

PRESS STATEMENT

Prime Minister held a meeting today with the Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Minister of State for Environment & Forests, Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office and Secretary, Department of Atomic Energy. Principal Secretary to Prime Minister, National Security Advisor, Chairman Nuclear Power Corporation of India (NPCIL) and other senior officials were present.

The meeting reviewed the current status of the Jaitapur Nuclear Power Project as well as safety concerns arising out of the nuclear accident at Fukushima in Japan and their impact on India's overall nuclear energy programme.

Chief Minister of Maharashtra and the Department of Atomic Energy apprised the Prime Minister about the doubts and concerns expressed by the local people in Jaitapur about the project, and the measures being taken to address these concerns. Chief Minister pointed out that detailed presentations had been made to all political parties and in the State Assembly as well. Political dialogue will continue. A generous new compensation package has been worked out by the State Government and NPCIL and will be announced soon.

It was also recalled that environmental approval for the Jaitapur Power Park was accorded in November 2010 and Chairman, NPCIL reiterated that each of the 35 conditions stipulated as part of the environmental clearance will be adhered to in a fully transparent manner

It was noted that the Jaitapur project would be implemented in a phased manner with two 1650 MWe reactors to begin with. A comprehensive environmental impact assessment of these reactors will be done when both are operational by 2019.

CM, Maharashtra and NPCIL assured the Prime Minister that all efforts will be made to engage local communities and address their fears and concerns in a credible manner. It was agreed that livelihoods of local fishermen and their families must continue to get the highest priority by the state government and NPCIL.

Several aspects of the overall nuclear energy programme of the country in the light of the unfortunate developments in Japan were also discussed. Prime Minister underscored that safety of nuclear power plants is a matter of highest priority and that there is a need for improving public communication and outreach on the part of the

Department of Atomic Energy and NPCIL. He also emphasized that nuclear safety should be seen not as a static but as a continuously evolving process.

Based on these the following decisions were taken:

1. The Government will introduce a Bill in the next session of Parliament to create an independent and autonomous Nuclear Regulatory Authority of India that will subsume the existing Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB).
2. The initial results of the six safety review Committees set up by the Government of India after the Fukushima accident will be made public. Action taken on previous safety reviews will be put in the public domain.
3. The best available expertise will be used to ensure the highest levels of safety. The Government will invite the Operational Safety Review Team (OSART) of IAEA to assist in its own safety reviews and audit.
4. Each reactor in Jaitapur will have its own individual stand alone safety and operation systems.
5. All reactors and technologies, whether indigenous or imported, will without exception meet the safety standards that are stipulated by the regulatory authorities, and there will be complete transparency in the functioning of the nuclear power programme.

It was reiterated that India's energy needs are vast and growing and nuclear energy is an important clean energy option. This will be pursued with full regard to the safety, livelihood and security of the people. Government's intention is to ensure nuclear power that is safe, secure and economical. Against this background the commitment to India's three stage indigenous nuclear energy programme was reaffirmed. While imported reactors have their place, indigenously-designed and developed reactors will continue to be at the very foundation of this programme.

26 April, 2011