

# CPCB team arrives to monitor KTPS air pollution over 2 days

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Nagpur: A four-member team of the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) from Vadodara reached the city on Wednesday to check air pollution caused by Koradi Thermal Power Station (KTPS). The team is here following a complaint to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) by activist Ankit Shah based on TOI's reports in April.

TOI learnt that the team is on a two-day visit during which it will monitor ambient air quality as well as emissions from stack (chimney). On the first day, the team reportedly set-up air quality monitoring equipment at affected areas like Suradevi, Waregaon, Singhori, Bokhara, Godhni and some other locations near the plant.

The team also interacted with the residents to know the problems they face because of air pollution from the plant.

Apart from this, the team also plans to monitor the air quality at the stack of KTPS.

Experts, however, fear that since the CPCB team is here, Mahagenco (the company which runs the plant) may take "extra precautions" to ensure that "all parameters of emissions are under permissible limit".

"The team should install a well-calibrated equipment at the stack and keep monitoring it online from Vadodara. If MPCB's role is suspect, a local level committee involving NGOs and environmental engineering academicians can be formed to monitor the air quality. This will ensure transparent results," said environment expert Debi Goenka.

On April 15, TOI had reported about the unrealistically low emissions of sulphur dioxide and particulate matter recorded from the stack (chimney) of KTPS's three units by Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB), which were dedicated to the nation by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on April 14. A week later, Mahagenco sent a clarification along with its own data, revealing that SO<sub>2</sub> levels were five times over the permissible limit set by the ministry of environment, forests and climate change (MoEFCC).

Based on TOI's reports, Shah had filed a complaint with PMO, which had forwarded the matter to MoEFCC and CPCB. Earlier, MPCB was directed to re-monitor the air quality. Following this, experts had told TOI that an independent agency should probe the KTPS air pollution as MPCB was itself accused of fudging the data.

Shah again wrote to the PMO demanding investigation by a neutral party. On May 18, Shah received an e-mail from the PMO. The letter, dated May 16, attached with it had CPCB's divisional head NK Gupta directing the board's regional director (west) to depute a team for "inspecting KTPS for monitoring of compliance".

"Since the matter is related to the plant whose one of the units was dedicated to the nation by the Prime Minister, the team should submit a report within 15 days," the letter stated.