

NOTE

Jaitapur Calling

NAPM writes :

The corrupting influence of the nuclear companies over the political parties has been revealed in the Indo-US nuclear deal. These are the same political players who had played dubious roles during struggle against Enron power plant.

The incident of police firing in Jaitapur, Maharashtra happened at the protest march which was organized against the Union Environment Minister's statement saying, come what may the Nuclear Park will be built in Jaitapur and Prime Minister's consistent advocacy for nuclear energy unmindful of the tragic incident in Japan.

In the police firing on 18th April, 2011, one person died and 8 others were seriously injured. This firing should not be seen in isolation. For the past one year, the government of Maharashtra has unleashed a reign of terror in the entire Jaitapur area against farmers, fishing folks and other rural artisans who have launched a non-violent and protracted democratic struggle against snatching away of their land, livelihood and the imminent catastrophe from the proposed Nuclear Power Park.

The high-handedness of Maha-rashtra State Government has been evident for the last four years. A local Konkani activist Vaishali Patil and even other prominent Konkani and Maharashtra residents like Retd Admiral L Ramdas and Retd Supreme Court Justice P B Sawant were arbitrarily declared out of bounds from Ratnagiri District.

This is a flagrant violation of democratic rights. This is a clear example of stamping out the right to protest which is one of the sacrosanct constitutional rights in the country. It should be noted that Mr Narayan Rane, the State Revenue Minister who also hails from the Konkani region has been going around Jaitapur area and threatening everyone who protests against the proposed Nuclear Power Park. Mr Rane has also openly given a call to local Indian National Congress cadres to forcibly drive out the activists who are protesting against the Nuclear Power Park.

Also, people are seriously concerned about Shiv Sena's role in provoking the tragic incident. Motivated hooliganism and strong arm tactics of Shiv Sena is a well known phenomenon which often dissipates the possibility of peaceful democratic protests. This provides the logic to the administration for Police repression and vilifying peaceful mass protests. Shiv Sena's opportunism in the Anti- Enron Struggle in the 1990s doesn't require much elaboration.

The people of Jaitapur are carrying out peaceful struggle against the proposed Nuclear Power Park for the past 4 years, but Congress Party's partisan role and Shiv Sena's unwarranted entry into the struggle has vitiated the atmosphere.

In the aftermath of the nuclear accidents in Three Mile Island, Chernobyl and Fukushima, a stark rationale for the abandonment of nuclear energy has emerged. In a situation where admittedly public health infrastructure is non-existent to deal with the inevitable event of nuclear emergency, promotion of nuclear commerce cannot be approved. Concerned citizens disapprove of nuclear energy in such a context where countries after countries are abandoning or doing a rethink about this dangerous option. □