

LETTERS

TORTURE AND RAPE

Four women activists of Sadhujana Vimochana Samyuktha Vedi (SJVSV); a Dalit organization leading the land struggle in Chengara in Kerala appeared on a Malayalam TV channel and accused trade union leaders of rape and torture. Till today; no complaint has been registered, and no one was arrested by the local police.

These recent events have been triggered by a blockade set up by the company people along with active support of police and hired goons in hundreds.

The people in the struggle site are largely daily wage workers going out of the site on an everyday basis. Women who go out in search of work are abused both physically and verbally by those who have set up the blockade. Children have been forcibly stopped from going to school in the past few days. Activists who visited the area have reported that few days ago, a woman gave birth in extremely unsafe conditions. Lack of proper health care and medicines is making life miserable for many others.

Rape of dalit and adivasi women and girls, who are most vocal and active in struggles, has become a strong weapon in the hands of those in opposition.

The Chengara land struggle therefore is about affirming the prior claim of these dalits and adivasis to land and hence to transfer legal ownership from planters to landless toilers.

Sreerekha, Saheli, New Delhi

Anjali Sinha, *Stree Adhikar Sangathan*, New Delhi

SCRAP INDO-US NUCLEAR DEAL

[This is an open letter to the Prime Minister of India to scrap the Indo US Nuclear Deal.]

The content of the Deal which is currently being negotiated between India and the US was first laid out in the joint statement issued by the Prime Minister and the US President on July 18, 2005 from Washington DC and further reiterated on March 2, 2006 in another joint statement by them issued from New Delhi. The signing of the Henry Hyde Act on December 18, 2006 is logical interference of the content of the Act legally making India a junior ally of the US confiscating and truncating India's hard earned sovereignty.

The Indo-US Nuclear Deal should be scrapped and given up with immediate effect and the ongoing talks between IAEA should be called off immediately.

The Indo-US Nuclear Deal is patently anti-people, will make India a strategic ally of American super-power in South Asia to impose its hegemony over Asia. The Deal also negates the concrete achievements gained by the International and national peace movements for disarmament and Nuclear-free World. After the example of the ruthless genocide, devastation and occupation of Iraq before the world people feel that the Indo-US Nuclear Deal will become an instrument for ruthlessly imposing the neo-liberal economic agenda and pliant regimes over the impoverished people of the Third World and further tightening the American hold through the Indo-US Nuclear Deal. US will now have a firm grip over the governments of the independent nation-states of India and Asia. This makes a mockery of the cherished values of equal and democratic world order and the aspirations of the national liberation struggles including the whole spirit of decolonization.

The Indo-US Nuclear Deal is an outrageous instrument of recolonization of India and Third World. The Deal, as and when comes through will, grievously undermine the current global regime of nuclear non-proliferation as it is meant to make a unique exception in case of India, in gross violation of underlying principles of the International peace workers, environment and women's movements.

The fact that Pakistan has been brusquely refused a similar deal by the US in spite of persistent clamouring and Iran is being demonstratively coerced to desist from developing its own nuclear power production allowed and encouraged under article IV of the NPT which further brings out graphically the abominable discriminatory nature of the Deal. The deal is likely to trigger a stepped up vertical and horizontal proliferations all over Asia. This goes against India's commitment of Nuclear-free Asia and World.

With the human development index of India and the Third World miserably low, instead of spending irrationally on nuclear power, expenditures on health, education, food security, rural and urban employment be enhanced.

India as the leader of the Non-Aligned Movement and as vocal participant in various International forums including the UN, has always committed itself for a Nuclear-free World and abolition of the existing nuclear weapons. In the spirit of the above the Government of India should ban the entry of nuclear powered sub-marines of the US and other major NATO countries. After six decades of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki nuclear tragedies, immediate steps must be taken for a Nuclear-free Asia and the world.

Kuldeep Nayar, Justice Rajendra Sachhar, Aruna Roy (M.K.S.S.Rajasthan), **Sandeep Pandey** (Asha Prarivar), **Major General Sudhir Vombattere** (Retd), **Ajit Jha** (People's Political Front), **Banwari Lal Sharma** (Azadi Bachao Andolan), **Lingraj** (General Secretary, Samajwadi Jan Parishad), **Anil Sadgopal** (Educationalist Bhopal) and 430 others.

NEPAL BECOMES REPUBLIC

On 15th August, Pushpa Kamal Dahal (Prachanda), Leader of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) won the election held in the Nepal Constitutional Council for the post of Prime Minister with a two-thirds majority. This victory is another major victory for the twelve-year-long struggle of the heroic people of Nepal to be rid of the monarchy. By his becoming Prime Minister, Prachanda and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) have been given the responsibility of heading and carrying forward the democratic government of Nepal.

Ending the monarchy was accomplished mainly as a result of the armed struggle along with accompanying mass struggles and a united front with other political parties. 13,000 people were killed in the course of the struggle which in the process led to the elimination of a cruel monarchy and the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Nepal. The Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) did not launch the above struggles by putting its trust in any foreign power or expecting any support from foreign sources. It relied entirely on the Nepali population while reaching to the lowest levels of society, and carrying out its struggles as People's War and mass struggles. The ruling elite forces of India and the US made a variety of efforts to oppose and defeat the Maoists. The US included the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) in its list of terrorist organisations. The present government of China too acted in support of the monarchy. Within Nepal the Nepali Congress and the pro-monarchy parties, with the backing of India, opposed the Maoists. The reason why the Maoists were able to overcome all their opponents was that they carried forward mass struggles by uniting workers, peasants, minority nationalities, people of depressed castes and women.

S K Senthivel, General Secretary, New Democratic Party