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### Bishop on Norachchulai coal power plant

The government should re-explore the possibility to set up the coal power plant at Norachchulai on the basis of the previously agreed condition and of the findings of the experts, before making a final decision, says Rt. Rev. Dr. Frank Marcus Fernando, Cont. on page 4

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Catholic Bishop of Chilaw diocese, in a statement issued to the media.

While appreciating the initiative taken by the government to seek a second opinion on a request made by the Bishop the statement points out that after conducting an in-depth study of relevant material and visits to the site, M/s. Rambol Consultant

Agency from Denmark, has submitted an interim report to the government. A copy of that report has been made available to us.

"We note that most of our concerns have been given careful consideration.

It would take too long to repeat them here.

By way of example, we may mention the 4.2 km. off shore jetty which was an integral part of the Nuraicholai project. Many persons had expressed concern over it, due to reasons of security, its impact on fishermen's lives, possible negative effects on the Shrine of St. Anne at Talawila, and the sheer expense and length of time - more than a dozen years needed according to some - to complete it. the consultant has practically eliminated that jetty.

"While setting aside the 4.2 km jetty,

the consultant has recommended transport of coal by barge, from ship to the plant, in case a power plant is to be built there. The building of a breakwater, and a near-shore harbour form part of this option. The consultant cautiously states that all this calls for further careful study. It can be expected that our local experts would study it further and perhaps make fresh discoveries.

"It is up to the government to proceed from here. Whatever the course of action it takes, that would be on its own responsibility. We can take for granted that the security aspects, especially, would be given

high consideration. Moreover, whatever be the place, the government ultimately chooses to erect the power plant, let it be clearly understood that the government bears the responsibility to ensure that all environmental and safety measures urged by the consultant and other specialised bodies are strictly enforced. Contravening of standards (eg. Importing of inferior coal, interruption of air and water purifying processes) should be made punishable offences. Recognised bodies from the neighbourhood of the power plant should be authorised to call for performance reports and other relevant data."