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(भारत सरकार का उद्यम)

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OF INDIA LIMITED**

(A Govt. of India Enterprise)

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Dear Sir,

**Sub: NPCIL's view on the story published in
'Outlook', December 20, 2010 issue**

This has reference to the story "The Rape of Eden" in your esteemed magazine, Outlook, December 20, 2010 issue. We are surprised to see many misleading and factually incorrect pieces of information in respect of the Jaitapur Nuclear Power Project (JNPP) site, village Madban, Rajapur Taluka in Ratnagiri District, Maharashtra. The story appears to be based on one-sided opinions, without verification of the facts and NPCIL's view.

A story of this nature should have taken into account vital facts as well as the underlying science, which were sorely missing in that piece. The unfortunate result is that the coverage of nuclear power and Jaitapur Nuclear Power Project (JNPP)/NPCIL in this story ends up being ill-informed, lopsided and misleading. In this regard, the following clarifications on important issues are provided below. The same may please be published in your next issue.

1.0 "Land was acquired in Madban, Niveli and Mithgavane without informing villagers of the nature of the project..."

The information provided in the story as above is incorrect. The following are the facts.

The Jaitapur site was accorded "In Principle" approval by the Government, initially, in October 2005. Subsequently, in October 2009, Government of India approved the full potential of this site to locate six reactors of 1650 MW. During the period 2005 to till date, NPCIL has organised several exhibitions, structured public awareness campaigns, held debates discussions and provided relevant information through local newspapers on Nuclear Power and Jaitapur plant in and around the Jaitapur site, in addition to the several meetings on the issues between NPCIL and all the stake holders, including the project-affected people. To name a few of these, exhibitions-cum-discussions and public addresses on the nuclear power/JNPP were organised in December, 2005 and February, 2006 in Village Mithgavane and Madban respectively. There was an active participation of villagers and their representatives, press and media and state officials in these events. These campaigns were followed by an organised visit of project-affected people, state officials, press and media, to NPCIL's, Kaiga

Generating station (KGS) in December, 2005 and Kudankulam Nuclear Power Project (KKNPP) in Tamilnadu in December,2006. Similarly, another visit was arranged to Tarapur Atomic Power Station at Tarapur in Maharashtra in February, 2007. About 60 to 70 persons from the surrounding area visited these plants in each of these visits. Till now, over 30 meetings with various groups of stake holders, including the project-affected persons/villagers, have been organised by NPCIL to provide factual information on the project and associated aspects. The public awareness campaigns on nuclear power and JNPP, around Jaitapur and Ratnagiri have been an ongoing feature through exhibitions, lectures, public addresses, meetings, press and media campaigns and personal interactions.

NPCIL is always open for discussions, sharing information and providing clarifications.

2.0 “...the nature which the Jaitapur project will destroy...”

Contrary to general belief, nuclear power is a clean and environment-friendly source of energy. It does not emit any obnoxious gases like carbon dioxide, sulphur dioxide, etc., which damage the environment. In fact, as far as nuclear power is concerned, the surrounding environment of nuclear power plants is maintained in its pristine form. Besides, development and maintenance of greenbelts, which attract a lot of birds and other forms of life, is unique to nuclear power plants. The environments around all the nuclear power stations in the country testify this fact.

The radiation release to the environment is insignificantly low and actually a small fraction of the limit set by Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB). Nuclear power in India has an enviable track record of 340 reactor-years of safe operation of 20 operating nuclear power reactors, with an installed capacity 4780 MW. It is pertinent to bring out that there has not been any nuclear accident in any of the plants in the country. Moreover, in view of nuclear power being environmentally benign, it is being preferred globally, and actually, the world is currently experiencing a nuclear ‘renaissance’.

3.0 “...four gram panchayats affected by the project got the 1,200-page EIA report in Marathi just eight days before the public hearing...”

Regarding the timing of presentation of EIA report, we want to clarify that the public hearing of Jaitapur nuclear power project was organised by the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB) on May 16, 2010, in line with the Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF) notification of September 2006. The said notification prescribes submission of the executive summary of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report in Marathi language, one month before the hearing date. The same was complied with by NPCIL. However, in view of the feedback received from MPCB and the state officials, the Main Report (Part-1) and Appendix on studies (Part-2) were provided in Marathi language as additional information to facilitate public hearing. Your story also gives an impression as if there was something unusual about the length of the EIA report. The fact is that EIA studies are typically detailed, and therefore the entire information package was voluminous – that is, of 1200 pages.

4.0 “...clearances to an (sic) N-plant that’s 10 times Chernobyl in a Grade IV seismic zone?” asks lawyer Girish Raut...”

Your story treats seismicity in a somewhat trivial manner, which is disturbing. Aspects related to seismicity are no casual matters. These are technically investigated at great lengths by experts, and only thereafter the regulatory body permits the setting up of a nuclear power plant. Your story fails to take cognisance of this fact. There is also a factual error in the story. It may please be noted that Jaitapur site is in Zone-III and not in Zone-IV. Actually, the JNPP site selection has been done keeping ample safety margins. The code set by Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) for site selection for setting up of nuclear power plant prescribes that there should not be any active geological fault within 5-km radius from the proposed site of a nuclear power plant (NPP). Extensive studies carried out by various government institutions/organisations, specialising on these studies, have found no active geological fault up to 30-km radius from the proposed Jaitapur Nuclear Power Project site, thus validating that the site is not earthquake-prone. Further, the design for the proposed NPP units at Jaitapur also amply takes care of these concerns and qualifies for seismicity and corresponding frequency spectrum as per AERB regulations, in line with the current practice for all NPPs. This shows that the concerns expressed in your story were totally out of place.

In view of the above, we expect you to kindly publish our aforementioned clarifications in your next issue. It is also hoped that our views on issues pertaining to us will also be considered in future, before publishing.

With warm regards,


(N. Nagalch) 23/12/2010

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