

10/09/01 Daily Mirror

Norochcholai Coal Project

This has reference to a recent *Daily Mirror* article titled "Render unto Caesar..."

It is claimed that Norochcholai has been picked by experts as the best possible site. This claim is totally false. I give below a view expressed by an expert of power generation by the name of Dr. Tilak Siyambalapitiya in 1996 in this respect.

".....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....."

It is a well-known fact that Norochcholai was chosen not because of its suitability, but because all other sites identified by the experts were not accepted by the local population. Norochcholai 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 unfavourable. A breakwater need 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 kilometres need 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 to 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\$0.056 per kWh.

This is the expected cost at the power station. The expected cost to the consumers is about US\$0.084 per kWh. Consumers are hereby warned that if and when the proposed coal power plant at Puttalam is commissioned, expect at least a 50% increase in the electricity price.

J. Ponnukone
Nugegoda.