

Greenlight for CEB to go ahead with Norochcholai coal-power project

by Shanika Sriyananda

The Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB) has received the final approval from the Coastal Conservation Department (CCD), Central Environmental Authority and the North Western Provincial Council to set up the proposed coal power project in the village of Norochcholai in Kalpitiya.

The Additional General Manager of the CEB, D.G.D.C. Wijeratne, told the *'Sunday Observer'* that the CEB is going ahead with the project as it is vital to maintain a continuous power supply.

Stressing the need for setting up a coal power project in Sri Lanka to meet the country's annual demand for electricity, Wijeratne said that the electricity demand of the country keeps on increasing at the rate of 10 per cent each year.

"The present hydro electricity generation is about 1,135 Mw. This amount is not sufficient to meet the country's annual demand for electricity", he said.

According to him, within the next ten years another 1,000 Mw should be added to the national grid and electricity from the proposed hydro power projects, will add approximately 400 Mw to the national grid.

"However, the rest 600 Mw has to be filled", he added.

Speaking about the trends in installing coal power projects, Wijeratne pointed out that since it is considered to be the most cost effective means of generating power compared with diesel turbines coal is the major fuel used in today's power generation. "Forty per cent of the world's electricity is generated from coal

power projects", Mr. Wijeratne said. According to him coal-power plants are the most economical means of power generation for developing countries like Sri Lanka. "Oil prices are escalating and on the other hand it is estimated that current oil reserves are sufficient only for about 40 years.

Therefore, Sri Lanka cannot afford to have power plants run on oil. Coal is much cheaper and coal reserves are sufficient for more than 200 years", he added.

"There is no other alternative than setting up of a coal-power plant, lest the country has to experience frequent power cuts in future", he warned.

However, the CEB targets to complete the coal power plant within the next five years.

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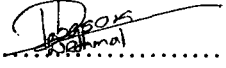
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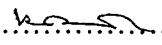
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