

PM's remarks at the Commissioning of the Power Reactor Fuel Processing Plant

"I am delighted to be present at the historic occasion of the commissioning of the second Power Reactor Reprocessing Plant at Tarapur.

This is a significant milestone in our country's three-stage indigenous nuclear programme. I heartily congratulate the scientists and engineers who were involved in the design, construction and commissioning of this unique complex and state of the art facility. This is yet another instance that once we make up our mind, India can do anything.

We have come a long way since the first reprocessing of spent fuel in India in the year 1964 at Trombay. The recycling and optimal utilization of Uranium is essential to meet our current and future energy security needs. The vision of the founding fathers of our nuclear programme, Jawaharlal Nehru and Homi Bhabha, was to achieve the mastery of the complete fuel cycle, thus enabling India to use our vast and abundant thorium resources in advanced nuclear power reactors. The reprocessing of spent fuel is therefore the key to our three stage indigenous nuclear power programme. Reprocessing is essential in the transition to the second stage of fast breeder reactors which we have begun, and in the subsequent third stage using thorium in advanced reactors.

Reprocessing spent fuel will also ensure that we are better able to manage the wastes which are by-products of the nuclear fuel cycle.

Tarapur, itself is an outstanding example of nuclear energy's capacity to provide the clean, safe and economical energy that our nation requires for its development and growth. This site is home to the oldest boiling water reactors in the world. Here we have built our own reactors as well. And we have subsequently added the entire range of facilities covering the entire fuel cycle from fuel fabrication to reprocessing and waste immobilization.

Taken together, the atomic energy programme of India represents a very important and significant step towards technological and energy self-reliance and security. That we have done so by the efforts of our own scientists and engineers is tribute to the vision of the founders of our atomic energy programme. Given the advanced status of our indigenous programme and the capabilities of our scientists and engineers we can now confidently utilize the new opportunities that have been created with the opening up of international cooperation in the field of nuclear energy.

As we move forward in the years to come to realize the potential of atomic energy to contribute to our nation's development I would urge that we pay greater attention to capacity building, training and nurturing young and fresh talent which is in abundant supply in our country.

I once again congratulate all those who have played a role in this important landmark and who have contributed to the development of our capabilities in atomic energy. In their own way, each one of our scientists and engineers engaged in this very important national projects are nation builders. I commend you all for your dedication and your hard work and your commitment to the goal of our national development. I wish you even greater success in your service to our nation. I think each one of you on this historic occasion."