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Work begins on 3rd, 4th nuclear reactors at Kudankulam

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'Third reactor will start generating power within 69 months'

In its dream of converting the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Project (KKNPP) site into a 'Nuclear Park' by establishing six 1,000 MWe pressurised water reactors with Russian assistance, the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd (NPCIL) crossed yet another major milestone on Thursday when the 'first pour of concrete' (raft concrete) for the third and fourth reactor buildings was conducted in a simple ceremony.

"The third reactor will start generating power within 69 months from today i.e., in March 2023; the fourth reactor will be ready for power generation one year later (March 2024)," said R. Banerjee, Director (Projects), NPCIL, told reporters.

Chairman and Managing Director of NPCIL Sathish Kumar Sharma; Executive Director (Light Water Reactors) R.S. Sundar; Site Director, KKNPP, S.V. Jinna; and officials of Atomstroyexports, the Russian firm supplying the VVER reactors technology, were present.

Mr. Banerjee said NPCIL had taken adequate measures for getting the components from Russia for the construction of the third and the fourth reactors on time. "Moreover, we, under the 'Make In India' programme, have planned to increase the

localisation. In other words, the third and the fourth reactors will have 30% domestically fabricated components. The fifth and the sixth reactors, for which the government has already signed agreement with Russia, will have additional 20% components of Indian make. “Hence, we’ll save a huge sum of money as we construct the reactors 3 to 6,” he said.

Though the ‘first pour of concrete’ was scheduled to be held before 11 a.m. on Thursday, the milestone event took place only at 3.48 p.m. as the KKNPP engineers here had to submit online a few more details required by Atomic Energy Regulatory Board that gave its nod for the ‘first pour of concrete’ on June 19 itself.

Use of ice flakes

“Instead of using water in the concrete mixture, we’re using ice flakes to bring down the heat that usually gets generated when we mix cement, sand and blue metal in the right proportion. Since the temperature is reduced to 19 degree Celsius, there will not be any crack in the construction,” explained M.S. Suresh, Chief Engineer.

As excavation of earth for the third and the fourth reactors was completed in a record time of eight months after commencing the exercise in February 2016, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladmir Putin formally inaugurated the ‘first pour of concrete’ for these units in October 2016 through videoconferencing from Goa.

NPCIL, the proponent of KKNPP, has planned to complete the construction of the third and the fourth reactors on an outlay of ₹39,747 crore.

Meanwhile, the first unit of KKNPP, where the scheduled annual fuel outage is going on, is likely to be ready for power generation on July 26, sources here said. “The fuel outage is likely to consume 102 days and the reactor will be ready for power generation on July 26,” the sources added.

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