
Thermal power plants battling coal shortages

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BL reported that the coal shortage situation affecting major thermal power stations across the country shows no sign of abating. According to latest available estimates, 23 thermal stations were facing critical coal stocks, with fuel in these plants expected to last less than 7 days.

Of these, the coal stocks position in 13 large stations have been designated as super critical, with stocks expected to last less than four days, latest data of coal stock position compiled by the Central Electricity Authority show.

Even more worrying could be the fact that stations facing super critical coal stock situation include a number of super thermal stations, several of which form the backbone of the Central and Eastern Grids, including NTPC's 1,840 MW Kahalgaon station in Bihar and the 1,000 MW Sipat station in Chhattisgarh.

However, the stations facing critical coal stocks include NTPC's 3,000 MW Talcher Super Thermal Power Station in Orissa, Gujarat's 1,470 MW Wanakbori thermal station, Maharashtra's 2,340 MW Chandrapur project and Uttar Pradesh's 1,550 MW Obra station.

According to Power Ministry officials, the shortages are on account of a lower coal production by Coal India Limited. Higher than anticipated power generation at some stations and unloading constraints at others, combined with low levels of coal imports, have compounded the problem further.

As per report, the impact is most pronounced in the northern and western regions. The west has the maximum number of stations facing coal shortages, with 11 thermal stations facing critical stocks, of which 5 are super critical. In the northern region, 8 of the 21 stations are critical, of which three face super critical stocks.

Meanwhile, thermal stations are normally expected to hold coal stocks of between 15 and 30 days, depending on the location of the project. While pithead stations should hold stocks of 15 days or more, stations located away from the mine are expected to hold coal stocks for 21 to 30 days.

(Sourced from Business Line)

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