

A BRIEFING NOTE

**East Coast Energy Ltd, Bhavanapadu, Kakarapalli,
Srikakulam (Andhra Pradesh)**

The fundamentals

Type of project	Coal-based power plant
Capacity	2,640 MW (4 x 660 MW)
Key controversy	The land allocated by the government for the project is a wetland rich in biodiversity. The site is also close to the ecologically fragile Naupada swamp, visited by migratory birds. The wetland provides livelihoods to the surrounding areas by allowing access to cattle feed, fishing and water for cultivation.
Water requirement	Water source is sea water, and the estimated water requirement will be 3,79,440 m ³ /day. The plant is expected to release into the sea 1,94,136 m ³ /day of hot cooling water.
EIA consultant	B S Envi-Tech (P) Ltd, Hyderabad
Environmental clearance (EC)	Granted to the project after the area was reduced to 1,995 acre, vide Letter No 1-13011/36/2008-IA.11 (T) dated April 9, 2009
Consent to establish	Issued by APPCB on June 15, 2009
CRZ clearance	Granted
Status of appeal in the National Environmental Appellate Authority (NEAA)	Lost
Status of appeal in Supreme Court	First hearing likely to be held on July 23, 2011

Source: Site Inspection report and inputs by Ritwik Dutta

The CSE analysis

EIA conducted at the wrong time

The wrong season was selected for conducting the EIA – it was done during summer from March to May. As the project is located on a wetland and supports a unique ecosystem, a much more comprehensive assessment is required. CSE analysts noted that

- A three-month data is not adequate to study a wetland, swamp or marshy area ecosystem.
- Any wetland survey must involve dry and wet season studies to ensure adequate estimation of the wetland's biodiversity.
- A swamp area/wetland shrinks to its smallest size during dry periods; therefore, a study done during summer will not be able to provide accurate information about the site.
- Migratory birds usually arrive in wetlands after September.
- Satellite imagery cannot provide actual information of land use during summer if a study area supports wetland, swamp or marshy area.

Misinformation on the land type and its use

Some of key land-related findings that emerged from the analysis of the EIA report are:

- The report did not give any information on the types of land or the land use patterns on the acquired land. This was in gross violation of the Terms of Reference (ToR) issued by the Union ministry of environment and forests (MoEF) on August 6, 2007, which had asked for information on *“land use pattern of study area as well as project area”*.
- The report carried misleading information on the types of land acquired for the project – for instance, the report referred to just a layout map of the project, and not the types of land to be acquired.
- The EIA contended that there was *“no vegetation on site as can be seen from the satellite imagery and site photographs”* – this was completely misleading information because more than 60 to 70 per cent of the project land is made up of mudflats, which support a unique biodiversity. The EIA also failed to provide explanatory notes on the land use patterns based on satellite imagery.
- The EIA says the project proponents zeroed in on Bhavanapadu and sited the following reasons for it, based on satellite imagery:
 - Land does not fall in a CRZ area.
 - The area is barren and non-fertile.
 - There are no rehabilitation and resettlement concerns.
 - No irrigated land needs to be acquired.

Assuming the satellite imagery was generated in summer, the images clearly show that the project site is located on a water body – the EIA’s contention that the project is sited on a barren and non-fertile wasteland is, therefore, completely false. Also, satellite imagery clearly showed that a part of the acquired land is single crop agricultural land, which goes against the report’s claim that *“no irrigated land needs to be acquired”*.