

'No' to N-Power

The real stake in the controversial Indo-US nuclear deal seldom gets attention it deserves. The left opposition to the proposed agreement is too clever by half. They think they could salvage their progressive image by making aimless noises about the deal. In truth they too are not opposed in principle to the idea of India becoming a dominating nuclear power in the foreseeable future. But the notorious deal is all about saving the ailing nuclear industry of America. The Karats and Yechuris like the Mukherjees and Singhs are equally enthusiastic in solving India's energy need by building a chain of nuclear power plants across the country. They do not bother about the consequences and catastrophes they are inviting for the future generations.

Both India and Pakistan cannot move further in enhancing their nuclear weapons capabilities because of unwritten understanding they have with Uncle Sam. They are being hammered day in and day out by the corporate America to switch over in a big way to nuclear power. But nuclear power is as hazardous as nuclear weapons. Also, nuclear power plant means large-scale eviction. While all are busy to rationalise the Indo-American exercise, or to make it acceptable after 'suitable' amendments, nothing is heard about the voice of dissent against nuclear power.

Right now some students of Kerala are on an indefinite fast at Jantar Mantar, New Delhi demanding that the Indo-US Nuclear Deal be completely rejected and also demanding that nuclear power, which is a destructive means of energy generation, be abandoned once and for all.

In truth the framework for a Nuclear Deal between India and the United States of America was laid down during the BJP-led NDA Government, but the specifics of the deal were rigorously worked out and pursued by the Congress-led UPA Government, though the deal has been postponed temporarily, due to resistance from various fronts and in particular from the political left.

No doubt the 123 Deal is at a critical stage. The International Atomic Energy Association (IAEA) negotiations with the UPA Govt. seeking the support of the NDA leaders indicate that the deal is being pushed by Indian leaders in spite of mass and public protests and demonstrations at various levels including from large numbers of youth and students.

Nuclear Power has proved to be destructive of natural resources right from the Uranium Mining in Jaduguda or Kota to plants elsewhere, is also economically unviable. The deal, which has major ramifications for the sovereignty of the sub-continent and would bring in foreign powers and forces in critical areas, is being pushed through without any public debate. It is therefore commendable that the students and youth are demonstrating against the deal, more particularly in a fast-changing politically hostile climate wherein the State seems to be showing little concern for basic issues of peace, sovereignty and resisting imperialism.

As things are they are not going to kill the deal even if Bush fails to finalise it, which is more likely, before he leaves the White House. In other words a sustained campaign against nuclear power is the cry of the moment. □□□

