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NPCIL signs agreement with Westinghouse

Staff Reporter *For AP1000 pressurised water nuclear reactors*

TIRUNELVELI: Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) and U.S.-based Westinghouse Electric Company (WEC) have signed a memorandum of understanding recently for commencing discussions on techno-commercial aspects of AP1000 pressurised water nuclear reactors in India.

The agreement was signed by Chairman and Managing Director, NPCIL, Shreyans Kumar Jain and President and Chief Executive Officer, WEC, Aris S. Candris in the presence of chairman of Atomic Energy Commission Anil Kakodkar.

About 50 per cent of the world's 440 nuclear plants are based on Westinghouse technology.

According to the WEC, the AP1000 is the safest and most economical nuclear power plant available worldwide, and is the only Generation III+ reactor to receive design certification from the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC).

Simplification was a major design objective for the AP1000. The simplified plant design includes overall safety systems, normal operating systems, the control room, construction techniques, and instrumentation and control systems.

The result is a plant that is easier and less expensive to build, operate and maintain. The AP1000 design saves money and time with an accelerated construction time period of approximately 36 months, from the pouring of first concrete to the loading of fuel.

In a statement, Deputy General Manager (Corporate Communications), NPCIL, Mumbai, A.I. Siddiqui has said the MoU between the two companies followed the signing of the co-operation agreement between the Government of India and the Government of United States of America in last October.

NPCIL, now operating 17 nuclear reactors and constructing five more, including the 2 X 1,000 MWe VVER (pressurised water) reactors being constructed at Koodankulam with the technical assistance of Atomstroyexports, Russia, had planned for significant capacity addition in nuclear power generation.

Apart from constructing 700 MWe Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors as part of its indigenous nuclear programme, the NPCIL has also proposed to set up nuclear power reactors with the capacity of 1,000 MWe or even higher unit size based on the international cooperation.

Signing of this MoU is yet another milestone in the cooperation between NPCIL and WEC for preparing the contract and related details of setting up of multiple AP 1000 reactors in India.

The NPCIL has already signed MoUs with General Electric Hitachi (GEH), also US-based, for setting up of advanced boiling water reactors in India and Areva, France for European Pressurised Reactors