

## Over 300 coal-based power plants continue to emit more as deadline to comply with strict emission norms ends

BY [VISHWA MOHAN](#), TNN | DEC 07, 2017, 08.38 PM IST

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NEW DELHI: Polluting coal-based power plants across the country were supposed to comply with strict emission norms by Thursday - a deadline set by the environment ministry two years ago. But, over 300 of them did not do so by taking refuge in a relaxed approach of the ministry towards them at the behest of the [Central Electricity Authority](#) (CEA) which sought more time for these plants to install required instruments for meeting those standards.

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Though the ministry has not come out with a fresh deadline, its approach towards the polluting power plants prompted [Greenpeace India](#) activists and volunteers of many other civil society groups to gather outside the ministry to remind it of the expiring deadline.

"The inaction by government to implement emission standards for coal-based power plants is a clear indication of the lack of political will, and demonstrates that the interests of some industries (power plants) is placed above public health", said Sunil Dahiya, senior campaigner of the [Greenpeace](#) India.

He told TOI that even the power plants located in the National Capital Region (NCR), including those in Punjab and Haryana, did not adhere to the deadline. "These power plants along with hundred others across the country continue to violate the emission standards. It's really shocking", said Dahiya.

The ministry had in December 2015 notified the revised standards for coal-based thermal power plants. The new standards, based on the recommendation of the [Central Pollution Control Board](#) (CPCB), are aimed at reducing emission of PM10, sulphur dioxide and oxide of nitrogen which will, in turn, help in bringing about an improvement in the Ambient Air Quality (AAQ).

The Delhi-based think-tank Centre for Science and Environment ([CSE](#)) has estimated that the power sector alone contributes 60% of the PM (particulate matter), 45% of sulphur dioxide, 30% of nitrogen oxides and 80% of mercury emissions of the total emissions from the industrial sector.

Though the industry was given two years to comply, there has been very little progress so far. The CEA has recommended that the plants be given another five years (which means the deadline should be extended from 2017 to 2022) to comply with the new norms.

"Another five years to meet these standards is unacceptable. Power plants have already wasted two years doing virtually nothing. It is important to push for ambitious time-lines for compliance with the new norms. The ministry needs to come up with a tight implementable deadline and a concrete road-map for each and every plant to ensure compliance", said [Chandra Bhushan](#), deputy director general of the CSE.

The Greenpeace India too demanded strict timeline to comply with the new emission standards. It said, "With each passing day of non-compliance of these emission standards, the health of millions of Indians is increasingly at risk. The ministry needs to come up immediately with strict, implementable deadlines and a concrete road-map for each plant to ensure compliance. This should be made available on public platforms for close monitoring by various stakeholders".