

[27 July, 2000]

RAJYA SABHA

dump the nuclear waste of the country in a tiny village near Pokhran in Rajasthan;

(b) if so, the details of the safety measures that have been taken by Government in order that the nuclear radiation may not adversely affect the health of the nearby villagers; and

(c) what are the reasons that the danger free zones are not being used for this purpose?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The size of the Indian Nuclear Power programme is relatively small and we have more than two decades to do the necessary research and development to decide on the safest possible mode of disposal and such a study will also take into account the safest possible location ("Danger free zones") in the country.

Decision on Hazardous Nuclear Waste

501. SHRI R.P. GOENKA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have decided that hazardous nuclear waste from various plants will be disposed off in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh;

(b) whether burying nuclear waste in granite is not extremely dangerous since granite can crack and water seep in with the result that radiation may spread out; and

(c) whether it is a fact that a study of Rajasthan University has found a rise in cancer cases in Pokhran after 1974?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) No, Sir.

(b) No, Sir. As regards the mode of disposal of high level wastes is concerned, after undertaking intensive studies and necessary R&D

in the matter since last two decades, it has been universally considered that scientifically deep geological disposal in granitic formation is one of the safest methods to isolate radioactivity from the human biosphere for extremely long periods of time.

(c) DAE is not aware of any study conducted by Rajasthan University after the 1974 Pokharan test. The 1974 Pokharan underground test was completely contained from a radioactivity point of view and there was no surface contamination even at the test sites after the explosion. So the question of a rise in cancer cases in Pokharan after 1974 does not arise.

State level Directorate for protection from radiation

†502. SHRI VIJAY SINGH YADAV: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to set up State-level Directorate for the protection from radiation under the non-military atomic programme;

(b) if so, whether the States, which are running atomic programme, would be free to formulate security rules independently;

(c) if so, by when; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE):

(a) No, Sir. There is no proposal to set up State-level Directorates to monitor radiation safety, as the present-national system is effective.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Amendment to the Consumer Protection Act

503. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that comprehensive amendments are being brought forward to the Consumer Protection Act;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.