

The Central Government constituted an Expert group comprising of academicians, scientists, engineers and doctors to allay the apprehensions. The Expert Group went into the details of all the aspects related to Kudankulam nuclear power plant safety and other related issues, and has addressed the concerns of the people. In addition to this, the Government have also launched a massive public outreach programme in and around Kudankulam and in the State of Tamil Nadu, using multi-pronged approach to allay the apprehensions of the people.

The Resettlement and Rehabilitation (R and R) schemes for different sites are formulated and implemented in accordance with the prevailing State /Central laws. In addition, neighbourhood development and welfare programmes are also undertaken. These comprise schemes on healthcare, education, infrastructure development, etc.

(d) The safety in nuclear power plant is of paramount importance. Therefore, deployment of appropriately qualified and competent personnel besides design, engineering, construction, commissioning and operation in line with the prescribed standards is an important consideration. Initiatives to provide both direct and indirect opportunities for livelihood to the local persons including through direct employment, subject to availability of vacancy and suitability of persons as per prescribed standards have been taken up. Various training programmes for Project Affected Persons (PAPs) and local people in different skills around sites have been organised. The PAPs are also given preference in award of contracts for various services at the sites.

Release of Additional Authorized Capital to Regional Rural Banks

*279. DR. PRADEEP KUMAR BALMUCHU: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has taken a decision to release further 632 crores of funds as Additional Authorized Capital to cater to the needs of Regional Rural Banks on 50:50 sharing basis;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that State Governments have also been released as their share of funds; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (d) A scheme for recapitalization of 40 financially weak Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) had

been approved by the Government. Out of total estimated recapitalization assistance of Rs. 2,200 crore, the share of Government of India was Rs. 1,100 crore, while the share of the State Governments was Rs. 330 crore.

So far Government of India has released Rs. 668.92 crore as its share towards recapitalization, while the State Governments have released Rs. 223.92 crore.

Uranium in groundwater

*280. SHRI ARVIND KUMAR SINGH : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

- (a) whether uranium has been found in groundwater of some States;
- (b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise;
- (c) whether uranium contamination in groundwater of some States is more than 12 times of the permissible limits of WHO;
- (d) if so, the details thereof;
- (e) the details of the people who have died due to uranium in groundwater, so far, State-wise;
- (f) whether uranium treatment facility from water has been installed by Government in affected areas;
- (g) if so, the details thereof, State-wise; and
- (h) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY): (a) Yes, Sir. Due to its natural occurrence, uranium is present in all environmental matrices such as water, soil, sediment, food materials and biota. On a global basis, its concentration in soil varies from 1-5 parts per million (ppm) while in water it varies from 1-3 parts per billion (ppb). The uranium content in water, which is in contact with granite rocks, is relatively high.

(b) Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) has carried out study for uranium content in groundwater and analysed the uranium content of 1109 number of water samples collected from four districts of Punjab (Bhatinda, Mansa, Faridkot and Ferozpur) in collaboration with Guru Nanak Dev University (GNDU), Amritsar. The results of the study reveal that about 42% of total samples have Uranium concentration above the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) permissible (radiological) limit (60 ppb) for drinking water.