India's hydrocarbon exploration and exploitation projects in the South China Sea off the coast of Vietnam. Government has clearly conveyed that such activity by Indian companies is purely commercial in nature and that sovereignty issues must be resolved peacefully by the countries which are parties to the dispute in accordance with international law and practice.

Lower power generation by atomic energy plants

*228. SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that atomic energy plants in the country have been generating energy below their installed capacity;

(b) if so, the factors responsible for the same; and

(c) the steps Government proposes to take to optimally utilise the atomic energy plants?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY): (a) and (b) The present installed nuclear power capacity in the country is 4780 MW comprising of twenty nuclear power reactors. Of these, ten reactors with a capacity of 2840 MW comprising KGS - 1 to 4 (4 x 220 MW), NAPS - 1&2 (2 x 220 MW), MAPS - 1&2 (2 x 220 MW) and TAPS - 3&4 (2 x 540 MW) are fuelled by indigenous fuel, which is not available in the required quantity. These are, accordingly, being operated at lower power levels matching the fuel supply.

The remaining ten nuclear power reactors with a capacity of 1940 MW are under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards, in accordance with the separation plan. Of these, presently one reactor (RAPS-1, 100 MW) is under long shut down for techno-economic assessment on continuation of operation. The remaining nine reactors under IAEA safeguards use imported fuel, which is available in required quantity. These reactors are operating at rated capacity.

(c) The Central Government's efforts are to augment domestic fuel supply by opening new mines and processing facilities which has resulted in improvement in domestic fuel supply. The capacity factors of Indian nuclear power reactors fueled by indigenous uranium have registered an improvement from 50% in 2008-09 to 61% in 2009-10, 71% in 2010-11 and 78% in the current year (April-October 2011).