

TAMIL NADU

TN Forest Dept to take up mitigation measures in Gulf of Mannar Marine National Park

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Permission has been granted for the establishment of two thermal power plants about six km away; the Forest Dept intends to collect data on marina flora and fauna as a first step



The Tamil Nadu Forest Department will take up mitigation measures and put up a strict monitoring regime to negate any impact on corals, and the marine eco-system, in the Gulf of Mannar Marine National Park, by the proposed thermal power plants.

The Coastal Regulation Zone clearance for the development for the proposed 2 X 500 MW Thermal Power Plants was granted by the Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change. The wildlife clearance for the plants was issued by the National Board for

Wildlife (NBWL), but with conditions. The NBWL Standing Committee decided to recommend the proposal in view of the distance of more than 6 km of the project from the Gulf of Mannar Marine National Park. However, laying down conditions while granting the Environmental Clearance, the Committee said the cost of the mitigation measures would have to be borne by the Neyveli Lignite Corporation (NLC), the project proponent.

The committee said the monitoring set-up must be in place within one year from the date of remittance. The measure suggested by the Forest Department addressing the issues identified as an impact on biodiversity as a result of the monitoring, should be adopted by the project proponent scrupulously.

Accordingly, the Neyveli Lignite Corporation Power Limited remitted ₹1 crore with the Forest Department. Now, the government has released ₹18 lakh in the first phase to take up work on mitigation measures.

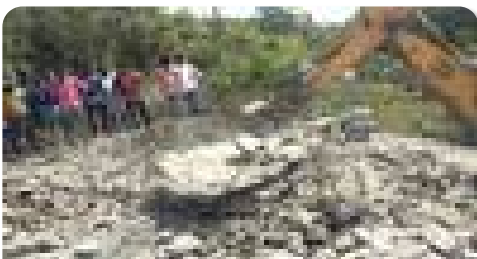
Initially, the Forest Department will conduct a detailed baseline data collection on the marine flora and fauna including ecologically-sensitive habitats (corals and sea grasses) and fish population, and will compare this data with baseline data collected during the Environment Impact Assessment study prior to the start of the project.

The Department will also be monitoring temperature and salinity (both surface and bottom water) once in 15 days (fortnightly), for a total of 24 times in a year.

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