

Nuclear power reactors on coastline safe: Kakodkar

Not only that ... they will supply the power needed for recovery while other plants cannot.

The Hindu
January 21, 2005

Nuclear power reactors on the country's coastline have been built to withstand tsunami and are safe, the Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, Anil Kakodkar, has said.

Talking to presspersons here on Thursday after the handing over an export consignment of Precision Magnet Positioning Systems (PMPS) jacks made by a Bangalore-based company, Avasarala Automation Ltd., Dr. Kakodkar said the Kalpakkam atomic power plant, which withstood the December 26 tsunami was a classic example. The export consignment is for the European Organisation for Nuclear Physics in Geneva.

"All factors, including cyclones and high tides, are usually taken into consideration before setting up an atomic plant. They are generally located on elevated sites and so is the Kalpakkam plant," he said. The tsunami factor would be taken into consideration before setting up atomic power plants near the coast in the future, he said.

Thorium deposits

Research is already on at the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) about the possible use of huge deposits of thorium reportedly washed ashore after the tsunami, Dr. Kakodkar said. "We are first concentrating on the uranium. There is abundant supply of thorium in the country and it will be used for power generation. It is a new technology and careful and constant reviews are on at BARC," he said.

"Presently, we are going through a three-stage nuclear power programme. The first stage is in the commercial domain, like heavy water reactors. Already 14 such plants have been taken up and eight of them commissioned. The second is fast breeder reactors to enhance potential of nuclear power generation. After we build sufficient numbers of fast breeder reactors, we can switch over to the use of thorium on a larger scale," he explained.

Earlier at the function, Dr. Kakodkar said export of the equipment proved India could take up any challenge related to advanced technology.

"This is the time to use our technical knowledge to make optimum use of opportunities from the globalisation of the economy."

The Director, Centre for Advanced Technology, V.C. Sahni, said the PMPS jacks were part of the major equipment for a particle accelerator being installed on the Switzerland-France border.