

# **Commission for Air Quality Management in NCR and Adjoining Areas**

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17<sup>th</sup> Floor, Jawahar Vyapar Bhawan,  
Tolstoy Marg, New Delhi-110001

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

**CAQM issues Show Cause Notices to 06 Thermal Power Plants within a radius of 300 km of Delhi for non-compliance of biomass co-firing norms; EC of about ₹61.85 crore proposed**

**NEW DELHI:**

The Commission for Air Quality Management in NCR and Adjoining Areas (CAQM) has issued Show Cause Notices to 06 coal-based Thermal Power Plants (TPPs) located within a radius of 300 km of Delhi for non-compliance with the mandatory provisions relating to co-firing of pellets or briquettes made from crop residue, notified under the Environment (Utilisation of Crop Residue by Thermal Power Plants) Rules, 2023. The action follows a detailed review of compliance status for the FY 2024-25, based on data provided by the Ministry of Power, Government of India.

The Environment (Utilisation of Crop Residue by Thermal Power Plants) Rules, 2023 mandate all coal-based TPPs to utilise a minimum 5% blend of biomass pellets or briquettes made of crop residue along with coal, with a minimum threshold of more than 3% co-firing prescribed for FY 2024-25 to avoid imposition of Environmental Compensation (EC). These Statutory provisions were notified with the objective of promoting ex-situ management of paddy straw, reducing incidents of stubble burning, and mitigating air pollution in NCR and Adjoining Areas. The Commission has, since 2021, issued multiple Statutory Directions, including Direction No. 42 dated 17.09.2021, and has consistently monitored implementation through periodic reviews and inspections.

Despite these measures, the compliance status of the following TPPs has been found to be unsatisfactory during FY 2024-25, with biomass co-firing levels remaining well below the mandated thresholds. Consequently, Show Cause Notices proposing imposition of EC have been issued to the concerned plants, as detailed below:

- Talwandi Sabo Power Limited (TSPL - Vedanta), Mansa, Punjab - proposed EC of approx. ₹33.02 Crore;
- Panipat Thermal Power Station (PTPS), Panipat, Haryana - proposed EC of approx. ₹8.98 Crore;
- Deenbandhu Chhotu Ram Thermal Power Station (DCRTPS), Yamunanagar, Haryana - proposed EC of approx. ₹6.69 Crore;
- Rajiv Gandhi Thermal Power Plant (RGTPP), Hisar, Haryana - proposed EC of approx. ₹5.55 Crore;
- PSPCL - Guru Hargobind Thermal Power Plant, Lehra Mohabbat, Punjab - proposed EC of approx. ₹4.87 Crore;

- Harduaganj Thermal Power Station, UPRVUNL, Uttar Pradesh - proposed EC of approx. ₹2.74 Crore.

The total Environmental Compensation proposed across these 06 TPPs amounts to approx. ₹61.85 Crore.

Since issuance of Direction No. 42, the Commission intensively reviewed the matter with all concerned stakeholders including TPPs. Observing a huge lag in compliance and directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court, the Commission in early 2024 issued Notices u/s 14 of CAQM Act, 2021 to 4 TPPs whose performance was consistently poor since the exercise has been started. The Commission also flagged the concern before 7 TPPs and all concerned authorities for immediate measures to comply with the Environment (Utilisation of Crop Residue by Thermal Power Plants) Rules, 2023. Even a Committee was constituted for examining the representations of non-compliant TPPs (if any) for the period of FY 2024-25.

The concerned TPPs have been directed to submit their written explanations within 15 days from the date of issue of the Show Cause Notices, failing which further action shall be initiated in accordance with the provisions of the Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas Act, 2021, including action under Section 14 of the Act.

The Commission reiterates that biomass co-firing in TPPs is a critical intervention for effective *ex-situ* management of crop residue and for reduction of air pollution in NCR and Adjoining Areas. The Commission shall continue to pursue strict enforcement of Statutory Directions to ensure timely and sustained compliance by all regulated entities.

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