

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ATOMIC ENERGY
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:361
ANSWERED ON:02.05.2012
SAFETY REVIEWS OF NUCLEAR REACTORS
Venugopal Shri P.

Will the Minister of ATOMIC ENERGY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether any mechanism/forum exists, at international level for the purpose of co-operation amongst nuclear power generating nations in regard to safety reviews and design of nuclear reactors;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether India's Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) has been admitted as the first new member in the Multinational Design Evaluation Programme (MDEP) recently;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the manner in which India is expected to influence MDEP's strategic decisions particularly with regard to nuclear safety?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES & PENSIONS AND PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY)

(a) to (e) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 361 FOR ANSWER ON 02.05.2012 BY DR. P. VENUGOPAL REGARDING SAFETY REVIEWS OF NUCLEAR REACTORS

(a)&(b) Yes Sir. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) plays an important role in fostering cooperation in regard to safety reviews and design of nuclear reactors. IAEA provides several platforms where experts from Member States operating nuclear power plants exchange information on nuclear safety, operation and design. Among these are the Senior Regulators Forum for PHWRs operating countries, VVER Regulators Forum for VVER operating countries, Incident Reporting System, Technical Working Groups for different types of reactors. The International Project on Innovative Nuclear Reactors and Fuel Cycles (INPRO) is a forum of interested Member States of IAEA that collaborates on topics of common interest including the role of innovation in technologies and institutional arrangements in support of sustainable development of nuclear energy in future.

As mandated by IAEA, the experts from member states together develop safety standards including for nuclear reactors, which helps in developing national standards.

The Convention on Nuclear Safety (CNS) was crafted to achieve a high level of safety globally in the land based civilian nuclear installations. As per the requirement of CNS, all the contracting parties to the Convention are required to submit a detailed national report on the status of nuclear safety in the country. These reports are peer reviewed in an extensive manner. The recommendations made during the review are followed up during subsequent reviews.

India participates actively in IAEA's programmes and activities including those related to safety.

The Multinational Design Evaluation Programme (MDEP) that includes regulators from Canada, China, Finland, France, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, South Africa, the United Kingdom, United States and now India, is a multinational initiative to develop innovative approaches to leverage the resources and knowledge of national regulatory authorities who are, or will shortly be, undertaking the review of new reactor power plant designs. MDEP provides a unique platform to engage with the regulatory authority of member countries.

Currently MDEP programme incorporates a broad range of activities which includes enhancing multilateral co-operation within the existing regulatory framework, multinational convergence of codes, standards and safety goals and implementing MDEP products to facilitate licensing of new reactors. According to terms of reference, MDEP work is carried out by Design specific and Issue specific Working Groups.

Design-specific working groups are formed when three or more countries express interest in working together. Presently two design specific working groups (one EPR working group and another AP1000 working group) exist.

Issues-specific (generic issues) Working Groups have been established for the technical and regulatory area, which include; Vendor inspection co-operation, Codes and Standards and Digital Instrumentation and control.

(c) &(d) Yes Sir. India's AERB became the first new member of Multinational Design Evaluation Programme (MDEP) on April 4, 2012

(e) MDEP pools the resources of the member nuclear regulatory authorities for the purpose of:

1. Co-operating on safety reviews of designs of nuclear reactors that are under construction and undergoing licensing in several countries.
2. Exploring opportunities and potential for harmonization of regulatory requirements and practices. As a full member, Atomic Energy Regulatory Board of India will contribute to the programme strategic decisions in the MDEP Policy Group and the MDEP Steering Technical Committee. India would be contributing to the convergence of nuclear safety practices among regulators in member and non-member countries.