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## 'Nod for IInd UPCL unit, only if first complies with environment norms'

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MANGALORE: Minister for Environment and Ecology J Krishna Palemar on Tuesday categorically said the government will not give its nod for the proposed Unit II of the Udupi Power Corporation Limited (UPCL) at Nandikur in Udupi unless environmental issues related to the thermal power plant are completely addressed by the plant authorities.

Palemar told TOI the state was facing acute shortage of power, but it will not go ahead blindly to approve the Unit II of UPCL, which is proposed to produce 600 MW power.

"I have held a discussion with chief minister D V Sadananda Gowda personally. Since the chief minister is also from our district, he knows the issue very well and has taken it very seriously. The clearance given by officials of the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB) for the Unit II has already been cancelled," he said.

The Unit I of **UPCL** with 600 MW capacity, which was shut down for maintenance, is still not operational. Meanwhile, the government had appointed an expert committee led by Karnataka State Bio fuel Development Board executive chairman Y B Ramakrishna and assessor at the Centre for Ecological Studies of Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore, T V

Ramachandra to look into the problems faced by residents in Nandikur and surrounding villages. The committee will hold a public consultation with regard to the issue on November 19.

Meanwhile, Pejawar Mutt seer Vishweshatheertha Swamiji had demanded that the Unit I of the UPCL should not be allowed to operate again until the expert committee gives its nod and the UPCL adhere to the norms of **KSPCB** fully.

Palemar said that power crisis is a major issue in the state and hence it is not possible for the government to stop the functioning of Unit I of UPCL.

"The 600 MW power produced in the Unit I will cater the needs of the region. However, we will not allow UPCL to function without rectifying the environmental issues," he added.