

Need to curb pollution caused by transportation of coal and iron ore at Visakhapatnam Port, Andhra Pradesh-Laid

SHRI SRIBHARAT MATHUKUMILLI (VISAKHAPATNAM): Despite the pollution-control measures implemented by ports in Visakhapatnam, residents continue to wake up to find their homes coated with black dust. A major source is the handling, stacking, and transportation of coal and iron ore. The average concentration of PM2.5 in Vizag exceeds the national average and is 10 times higher than WHO standards. This poses a serious threat to the respiratory health of the city's residents. I request an immediate action plan to conduct a long-term comprehensive study, including comparative analyses with other port cities, engaging local stakeholders and experts to identify causes and effects of dust pollution on the local community and public health in Visakhapatnam. Additionally, it is essential to ensure that ports adhere to the regulations set by APPCB and NGT including implementing a semi-automatic tarpaulin coverage system for cargo transportation, exploring the use of tube conveyor systems, stringent monitoring and evaluating feasibility of chemical spray among others. Further, Government can consider funding ports to construct covered cargo storages and explore redesigning rolling stock to facilitate covered transportation of coal instead of relying on open wagons, with complete transition towards container cargo handling as a long-term goal. Ultimately, public health must be prioritised at all costs.