Radiation levels in surrounding areas of nuclear plants

1244. SHRI T.M. SELVAGANAPATHI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the radiation levels in the areas surrounding the nuclear plants in the country were minuscule, compared to the upper limits prescribed by the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that there will be no compromise on the safety of atomic plants and it will be harmful to close the additional source of energy; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) has stipulated an additional dose upto 1000 micro-Sievert per year for public over natural background radiation in the vicinity of nuclear power plant. The actual dose established, based on monitoring of environmental matrices like air, water, soil, vegetation, crops, fish, meat etc. over several decades is in the range of 1 to 25 micro-Sievert per year. Independent Environmental Survey Laboratories (ESL), under the administrative control of Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) are set up at each site. The ESL monitors environmental matrices all around upto 30 km of the site for radioactivity, even prior to setting up and also after the operation of the nuclear power reactors. Reports of such monitoring are submitted to AERB. The data obtained from ESL, over several decades, has shown that there is no significant increase in radioactivity and radiation level over the background levels prevalent before the operation of the reactors.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Safety is accorded utmost priority in all phases of nuclear plant, encompassing siting, design, construction, commissioning and operation. There is a robust regulatory mechanism in place. India's energy resources are limited and the energy demand is huge and rapidly growing. Given India's energy resource profile the integrated energy policy envisages optimal deployment of all energy sources including nuclear power.