

NOTE

'No' to Nuclear Power

NAPM writes :

PRIME MINISTER MANmohan Singh's statement after the nuclear disaster in Japan that there is no need to be panicky as India will take all safety measures is not only amateurish but also lacks wisdom.

His statement gives the impression that the Japanese have not taken adequate safety measures. What type of natural calamities or man made lapses are in store, no one can visualise or predict, leave alone taking safety measures against them.

The Prime Minister who has no control over his own cabinet ministers and has unashamedly wailed in public that he was ineffective due to coalition government, and caused the nation unimaginable and unprecedented loss by allowing mind blowing scams, issuing such absurd statements like taking all safety measures- lacks any tangible weight.

The urgency with which the US authorities issued statement in the immediate aftermath of the Japanese Nuclear power plants disaster urging India not to abandon Indo-US nuclear deal as India is in dire need of power and only nuclear power can fulfil it clearly shows the ugly face of US business interest over and above the safety of Indian lives. This has been further confirmed by the documents published via WikiLeaks in the *Hindu* and the influence which US government has exerted on the foreign policy matters and sensitive nuclear issues.

The statements emanating from authorities of the Indian nuclear establishment that they have already handled earthquake and tsunami situations is highly misleading and shallow justification that qualifies as institutional malfeasance. And Indian technocrats and engineers are in no way more capable of dealing with nuclear catastrophe, than their Japanese counterparts.

India's Policy on Nuclear Energy and push for setting up nuclear power plants in various places across the country is not only a threat to communities that are likely to lose their lands and others living in the power plants' vicinity but also seriously compromises her energy security, sovereignty and independence, and sparks off a race in the region. The Government has abandoned the country's time-tested refusal to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty by signing the 123 agreement with the US and has had to follow its dictates by dropping the Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline deal.

Nuclear energy is not cheap, neither it is clean nor safe. Every step in its whole cycle from mining to enrichment to power generation to waste disposal is fraught with inevitable environmental and health hazards, and permanent damage across generations.

The proposed nuclear power plants at Haripur (West Bengal), Mithi Viridi (Gujarat), Madban (Maha-rashtra), Pitti Sonapur (Orissa), Chutkha (Madhya Pradesh) and Kovada (Andhra Pradesh) be immediately scrapped otherwise India will have to face its own Fukushima not in the distant future.

The draconian Indian Atomic Energy Act, 1962 be revoked forthwith and the Right to Information (RTI) Act be amended to apply to all aspects of the nuclear establishment. □□□