

Fly Ash Management and Utilization Mission

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In news- The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed the constitution of a 'Fly Ash Management and Utilization Mission' in its recent order.

About the mission-

- Its goal will be to coordinate and monitor issues relating to the handling and disposal of fly ash.
- The Mission is to be jointly headed by the secretaries of the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEF&CC), Union Ministry of Coal and Power and the chief secretaries of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.
- The secretary of MoEF&CC will be the nodal agency for coordination and compliance.
- The Mission may also monitor scientific management and utilization of fly ash by power projects outside Singrauli and Sonbhadra, in coordination with chief secretaries of concerned states.

Comparison of between responsibilities allocated to the committees under the Fly Ash Notification, 2021 & Fly Ash Management and Utilisation Mission-

- The notification of December 2021 which was issued under Environment (Protection) Act 1986 , has made provision for the 'enforcement, monitoring, audit and reporting' of the progress of fly ash utilization and implementation of the clauses of the notification by coal thermal power plants and user agencies.
- The Notification holds the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and State Pollution Control Boards (SPCB) / Pollution Control Committees (PCC) responsible for

monitoring the effective implementation of mandates under it.

- It is mandatory for plants to ensure 100% utilization of fly ash within three to five years.
- However, **along with these statutory regulators, the Mission also extends the responsibility of fly ash management to the chief secretaries of the states.**
- The **Notification mandates the individual thermal power plant to upload monthly information** regarding ash generation and utilisation on its web portal.
- The notification mentions a third **Party compliance audit** for ash disposal by the thermal power plants, but the mission does not.
- The proposed **Mission, on the other hand, will make the roadmaps and progress in fly ash utilisation available for all thermal power plants** and their clusters, on the MoEF&CC website on a quarterly basis for the knowledge of all stakeholders.
- Mission also includes a provision of on-site and off-site crisis management plans with regard to fly ash ponds and dykes.
- The **'victims' of the environmental damage such as ash dyke breach from coal power plants may also approach the Mission** for statutory compensation.

About Fly Ash-

- Fly ash is an unwanted unburnt residue of coal combustion in a coal thermal power plant.
- It is emitted along with flue gasses during the burning of coal in a furnace and collected using the electrostatic precipitators.
- The fly ash collected with the help of precipitators is converted into a wet slurry to minimize fugitive dust emissions.
- It is then transported to the scientifically designed ash ponds through slurry pipelines.

- It is used as a supplementary cementitious material (SCM) in the production of portland cement concrete.
- It is also used in road embankment and construction.