

Planned power plant at Trinco meets tough opposition

By Damitha Hemachandra

The Coast Conservation Department (CCD) had given initial permission for the 110 Mw coal power plant at Trincomalee, raising fears and doubts among environmentalists.

CCD Director, Dr. R.A.D.B. Samaranayake said that the initial permission to the project had been granted but the project needs to acquire an Envi-

ronment Impact Assessment (EIA) under the Coast Conservation Act.

The Rs. 220 million coal power plant which is to be constructed near the bay of Trincomalee, is to produce 110 Mw power using waste gas and coke fume for the main grid.

The project met protests from environmentalists due to its possible threats of air and ocean pollution while

the Air Force and the Army protested at the coal power plant due to its close proximity to the Trincomalee air base.

The discharge of warm water into the surrounding water body after using it in the coal power plant, the mitigation of dust and also the gathered impact of other future projects like the coal power plant are some of the concerns held

out by environmentalists.

The area also involves dredging operations for site preparation. The establishment of a railway track is also likely to interrupt the coastal habitat.

The Air Force protested at the coal power plant due to its closeness to the air base on the grounds of disturbance to the air navigation path while the Army protested due to its

proximity to its firing grounds.

However Dr. Samaranayake stressed that the project operators have to acquire permission from defence officials prior to the granting of final permission for the project.

Meanwhile an official of the Defence Ministry stressed that a comment could not be made before permission was requested

from the Ministry.

"We had been informed of possible impacts from the Army and the Air Force officials but we cannot make a comment at the moment," he said.

However environmentalists held that there had been much pressure from the BOI as well as from top politicians in favour of granting permission for the project.