

TAMIL NADU

Thoothukudi heavy water plant to resume operations by March 2019



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Work to restart the heavy water unit at Thoothukudi is underway and it is expected to be recommissioned by March 2019.

The unit, which was started in 1978, was shut down in 2008 when it could not get naphtha supplies and at that time was also considered to be energy intensive.

U. Kamachi Mudali, Chairman and Chief Executive, Heavy Water Board (HWB) told reporters on the sidelines of a Department of Atomic Energy - National Union of Journalists workshop at Kalpakkam near here that an unit to extract rare materials from phosphoric acid and one to produce organic solvents too are to come up at the same site.

Agreement

The Board was in the process of signing an agreement with a private fertilizer major in Thoothukudi for supply of gas as part of the revival plan.

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The reopening is necessary since the HWB wants to augment the production of heavy water, which it is even exporting.

“Since the Kota plant has reached its lifetime of 35 years, we may have to shut it down, we want production from other plants to supply that gap,” Dr. Mudali pointed out.

The organic solvent plant that would have a capacity of 100 tonnes/annum, would produce solvents including Tributyle phosphate for use in reprocessing spent nuclear fuel.

“The plant is in an advanced stage and we hope to commission it by the end of 2019. It will come inside the same plant site,” he said.

On the setting up the plant for extraction of rare materials from phosphoric acid procured from another private company, Dr. Mudali said that materials including yttrium and ytterbium would be produced.

“India does not have any rare materials and these could be used in the country’s nuclear, space and defence programmes,” he added.