



COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA (MAOIST)

CENTRAL COMMITTEE

Press Release

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Condemn police firings and arrests of people agitating against Jaitapur nuclear power plant! Fight for scrapping of all proposed nuclear power plants in the country including Jaitapur plant!

On April 18, 2011 police fired on people agitating against the planned 9,900 MW Jaitapur nuclear power plant and killed Tabrez Soyekar (32), an anti-nuclear activist belonging to Nate village and the sole breadwinner of his family. Eight other demonstrators were seriously injured. Protestors attacked and damaged a hospital to prevent a government autopsy on the dead body as they believed the government would not conduct an impartial autopsy. The four year old agitation which intensified after the nuclear disaster at Fukushima nuclear power plant in Japan had gained enough first hand experience of the government's callousness to believe so.

Coldly ignoring the increasing protests and not bothering to compensate or reassure the victims, the Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh and the Maharashtra government (the spineless pet dogs of imperialists) restated their intention to go ahead with the construction of the 'world's largest nuclear power complex' with six reactors. In fact, the above protest was against this very stand of the government to build the nuclear power park 'come what may', deliberately unmindful of the Fukushima tragedy.

Nearly 100 people and eminent activists from all parts of India (Maharashtra, Gujarat, Tamilnadu, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh) who gathered to participate in the national anti nuclear yatra planned from Tarapur, the First Nuclear power plant in India to Jaitapur from 23rd to 25th April were detained illegally by the Police. In fact, after Fukushima there were a spate of protests – both new and as a continuation of already ongoing agitations – against nuclear power plants in all corners of the country especially in Haryana, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh, if only our stone-deaf rulers would care to hear.

The nuclear plant site covers the five villages of Madban, Nivel, Karel, Mithgavane, and Sakhari Nate, in an earthquake-prone region of Jaitapur in Ratnagiri district, Maharashtra and 968 hectares of land was cleared for acquisition. A total of 2,400 families were affected by this land acquisition. The plant affects the livelihood of 40,000 people which includes about 16,000 people dependent on fishing.

While many countries are rethinking about their nuclear programs after Fukushima, the government of India is hell-bent on implementing its nuclear program. Hiding the fact that India's reactors are considered to be the most inefficient and dangerous in the world, some anti-people scientists of India are misleading the people by uttering that India's safety standards are the better than Japan's! Jairam Ramesh who till now masqueraded as a pro-environmentalist minister came out with his true pro-corporate face claiming there is no alternative to nuclear power mimicking Manmohan Singh who bent over backwards to sign the Indo-US nuclear deal, disbursing billions of rupees given in bribes by the nuclear companies to buy votes. While the whole world is thinking about and trying out various alternative energy sources he has the audacity to say that there is no alternative as if all of us Indians are dumb enough to believe this trash. Everything would be possible if the basic electricity needs (domestic, industrial and agricultural) are to be fulfilled. But in a country where the monthly electricity bill of Mukesh Ambani is nearly 71 lakhs of rupees, where day and night cricket matches are played with utter disregard to the electricity consumed while on the other hand farmers weighed down by the agrarian crises they cannot escape, one of the reasons of which is lack of electricity, are committing suicides and millions of people are living without even a dimly lit electric bulb in their homes, one can only imagine about whose or what energy needs the Minister is talking about. The hundreds of MoUs signed by the comprador central and state governments to mine the rich resources in the vast rural and forest tracts of India and to build various industrial plants require enormous amounts of electricity and it is this need of the corporate MNCs that is driving the likes of Jairam and Manmohan crazy to construct power plants in spite of immense protests from the people. The issue of lives and livelihoods of the people or the ecology of this country which the protestors are raising mean nothing to them and the only solution they know is to treat them like a 'law and order' problem.

Moreover, we would never know (unless another Wiki 'leak' surfaces) how much our comprador rulers had been paid in kickbacks from notorious corporations like the Areva (belonging to France) from whom we are importing reactors while even pro-nuclear countries like USA and UK too have refused to give design clearance to them. Not a single Evolutionary Pressurized Reactor (EPR) has either been built or safe-tested till now anywhere in the world which makes them the most unreliable and unsafe option but our rulers with their lickspittle servility to their imperialist masters are scurrying to purchase them without in the least bothered about the human or ecological costs.

Fukushima disaster affected lakhs of people and the deathly radiation would last for tens of thousands of years. Independent European medical experts have estimated that more than 4 lakh people will suffer from cancer in the coming decades in the region 200 kms from the reactor and the radioactive contamination from the plant has spread all over the world. Four lakh people were evacuated after the Chernobyl accident that happened 25 years ago while many millions continue to live in contaminated conditions constantly living in fear that they could develop cancer anytime and that even their great grand children may be born with severe birth defects. Nearly ten lakh people have already died due to its delayed health effects and the number will continue to increase. If there is a major accident at Jaitapur, the entire Ratnagiri district will have to be evacuated, permanently, and entire Western Maharashtra, including Pune and Mumbai would be radioactively contaminated for tens of thousands of years.

The Konkani people of Jaitapur who are well aware of all these consequences, more so after Fukushima are waging a determined struggle against the nuclear plant. The government unleashed a brutal repressive campaign (lathi-charges, promulgating Section 144 and Section 37 (3) prohibiting different kinds of assembly, beatings, indiscriminate arrests, registering of false cases (including one for an attempt to murder!) against hundreds of activists and now police firings) to crush the struggle. Leading activists of the area have been issued externment notices from Ratnagiri district with Narayan Rane even threatening that they would not return alive from the district if they dare to enter it! The police even informed the media that Jaitapur agitation is being closely watched for 'possible links with naxalites', using an already-exposed intimidatory tactic. Eminent citizens from the region who have supported the struggle have been barred from entering the district. But all these and more could not cow down the Jaitapur agitation which is soon becoming another symbol of unflinching struggles raging across India on various burning livelihood issues.

The Shiv Sena which kept quiet during the four-year period that the agitation was raging on has now entered the agitation seeing an opportunity to regain the ground it has lost in Konkani after Narayan Rane defected. The politically aware people of Jaitapur must not allow these opportunists who said Enron would be thrown into the Arabian Sea and did a volte-face after they came to power, to hijack their genuine struggle for their self-interests. The CPM which projected itself as the champion of nuclear deal issue is seen nowhere in the scene consolidating against the government's choice of nuclear power as the only option. In AP opposition parties like TDP are shedding crocodile tears when villagers protesting power plants are killed in police firings but they would be no different once they are in power as they had proved the previous times they were in power. While a broad based struggle uniting all kinds of forces which oppose the nuclear power plants is to be consciously built up the people should stay alert to various kinds of ploys to divert the struggle from the actual issue for vested interests or vote-bank politics.

CPI (Maoist) demands that all proposed nuclear power plants in India including the Jaitapur nuclear park should be scrapped. It strongly condemns the strong arm tactics employed by the government to suppress the just struggle of the Konkani people to preserve their lives and ecology from imminent dangers of a nuclear power plant. It is demanding a judicial probe into the firings on 18th April and immediate action against the officers and officials who ordered the firing. All false cases, illegal externment orders and banishments of anti-nuclear activists should be withdrawn. In fact, the people of Ratnagiri should declare that it is the likes of Narayan Rane's hell-bent on selling the resource-rich Konkani coastline to the imperialists and destructing their livelihoods have no right to enter the area and not the anti-nuclear activists who are selflessly fighting for them.

Let us declare that the people of this country alone have the right to decide what kind of development or energy resources they need and not the corrupt politicians who behave like loyal servants of the imperialist MNCs. Let us stand in firm support of the anti-nuclear plant struggle of the militant Konkani people and build a country-wide campaign against the unsafe, harmful nuclear power option pushed by the ruling classes. As the Ratnagiri people have declared – let us not allow the sacrifices of Tabrezs to go in vain.

Our country is at present witnessing a deluge of militant struggles in all four corners on various issues with Jal, Jungle and Jameen, genuine democracy, progress and self-reliance at the core. People are carrying on these struggles (some of them since many years) peacefully and militantly without stepping back even in the face of severe repression. All these struggles are drawing inspiration from one another too. The need of the hour is for all these struggles to stand in firm solidarity and support to one another and unite on a common platform to fight the imperialists, Indian big corporate sharks and feudal lords which are implementing all these anti-people policies and repressing the fighting masses. A broad, united and militant movement of all the fighting masses of India can alone save this country and people from the dark pits of destitution these enemies of the people are scheming to throw us into.



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