16 TPPs [46 units (15006 MW)] under Category-C in the state of Maharashtra. These TPPs are owned by Central/State Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) and Independent Power Producers (IPPs).

**(c) & (d):** TPPs located within 10 Km radius of Critically Polluted areas or Non-attainment cities fall under Category B. The applicability of emission standards for SO<sub>2</sub> in TPPs for all Category B Plants or Units, whether existing or upcoming, shall be decided on a case-to-case basis by the Central Government based upon the recommendations of the Expert Appraisal Committee in charge of Thermal Power Projects.

**(e) :** Thermal Power Plants are using Electrostatic Precipitator (ESPs) for meeting Particulate Matter (PM) emission norms.

Further, MoEF&CC Notification dated 11.07.2025 is based on approach of resource conservation by avoiding additional consumption of water, auxiliary power, and limestone, increase in carbon footprint / CO<sub>2</sub> emissions resulting from the FGD operation, as well as the mining and transportation of limestone required for these measures.

In all cases where SO<sub>2</sub> emission standards are not applicable, all such TPPs (irrespective of location) shall ensure compliance to stack height criteria notified by MoEF&CC on 30.08.1990.

In case of non-compliance beyond the specified timelines, MoEF&CC has prescribed the following Environmental Compensation on non-retiring TPPs:

<b>Non-Compliant operation beyond the Timeline</b>	<b>Environmental Compensations (Rs. Per unit electricity generated)</b>
0-180 days	0.20
181-365 days	0.30
366 days and beyond	0.40

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