

21/09/2001 Daily Mirror

For and against Norochcholai

Catholic church blocks project

Nature is never a stickler to norms or definite patterns, as such the prevalent drought could not have been predicted. But the CEB should have been alert to such a situation. The present generation of power using both Hydro and Thermal is not sufficient to meet the demand and this is a fact. In which case the CEB should have had standby generators to meet a crisis when hydro power goes out. Obviously, this would result in additional costs both to the CEB as well as the consumer.

Another matter which has to be raised is why the proposed Coal Power Plant was not erected? Had it been constructed by now we should have been supplied with enough power even without the hydro output. First this was stalled when it was proposed at Trinco, due to terrorism. The second time when it was to be shifted to Mawella President Premadasa blocked it for reasons known only to him. Then when it was to be located at Kalpitiya this was stopped by the powerful Catholic Church on alleged flimsy grounds. But it is known this was



People in prayer voice their opinion against the coal plant in Norochcholai

stopped due to the Oil Lobby and the smugglers operating at Kapitiya.

Anyway the outcome is that the power cuts are to be extended to longer periods and the people have to suffer in the dark, while the Catholic Church maybe praying.

The Church has never been famous for being rational and it is wondered how a country that has been disciplined by rational thinking could be dominated by an irrationalistic force.

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Dr. Tilak Siyambalapitiya, an expert of power generation observed in 1996:

".....Mawella in the Matara District, the next most economical site for coal power after Trincomalee has been abandoned owing to perceived social impacts of resettlement.

The CEB should be directed to initiate the feasibility study for Mawella.....The on-going study at Puttalam may be completed for implementation at a future date.....

Coal Power at a huge price

Norochcholai was chosen not because of its suitability, but because all other sites identified by the experts were not accepted by the local population. Noorochcholai is the worst

site for the establishment of a coal power plant for the following reasons:

1. The Bathymetric feature at this site is very unfavorable. A breakwater needs to be constructed at a distance of 4.2 kilo metres from the shore to anchor

ships carrying coal. A conveyor with the length over 4.2 kilometer needs to be erected on 100 concrete columns to transport coal from the ships to the power plant. These columns are tall enough to allow fishing boats with sails to pass underneath without hindrance.

2. Unavailability of fresh water to be used as make-up water for boilers. At this site, it is proposed to desalinate seawater for this purpose. Such practices are common only in Middle East.

3. The location is very close to the war-affected North-East Zone and hence susceptible to destruction.

4. Very close to a religious shrine.

According the feasibility study carried out by the Japanese Consultants in 1993, the cost of electricity from the proposed coal plant at Puttalam would be US\$0.056per kWh. This is the expected cost at the power station. The expected cost to the consumers is about US\$0.084per KWh.

Consumers are hereby warned that if and when the proposed coal power plant at Puttalam is commissioned, they would have to expect at least a 50% increase in the electricity price.

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