

NO clearance for 88 polluting industrial clusters: Jairam Ramesh

'Unless Action Plan is prepared to improve the environment'

Union Minister of State for Environment and Forest Jairam Ramesh has said a nation-wide Comprehensive Environmental Assessment found that 88 industrial clusters were critically polluted. Out of these 88 clusters, 8 are in Maharashtra including Tarapur and Chembur. The environment Ministry will not give clearance to any industry in these 88 clusters unless Action Plan is prepared and implemented to improve the environment in these areas, said Mr. Ramesh, while dedicating HPCL's EURO-4 Petrol Production Facilities to the Nation here. Speaking on this occasion Environment Minister said that "we have to be tough in matters related to environment." Drastic and tough measures are to be taken to save the environment. Elaborating further, he said environment and public health are inter-dependent.

In a place like Bhatinda where there is a critically polluted industrial cluster, the number of Cancer patients is very high. Where the environment is polluted beyond a certain level, it has caused health hazards for the inhabitants of the area. Although, in India, transport emission forms 7 to 8 per cent of the Green House Gases (GHS), but keeping in view the rapid growth in transport sector, there is urgent need to provide clean fuel at affordable price, the Minister added.

Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas Murali Deora in his address said EURO-4 petrol would be introduced in 13 mega cities including Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkatta, Chennai, Hyderabad, Bangalore etc: by April 2010 where as EURO-3 petrol would be available in rest of country by October 2010.

In order to meet the objective of a greener environment as envisaged in auto Fuel Policy, HPCL's Mumbai Refinery undertook, "Green Fuel and Emission Control Project". The total cost of the project is Rs. 1731 crore for upgradation of petrol quality to meet Euro-4 specifications, Mr. Deora added.

"Petroleum products will continue to occupy a dominant position in meeting the energy requirements of our country before we switch to alternative sources of energy," said Mr. Deora.

It is, therefore, important that appropriate regulations be put in place for ensuring that India meets globally accepted environment norms. At the same time, it is incumbent upon the oil industry to keep upgrading their technology and processes so as to provide the nation the cleanest possible sources of energy.

Exports

Indian refineries have been performing well in contributing to the domestic availability of sensitive petroleum products as well as in exports.

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