

(c) whether the funds allocated thus will be handed over to State Government of Tamil Nadu or will it be executed by any independent agency of NPCIL; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

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

(b) Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) has made an allocation of Rs. 200 crore for neighbourhood development around Kudankulam. Government of India has also accorded approval for allocation of Rs. 300 crore for providing housing for ten thousand families as part of Neighbourhood Development Programme in and around Kudankulam Nuclear Power Project.

(c) The projects are being implemented by the Tamil Nadu Government and the funds for the same would be released to the Tamil Nadu Government progressively in accordance with the progress.

(d) So far, a sum of Rs. 45 crore has been released to the Tamil Nadu Government in this regard.

#### **Deal to produce rare earths**

3881. DR. CHANDAN MITRA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indian Rare Earths Ltd. (IREL) has signed a deal to produce rare earths like Lanthanum, Cerium and Neodymium for Japan;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the steps taken by Government to have a regulatory mechanism to take care of the strategically important natural resources like Monazite and Ilmenite; and

(d) the further steps taken by Government to check plundering of country's Thorium rich Monazite which is going on for decades?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY): (a) and (b) No, Sir. No deal has been signed by Indian Rare Earths Ltd. (IREL) to produce rare earths like Lanthanum, cerium and Neodymium for Japan. However, a Memorandum of Understanding on co-operation in rare earths has been signed on 16.11.2012 between Department of Atomic Energy and Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) of Japan.

(c) Ilmenite, one of the beach sand mineral, has been delisted from the list of 'Prescribed Substances' under the Atomic Energy Act, 1962 from 01.01.2007 *vide* Notification No. S.O.61 (E) dated 20.01.2006. However, monazite continues to be a 'Prescribed Substance' under the Atomic Energy Act. Till date no licence has been issued to any private entity for production of monazite, its downstream processing for extracting thorium, and their export. Indian Rare Earths Ltd. (IREL) a Public Sector Undertaking under the Department of Atomic Energy, is the only entity which has been permitted to produce monazite, process it to extract thorium and handle it for domestic as well as for export purpose.

(d) The Department has initiated steps to put in place comprehensive systems to check illegal mining/exporting of country's Thorium rich Monazite. Prescribed regulatory inspections of beach sand mining facilities are being carried out by Atomic Energy Regulatory Board. The Central Board of Customs and Excise has also been requested for monitoring of radioactivity at ports and testing of Beach Sand Minerals export consignments.

#### **Safety of nuclear power plant**

3882. SHRI N. BALAGANGA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has made any assessment about the safety of the nuclear plants in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the safety parameters in India are at par with the standards set by the IAEA;

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the steps taken by Government to ensure safety of the nuclear power plants?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY): (a) and (b) The safety reviews of the Indian nuclear power plants (NPPs) are carried out by the regulatory authority, the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB). All nuclear power projects undergo an elaborate in-depth safety review during the consenting stages, *viz.* siting, construction, commissioning, etc. After satisfactory review during project stage, AERB issues operating licence to an NPP for a period of upto five years. During the licence period, safety