

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ATOMIC ENERGY
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:544

ANSWERED ON:07.08.2013

SECURITY AND SAFETY OF NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS

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Will the Minister of ATOMIC ENERGY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has made any efforts to ascertain the security and safety of the existing and under construction nuclear plants in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof along with a comparison of India's nuclear safety system with those of developed countries;
- (c) the current preparedness to deal with radiation's from nuclear plants;
- (d) whether the Government has a set of regulations in place to address nuclear safety concerns and if so, the details thereof;
- (e) whether the Government plans to bring in stringent punishment for violating safety guidelines in place of a paltry fine of 500 rupees and if so, the details thereof; and
- (f) the progress made in the setting up of an independent nuclear safety regulatory authority in the country?

Answer

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

- (a) The safety and security of existing nuclear power plants in the country is monitored on continuous basis and periodic safety and security audits are carried out as prescribed.
- (b) Nuclear power plants in India are designed, built and operated in accordance with the safety and security requirements and guidelines prescribed by Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) in the form of Safety Codes, Safety Guides, Safety Manuals and Technical documents. These requirements/guidelines are in line with the safety and security standards advised by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and other international bodies.
- (c) Nuclear Power Plants in India have sufficient safeguards by way of design features, operating practices and regulatory controls against any major radiological releases. The release of radioactivity from the plants and the environmental matrices in the vicinity of the plants are monitored regularly for radiation levels through a robust monitoring mechanism. Emergency preparedness and response plans are available at all Nuclear Power Plants (NPPs) to cater to an unlikely event involving release of radioactive substances. The NPPs conduct periodic exercise using these plans.
- (d) The high level documents of AERB viz. Radiation Protection Rules, 2004, the Mission Statement and the Codes of AERB, address nuclear safety concerns. AERB has published 141 regulatory documents relating to the regulation and safety aspects of the facilities regulated by it.
- (e) The provision of fine of `500 under Section 30(3) of the Atomic Energy Act, 1962 is in regard to minor administrative lapses. Special provisions pertaining to safety are provided under Section 17 of the Act. Contravention of any rules made under Section 17 (special provisions as to safety) shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to five years, or with fine, or both. Other enforcement actions ranging from written warnings to withdrawal/suspension of the consent are also available to AERB. The withdrawal of licence by itself is a very severe economic penalty and has the potential to seriously affect the financial health of the stake holder.
- (f) The Nuclear Safety Regulatory Authority Bill, 2011 was introduced in Parliament in 2011. Government proposes to introduce official amendments to the said Bill.