

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: He is not in charge of Atomic Energy Department.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: Please kindly bear with me. Let me submit my views to the Chair. Today I was actually having a programme to go to Calcutta. I cancelled it because in both Houses the Presidential Proclamation regarding U.P. is going to be ratified. I want to reply myself. I want to be present here. I cancelled my programme to go to Calcutta. I told my colleague that I would come to the House within two or three minutes. Let the House commence Question Hour. When I was about to leave the House my colleague was there. There is no question of showing any disrespect to the House. He is going to answer. If there is anything to be intervened by me, I will intervene. (Interruptions)...

SHRI SURINDER KUMAR SINGLA: Then why was there a letter from the Prime Minister that he would not be coming to the House?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No. The letter is not that. (Interruptions)... Well, now the Prime Minister has explained the position. May I call Question No. 201? Dr. Manmohan Singh.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Safety Aspects in Atomic Energy Projects

*201. DR. MANMOHAN SINGH : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the recent reports that enough attention is not being paid to safety aspects in the atomic energy Projects;

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) whether Government propose to consider giving the Nuclear Safety Agency an autonomous status?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Adequate attention is being paid to safety aspects in the atomic Energy Projects.

(c) Atomic Energy Regulatory Board constituted under the Atomic energy Act, 1962 to carry out regulatory and safety functions with respect to nuclear installations in the country already enjoys functional independence. The Board which was formed in 1983, has evolved over the years to be on par with regulatory agencies in advanced countries and meets the specific requirements of the country.

DR. MANMOHAN SINGH : Mr. Chairman, Sir, while I appreciated the good work being done by our scientists and technologists working in the Department of Atomic Energy, I believe the country is entitled to an assurance that arrangements for nuclear safety in India are as good as in any other country. In this context, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Government will appoint an independent committee of top scientists and technologists to examine the criticism of safety measures made by no less a person than the former chief of the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board.

SHRI YOGENDRA K. ALAGH : Sir, the whole question of nuclear safety is constantly under review. In fact, the Government keeps on looking into these questions at a very high level. The former Chairman of the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board had done good work when he was in office and all his recommendations and being followed in great detail. But I would say that he has taken a stand which is very critical of India's nuclear policy. I say it with a full sense of responsibility—after laying down office. I can give the hon. Member examples of this ...(Interruptions)... Let me finish ...(Interruptions)... On the day we were

negotiating the CTBT in its ultimate state, the former Chairman ...*(Interruptions)*...

DR. MANMOHAN SINGH : This is nor fair...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI YOGENDRA K. ALAGH : Please listen to me. You were referring to his comments ...*(Interruptions)*...

DR. MANMOHAN SINGH : I was referring to the nuclear safety aspect. You should not comment on the integrity of an individual. That is not the issue. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI YOGENDRA K. ALAGH : I am not referring to the integrity of an individual. The individual has the full right to take a political view on a certain issue ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN : No ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT : No. ...*(Interruptions)*...

DR. MANMOHAN SINGH : This is very wrong ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI TRILOKI NATH CHATURVEDI : It is a technical question. Where is the question of taking a political view?...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI YOGENDRA K. ALAGH : My dear Sir, the gentleman under question, the night we were negotiating the CTBT, gave an interview to the CNN. He was very critical of the programme ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI SURINDER KUMAR SINGLA : What has this got to do with this question?...*(Interruptions)*...

DR. MANMOHAN SINGH : You are a Minister of the Government of India. This should not go on record...*(Interruptions)*... I have not come across a more misleading reply.

SHRI YOGENDRA K. ALAGH : Why should it not go on record? I do not see any reason why this should not be raised ...*(Interruptions)*...

DR. MANMOHAN SINGH : This is

not the issue that we are discussing ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN : You are giving the background to the question and I appreciate it. But you can answer the hon. Member's question directly.

SHRI YOGENDRA K. ALAGH : I am being asked to react to the criticism made by Dr. Gopal Krishnan. That is the question that has been put to me. I think it is very important appreciate that Dr. Gopal Krishnan is very critical of India's nuclear programme. He has signed statements against the CTBT ...*(Interruptions)*...

DR. MANMOHAN SINGH : How does it matter to you?

SHRI YOGENDRA K. ALAGH : It may not matter to you. But it does matter to other people. Dr. Gopal Krishnan has also said that India is not meeting its treaty obligations ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT : We are not discussing this ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE : If the Members have objection, let us restrict ourselves to the question of safety ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI YOGENDRA K. ALAGH : The hon. Member raised the question. I did not raise it.

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN : It is not correct ...*(Interruptions)*...

DR. MANMOHAN SINGH : I raised the question of nuclear safety. I have not questioned anybody's integrity.

SHRI YOGENDRA K. ALAGH : As far as the allegation that has been made that India has not met its treaty obligations on nuclear safety is concerned, it is totally irresponsible ...*(Interruptions)*...As far as recommendations made by the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board are concerned, we have examined them very carefully. In the case of all of them, action has been

taken. Most of our nuclear installations have accepted these recommendations. About 20 of the recommendations that have been made have already been implemented. Some of the recommendations like, for example, changing the tubing to zirconium alloy and so on will take a few years. As far as specific recommendations made by the Atomic Energy Safety Regulatory Board are concerned, they are fully under control. Action is being taken and they are being implemented.

DR. MANMOHAN SINGH : Sir, I am happy that the hon. Minister has given an assurance that the situation is under control. But when no less a person than the chief of the agency, whose duty and responsibility it is to regulate safety measures, makes such a statement, I think it becomes necessary that the House should be satisfied through the instrumentality of an independent committee of top scientists that the nuclear safety arrangements are as they ought to be.

Having said that, Sir, through you I ask the hon. Minister : Will the Government ask the Nuclear Safety Agency to submit, for Parliament's information, the Annual Audit Report regarding the effectiveness of safety arrangements in all our nuclear installations?

SHRI YOGENDRA K. ALAGH: Sir, the whole question of nuclear safety has already been gone into by the Standing Committee of Parliament on Energy under the Chairmanship of the hon. Jaswant Singhji. It has categorically stated...*(Interruptions)*... It has categorically stated ...*(Interruptions)*... What is this? You asked for Parliament's scrutiny. I want to give you the report of a Parliamentary Committee but you do not allow me even to stand up.

It has stated that the commitment of the DAE to safety is total. It has talked about the "good record of safety of the Atomic Energy Regulatory System". It

has gone into it in very great detail. It has examined all nuclear installations, it has examined the whole question of spent fuel management. It has interviewed the heads of units and it has visited a number of them. It says—again I quote—"No fatalities or any significant occupational/radiational injuries have been noticed." My submission to the hon. Member through you, hon. Chairman, is that the world over, structural details of nuclear plants are not made public. These are examined by safety boards, by regulatory boards of the kind that we have, and we have to appreciate that our Atomic Energy Regulatory Board has the power to close down an installation. It has, in fact, done so on a number of occasions. There are safety committees in every plant—there are safety committees at the level of units—and there are a number of instances where, when they had the slightest doubt, they closed down the units.

Please let us remember that our record of nuclear safety is exceptionally good. This is what the Jaswant Singh Committee has gone into.

Sir, I think I would submit to the hon. Member—who is a very distinguished person—that given the fact that our nuclear energy establishments are now working very well—for the first time the plant load factors have been close to design levels during the last two years; they have mastered the technologies and we are now at a stage when we want to bring about a very rapid expansion of the sector—they need our support, and we should not go by newspaper reports.

DR. MANMOHAN SINGH: I object to that. We are not going by newspaper reports. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI YOGENDRA K. ALAGH: Individuals have shown a lot of...

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: The Minister is twisting the question. He should not twist the question.

SHRI YOGENDRA K. ALAGH: Reports of individuals.

...(Interruptions)... a lot of hostility towards it. Thank you.

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Don't twist the question.

SHRI YOGENDRA K. ALAGH: Look, I am not doing that at all.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Don't react....(Interruptions)... There is a lot of nuclear energy in the House today, Sir. Shri John F. Fernandes : Sir, there are many new nuclear plants coming up in the country and these nuclear plants involve a lot of civil constructions, that is, concrete structures. In the Prime Minister's State, at Kaida, there is a new plant under construction. Way back, about five years ago, I had raised the question that the central dome of this structure gave way and it had come down, but I was informed that it was repaired. May I know from the hon. Minister whether they are taking any precautions to see that the safety not only of the nuclear installations but even of the superstructures—the concrete structures—is under the strict control of the Government as, otherwise, any accident would affect not only my State of Goa—we know what had happened at Chernobyl. I want to know whether any safety measures have been taken at the initial stage itself of the concrete structures.

SHRI YOGENDRA K. ALAGH: Sir, the hon. Member is quite right that at the Kaiga Power plant, during the stage of construction some of the concrete structures in the containment dome did collapse. This has been gone into in great detail by two expert committees, and safety designs have been gone into fully and these will be implemented when construction restarts on the Kaiga dome.

I want to inform hon. Members that we have a number of fail-safety measures in the nuclear power reactors. One of them, of course, is the double containment dome itself. Then there are emergency cooling systems. There are

other alternatives that are looked into. All the nuclear reactors have gone into test runs of the safety systems. So, I want to assure the Member that full precautions have been taken as far as the safety aspects of the working of the systems are concerned. ...(Interruptions)

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA: Sir, in fact, I was also trying to raise the Kaiga question. I visited Kaiga after it had collapsed. There has been a great deal of debate about the safety of our plants. I think there are many people around the world, who want to give an impression that everything is not safe in the Indian nuclear power projects. I realise what the lobby is.

But, given the fact that there might be lobbies working here and there, I think, the basic question of the safety of the nuclear plants in the country is of national importance to all of us. Kaiga collapsed at the time of the construction, as the Minister himself has admitted. Two expert committees were set up. I think you were also in the Ministry at the time Sir. We in Karnataka have been demanding the reports because this power plant is in our State. These reports are not being made available to anybody. There is a lot of anti-propaganda going on in North Kanara and Karwar, bordering Goa that there was something wrong and that it was seriously mismanaged. At least if these reports are made available and the facts are known, we would be satisfied, But they are not being made available. I was later on told they would be released. I have been following it up. No copy has been given even to us, Members of Parliament. If everything is all right and there is nothing to hide, why is it that the commission of Atomic Energy does not make the reports public? Let us know what is happening. We are as interested in it as you are. We want to know why it collapsed. What were the structural problems? Was it purely engineering? Was it a construction problem? Was something wrong with the material? Was

it sabotage? The country should know what the expert groups have said. All that we are asking is to allow us to see these reports. You can make the reports confidential. At least let Members of Parliament know what they are. Even Members of Parliament from Karnataka have not seen the reports after almost three years.

SHRI YOGENDRA K. ALAGH: Mr. Chairman, Sir, as far as the structural details of nuclear establishments are concerned, they have been kept confidential the world over.

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Only this.
...*(Interruptions)*

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA: Let the experts' report on what went wrong be made available to us.

SHRI YOGENDRA K. ALAGH: I keep on repeating this. The world over the structural details of nuclear establishments are not made public. The hon. Member must have handled this when she was in the Government.

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA: Yes.

SHRI YOGENDRA K. ALAGH: These details have not been made public. The hon. Member knows that we are talking about the structural dome, the inner core of the nuclear power establishment.

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: It collapsed.

SHRI YOGENDRA K. ALAGH: It is not the structural dome, the completed dome itself which collapsed. What you are talking about is that during the construction phase there was some concrete collapse, yes.

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA: The whole thing. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI YOGENDRA K. ALAGH: I am sorry, it is not the practice anywhere in the world to make public the structural details of nuclear establishments. I request the Member not to request the Government to make public the

structural domes of the nuclear establishments.

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA: I have been misquoted. I am not asking for the structural designs. ...*(Interruptions)*

Sir, the Prime Minister was the Chief Minister of Karnataka. The Government of Karnataka itself has been demanding the report. When I was a Minister, the Government of Karnataka was demanding to know as to what went wrong. Sir, I can quote your Minister of Industries. We jointly visited Kaiga. I do not want to bring in people who are not here. A Minister of the Government of Karnataka and I visited that spot together, because the unions and the local people were agitating. I and a Minister of the Government of Karnataka had promised the people and the Press that we would see to it that the facts are known to them so that the people in North Canara do not object to the Plant at Kaiga. Sir, this is an assurance given by your Minister of Industries to the people of North Canara. Both of us made this commitment. But, in spite of our repeated requests we have not been given the report. The people are saying that they would not allow the construction to go on unless they know what you are doing there, because they are affected. You must understand that.

SHRI YOGENDRA K. ALAGH: If the Government of Karnataka wants to discuss the whole issue of the Kaiga dome with us, we will be happy to do that with them.

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA: But not with the Members of Parliament! That means he does not want to discuss with the Members of parliament. *(Interruptions)* How can you bypass the House?

SHRI SURINDER KUMAR SINGLA: That way you want to create a cleavage between the two.

SHRI YOGENDRA K. ALAGH: I am not bypassing the House. I am sorry. There are some Parliamentary

conventions on matters of strategic importance. So, there is no question of bypassing the House as far as the Government is concerned and we are very transparent in terms of details. *(Interruptions)* As far as the summary of the report and its main findings are concerned, we will place them before Parliament and they would certainly be given to the Government of Karnataka.

SHRI S.M. KRISHNA: Sir, when the collapse occurred at the Kaiga dome in Karwar, I was the Minister in-charge of Power in Karnataka. Within 48 hours, after the collapse of the dome, I visited the spot. At that point of time the authorities in kaiga informed me that a high-level technical committee was visiting Kaiga and it was going to examine it in detail and after that it would submit a report. I am not expecting transparency, because I know it is confidential. After getting those reports, when I visited, the contractor said there was some design defect. He attributed the collapse of the dome to the design defect. You have said that you have received two reports on this. I would like to know whether any action has been taken against those who have been found at fault for the collapse.

PRIME MINISTER (SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA): Mr. Chairman, Sir, so far as the question of collapse of the dome is concerned, the Karnataka Government has not demanded to make public the reports of the two committee appointed by the previous Government. As Chief Minister for 18 months, I never demanded those reports to be made public. I hope the hon. senior lady Member will cooperate with me. Since we started establishing the Kaiga project, the controversy has started in North Canara. Even in the case of the Seabird Project, the hon. former Deputy Chief Minister and senior Member, Shri S.M. Krishna, who is present here, knows what local controversy had arisen during that period and which is going on. I do want to drag in that issue here. After we took

over, I called the concerned officers and had detailed discussions with them. The two reports that we have got differ from each other. I do not want to enter into details, so far as the question of the collapse itself is concerned, one report says the reason is something and the other report says the reason is something else.

The other report also said that the reason was something. So, there was no unanimity among the two expert committees. Then, I asked the Cabinet Secretary and the Principal Secretary to call some experts and discuss this issue with them and take a final decision because I did not want this issue to be dragged on. We have had a preliminary discussion. After a meeting taken by the Cabinet Secretary and the Principal Secretary, they have come to the conclusion that the collapsed dome portion should be restored. We must spend about Rs. 125 crores for this purpose. I think within the next one month the damaged dome portion is going to be taken up for completion. This is what I would like to apprise the House of.

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA: I am not asking for more information. Sir, I would like to inform the hon. Prime Minister that his Minister, Mr. Deshpande, and I addressed a press conference together.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: I know that both Mr. Deshpande and you come from the North Canara District.

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA: On behalf of your Government, your Minister gave an assurance that the report would be made available. Mr. Deshpande was your own Minister. I would send you the press clipping.

DR. GOPALRAO VITHALRAO PATIL: Mr. Chairman, Sir, all is not well with the Department of Atomic Energy. There is more to be criticised than to be appreciated. The scientists are working very nicely, but the Department is not

performing properly. The reactors are failing. The targets are not being achieved. Much, much is to be said about the Department of Atomic Energy. Unnecessarily you are putting everything under secrecy. There should be more transparency. I would request you to kindly permit a Short Duration Discussion on this matter because it is a very important. The energy targets are not at all being fulfilled. The nuclear reactors are not functioning properly. We are not sticking to the schedule. This is the first thing.

The second thing is: I would request the hon. Minister to come out with a white paper on the functioning of the atomic energy plants, how much money has been invested and so on. The safety standards are really to be questioned. All the Governments have been saying that they are under secrecy.

Only yesterday we were shocked to read in the newspapers that in the United States they have conducted experiments on 40,000 people by injecting plutonium. The results were disastrous. The Department of Atomic Energy and the President have apologised to the public for conducting this experiment.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude.

DR. GOPALRAO VITHALRAO PATIL: They have suffered a lot. It is not a question of transparency. What we are saying is that he should take members of Parliament into confidence.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have made your point.

DR. GOPALRAO VITHALRAO PATIL: The safety measures are to be questioned. Whenever a scientist says that an individual has done something, it may become contradictory to the national interest.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have made your point. Please put your question.

SHRI YOGENDRA K. ALAGH: As far as nuclear safety is concerned, let me clarify to the House that there is no

question of putting everything under secrecy. In fact, the Standing Committee on Energy has submitted a ninety-six page report which contains a lot of details. The only point I raised was ... *(Interruptions)*... Please allow me to reply. As far as the structural details, inner details of particular units are concerned, those are never made public anywhere in the world.

As far as the performance of the nuclear power plants is concerned, I agree with the hon. Members that in the earlier period they were not able to work to their capacity levels and in terms of implementation also there were delays. During the last two years all our nuclear power plants—apart from the Rajasthan Atomic Power Plant which is down for statutory repairs because its tubes have to be corrected—are working at design plant load factors which means they are working very efficiently.

My own assessment is that the Atomic Energy establishment has now mastered the technology which we have started implementing from the mid-eighties.

And therefore, I would submit to the House that we should not belittle their performance. We will be very happy to give you the details. In fact, the Approach Paper to the Ninth Five-Year Plan will have a full discussion on the need for giving priority to the nuclear power sector. While there has been a problem of lack of resources during the last few years, we do want to fund these projects adequately because we believe ... *(Interruptions)*. If You do not want to know these details, please do not blame professors.

SHRIMATI

JAYANTHI

NATARAJAN: Sir, this is a very important issue for the city of Chennai, Madras, because the Kalpakkam unit is very close to the city. Two years ago, the residents were shocked to find in the Coovum River radioactive material. There were three containers filled with that material. It was suspected that there

was a serious breach of security at Kalpakkam and that was stolen from Kalpakkam and deposited at the bottom of the river. So there was panic in the city. And, ultimately, they were retrieved by experts and taken away. My specific question to the Minister is this. After that, we are not aware as to how it had escaped from Kalpakkam, whether there was a breach of security, and what the danger was to the safety of the people of the city. Have they conducted any study of these things? Has there been any report? Has any action been taken against the people found guilty? How did this happen?

SHRI YOGENDRA K. ALAGH: As far as the whole question of effluents is concerned, at the level of each plant, there is an environment survey laboratory. (Interruptions). I will come to your question. Once we raise these questions, it is very important. (Interruptions). I am coming to that. You are talking about the radioactive contamination outside the plant. As for the containers, they were sealed containers which were not used at all. They have been recovered and there was no radioactivity released from them at all. In fact, our information is that they did not belong to Kalpakkam at all. They belonged to a foreign oil company and there was no radioactivity contamination from them.

As far as radioactive effluents are concerned, there is a Safety Committee in each plant which has thousands of samples on air, water, vegetables, etc., and therefore, there can be no question of undetected contamination.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question No. 202.

शहरी कार्य और रोजगार मंत्रालय में अनुकंपा आधार पर रोजगार

***202. श्रीमती मालती शर्मा:** क्या प्रधान मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) शहरी कार्य और रोजगार मंत्रालय के अंतर्गत चतुर्थ श्रेणी के उन कर्मचारियों के नाम क्या-क्या हैं जिनकी 1995 से लेकर आज तक सेवाकाल के दौरान आकस्मिक मृत्यु हुई;

(ख) क्या यह सच है कि बार-बार अनुरोध किये जाने के बावजूद अब तक उन कर्मचारियों के आश्रितों को अनुकंपा आधार पर नौकरियां नहीं दी गई हैं; और

(ग) यदि हां, तो इसके क्या कारण हैं और उन सभी कर्मचारियों के आश्रितों को कब तक नियुक्तियां प्रदान किए जाने की संभावना है, यदि नहीं, तो इसके क्या कारण हैं?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (DR. U. VENKATESWARLU): (a): Four employees of this Ministry have died in service since 1995. Their names are a under:

S/Shri	Expired on
(1) Trilok Singh, Peon	6.8.95
(2) Ram Swarup, Farash	29.8.95
(3) Chakradhar Prasad, Peon	26.1.96
(4) Dharam Vir Singh, Peon	23.4.96

(b) and (c) These appointments cannot be made at present under the existing rules for want of vacancies in Group 'D'.

However, appointments will be made to the eligible family members of the concerned deceased Government employees as soon as the requisite vacancies under the category of "compassionate appointments" become available in this Ministry.

श्रीमती मालती शर्मा: माननीय सभापति महोदय.