

Desalination plants in all major coastal cities of country planned for 2006

Special Correspondent - The Hindu

'Most cost-effective plant of 1 lakh litres fabricated'

- *The one-lakh litre plant commissioned recently at Kavarati under Lakshadweep working well*
- *Seven more islets around Lakshadweep to get similar plant each to help its inhabitants get 'sweet water'*
- *Nuclear tests have a bearing on atmosphere but cannot cause tsunamis*



BIG PLANS: P.S. Goel, Secretary, Department of Ocean Development, addressing a press conference in Tirupati on Monday.

TIRUPATI: Secretary Department of Ocean Development (DoD) P.S. Goel, has claimed that the department has succeeded in fabricating for the first time in the world a most cost-effective desalination plant with 1 lakh litres capacity and said that hopefully by next year it would come out with a version which will have a ten times larger capacity. Our aim is to ultimately bring out a 1-crore litre capacity version for use in all the major coastal cities of the country possibly by 2006, Mr. Goel said.

Addressing a press conference here on Monday on the eve of his visit to the temple city, Goel said that the plant besides being completely indigenous was also entirely different from the existing version which worked on the reverse osmosis principle.

He said the 1 lakh litre plant commissioned recently at Kavarati coming under Lakshadweep was working perfectly well and added that seven more islets around Lakshadweep also would get a similar plant. D. Narayana Rao, Director of the National Atmospheric Research Laboratory (NARL), Tirupati, was also present at the press conference.

Under-water sensors

Goel said that the Tsunami Warning Centre coming up at Hyderabad would be taking up in the next two years large scale research and development on things like preparation of a detailed mathematical modelling, fabrication of the under-water sensors and their placements at all vulnerable and strategic positions and so on.

He said that the nuclear tests might have a bearing on atmosphere, weather condition, eco-system but cannot cause tsunamis.

He said global warming which triggered only a point five degree celsius increase in the temperature world over has pushed up the temperature in the Antarctic region by 4 to 5 degree celsius and pointed out that another 4 to 5 degree increase might be disastrous.

He described Antarctic region, the most focussed area for oceanographic studies, as the world's barometer for all ocean-related matters because any change in the weather, ocean profile there would impact the climate of the whole world.

Gas hydrates

The DoD Secretary has said another area where the department was focussing its attention was the exploration of the gas hydrates-- solidified gas reserves 200 to 300 metres below the seabed. "We have identified the places in the Indian coastal region where they are available," he said and pointed out that the department would come out by 2006 with the under-water vehicles required to reach the deposits and study their profiles, ways of exploration etc.

He said the DoD which was engaged in R&D on exploration of the ocean's living and non-living resources for invention of drugs has found out that two major drugs-- one to cure diabetics and another to address obesity problem -- were possible.