

As 10 plants stop lifting coal, output & despatch at CIL hit

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Kolkata, March 16

AS many as 10 thermal power plants with an aggregate generation of 15,200 MW have stopped lifting coal from Coal India (CIL) due to huge stocks. These plants have cut down generation owing to lower demand. This has forced CIL to reduce offtake, which is forcing the company to go slow on production even as it falls short of its target.

A Central Electricity Authority report says five coal-fired power generating units in Haryana and four in Punjab have stopped lifting coal receivable as per the annual contracted quantity as stocks have piled up owing to weak power demand.

Haryana Power Generation Corporation, with only 63% of the contracted quantity materialisation, is heavily stocked. Power plants in Panipat and Khedar (Hisar) have stockpiles of 41 days while those in Yamuna Nagar and Jhajjar have stockpiles of 28 days and 24 days, respectively. The Mahatma Gandhi Thermal Power Station at Yamuna Nagar has stocks for 17 days.

Punjab faces the same situation with its Bhatinda plant having a stock for 28 days, Lehra for 19 days and Ropar for 20 days. The

Stock position at thermal power stations

Name of power station	Capacity (MW)	Actual stock (in '000 tonne)	Stock in days
Haryana			
* Panipat TPS	1,360	798.37	41
* Rajiv Gandhi TPS (Khedar – Hisar)	1,200	502.67	41
* Yamuna Nagar TPS	600	192.41	28
Indira Gandhi (STPP) (Jhajjar JV NTPC & Haryana)	1,500	463.58	24
Mahatma Gandhi TPS (IPP of China Light) (Thermal Plants of Haryana Power Generation)	1,320	275.41	17
Punjab			
GND TPS (Bhatinda)	440	139.48	28
GH TPS (Lehra-Mohabat)	920	244.36	19
Ropar TPS	1,260	370.72	20
Kahalgaon TPS	2,340	909.64	25
Vindhyachal STPS	4,260	908.67	16

Kahalgaon Thermal Power Station under NTPC has a stock for 25 days and the Vindhyachal Power Station has a stock for 16 days, the CEA report says. All this has put CIL in a fix as power producers have made it clear that they are not going to lift any more coal this fiscal, a CIL official said.

CIL chairman S Narsing Rao told the company was already falling short of target and, now, with depletion in demand, the gap between production and target will increase. "With comfortable ground stock of around 40.40 million

tonne as of February 28, the company is ideally in a position to ramp up supplies in an effort to meet its offtake target. But lower power demand in many states and coal brimming over at coal-fired power plants is restricting the state-owned coal miner to push up supplies. This has further dampened offtake and production targets of CIL this fiscal," Rao said.

According to a CIL official, as of March 14, CIL has despatched 447 mt. Another 45 mt of dispatch in the remaining days of the fiscal would help meet its tar-

get. CIL, in actual terms, would be able to despatch 30.6 mt within the remaining days of the fiscal, but the current demand scenario doesn't ask for this much.

In the same way, as of March 14, the company has produced 432 mt. With March being the peak time (production reaches an average of 1.8 mt a day), the company could have ended the year with around 462 mt against a target of 482 mt. But it is forced to produce much less than 462 mt because of low demand, the official said, adding that CIL has to avoid increasing pit head stock.

Rao said that even as some power producers with stocks of less than 20 days would not have minded lifting coal, the cash and carry system, introduced in October 1 last year, has led to depletion in demand because of stricter inventory. Although companies like HPGCL would become liable to pay penalty to CIL for not lifting the agreed quantity, Rao said, "our agreements are gentlemen's agreements. We should not push much for penalty realisation."

Although some power plants have the capacity to absorb more coal, the non-availability of rail linkage bars — to shift coal from those units having excess to those that are needy — is a logistical hurdle, the CIL official added.