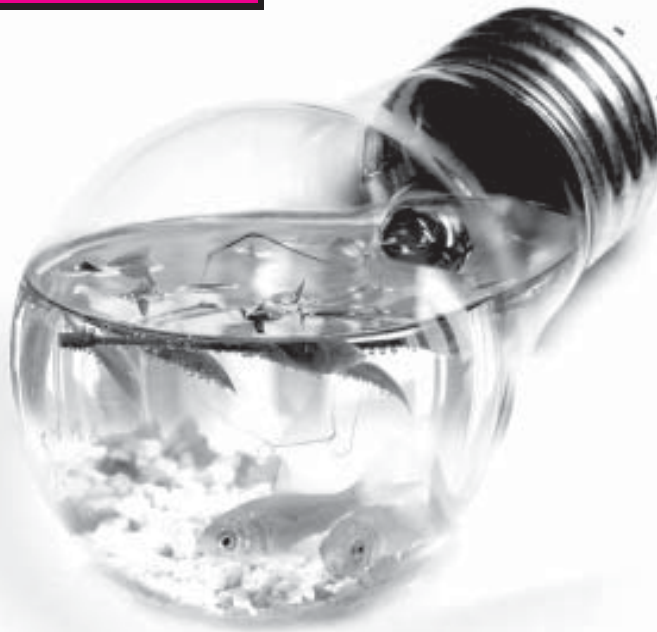


THE MOVEMENT OF INDIA

VOL. 5, ISSUE 2
SEPTEMBER-2010

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ENERGY POLICY SPECIAL



- ◆ **QUESTIONABLE INTEGRATED ENERGY POLICY**
- ◆ **PRO-PEOPLE ENERGY ALTERNATIVE**
- ◆ **FACT FINDING REPORT ON SOMPETA POWER PROJECT FIRING**
- ◆ **ENVIRONMENTALLY DESTRUCTIVE ATHENA POWER PROJECT CLEARED**
- ◆ **PEOPLE OWNED POWER PLANT IN JHARKHAND**
- ◆ **PEOPLE'S VICTORY AGAINST MEGA POWER PROJECT IN CHAMALAPURA**

- ◆ **KASHMIR NEEDS A PERMANENT SOLUTION**
- ◆ **POSCO UPDATE**
- ◆ **TRIBUTES: M J JOSEPH AND ADVOCATE B M MASANI**

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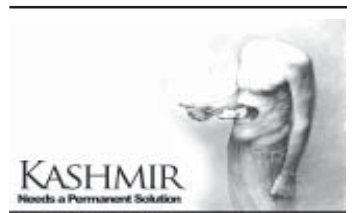
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India's energy policy and its implementation form the main theme in this issue. The present energy policy is characterized by capital investment-driven, electricity-focused, centralized, large-scale power plants that uproot local communities of tribals, landless and farmers and destroy the environment and biodiversity. Benefits of such large scale projects go largely to the middle and upper class populations in urban areas and to big industries. Displaced families are neither rehabilitated adequately nor given any benefits of such projects. Most are pauperized.

In addition, large scale power generation technologies like coal fired thermal plants directly contribute to global warming and nuclear power plants result in unresolved safety hazards. The workers in these facilities and economically weak populations who live in proximate regions are the immediate victims of terrible health impacts without receiving adequate healthcare services.

The need of the time is to replace this large-scale, people-displacing and nature-annihilating paradigm of energy planning with a small-scale, people-empowering and sustainable one. This, in turn, requires replacement of centralized and autocratic processes of decision making with decentralized and democratic processes which involve local communities in decision making as a matter of routine and let the communities gain control of local resources like lands, waters, forests and minerals. Small-scale and renewable

energy technologies need to be developed that permit people to harness local resources in a sustainable manner.

There are three types of energy related articles in this issue – those that critique the present energy policy and outline broad alternative paradigm; those that report the antidemocratic way in which current power projects are being implemented (taking as examples administration's repression of local people threatened by Nagarjuna Construction Company's thermal power plant at Sompeta, AP, and environmental clearance granted to Athena's thermal power project in Chattisgarh); and those that report cases of hope for the people, a case of small-scale thermal power plant owned and managed by tribal village people in Hazaribagh district of Jharkhand, and another of how villagers in and around Chammalpara (close to Mysore) got together and ousted a mega thermal power project that was to occupy 2000 acres of agricultural land and displace 20,000 people.

Besides, this issue contains articles on POSCO, Kashmir, and NAPM's statements on some important events like expressing concern over Azad's murder and harassment of Shri EAS Sharma, and celebrating first anniversary of historic Delhi High Court judgment declaring Section 377 IPC unconstitutional and scrapping of Karla SEZ near Pune under pressure of the people. The POSCO article updates on continuing land acquisition and people's growing resistance. The article on Kashmir problem argues that the only solution to end vicious cycle of violence is for India to help work out Kashmir's autonomy in agreement with the people of J&K and with approval of Pakistan.

Finally, we offer heartfelt tributes to two compassionate compatriots who recently passed away – M. J. Joseph and Advocate B. M. Masani. Both aligned their lives with the struggles of the ordinary and disadvantaged people.

- Editorial Team

The Planning Commission's *Integrated Energy Policy* report – the key document that lays out the strategy for meeting India's energy needs for the next 25 years – begins with a clear articulation of its basic approach to energy.

“India needs to sustain an 8% to 10% economic growth rate, over the next 25 years, if it is to eradicate poverty and meet its human development goals. To deliver a sustained growth rate of 8% through 2031-32 and to meet the lifeline energy needs of all citizens, India needs, at the very least, to increase its primary energy supply by 3 to 4 times and its electricity generation capacity/supply by 5 to 6 times of their 2003-04 levels.”

In other words, it begins with the assumption that the 8-10% growth rate is necessary to eradicate poverty. It then projects the energy and electricity that will be required to achieve this rate of growth. It finds that to achieve 8% economic growth every year for 25 years (from 2006 to 2031), the total primary energy supply will have to be raised to 1250 Kilogram Oil Equivalent (kgoe) per

capita by 2031 from the level of 439 kgoe in 2003.

As far as electricity is concerned, the consumption will have to be raised from 553 units per capita in 2003 to 2471 units per capita by 2031 for the same growth. To meet this requirement, the report suggests that India will need to create a total installed capacity of 778,000 MW, up from the current (2010) level of 161,000 MW - close to five times the existing capacity.

To meet this level of energy and electricity needs, even some of the best scenarios outlined in the report require the full development of hydro resources – 150,000 MW – and creating 63,000 MW of nuclear capacity in addition to huge amounts of coal power. And, as per the report, in the least coal-dominated, highest energy efficient and renewables scenario also, coal will still have to provide for 41% of our primary energy supply and oil will have to supply 22.8%.

In effect, the need to maintain 8% growth is the basic justification for building hundreds of large dams, including in the sensitive Himalayan region, many nuclear facilities and

thousands of acres of coal mining and thermal power plants. This means displacement of millions of people, destruction of livelihoods, tearing asunder social, cultural and community fabrics, huge impacts on environment and biodiversity, the drying up of many rivers with multiple dams and diversions in a single basin, the spectre of managing massive quantities of radioactive waste, not to mention the huge financial costs of building this infrastructure.

Shripad Dharmadhikary

What if we as a society start choosing that we need to keep at least some rivers flowing? That we need to conserve biodiversity? In other words, the massive extraction of resources required to maintain this level of electricity supply is likely to face several constraints - external constraints of costs and non-availability, possible resource extraction limits, and limits imposed by societal tolerance and by values.



The Integrated Energy Policy
MANY QUESTIONS

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And even with all this, the report estimates that we will need to import 90-93% of our oil and 11-45% of our coal requirements.

About coal, our most abundant domestic energy source, the report adds:

If domestic coal production continues to grow at 5% per year, the total (including proven, indicated and inferred) extractable coal reserves will run out in around 45 years.

Thus, along with massive social and environmental upheaval, the prognosis is that of great uncertainty as far as energy security is concerned, on both internal and external sides.

Given this, and the massive disruptions that ongoing, under construction and planned power projects are causing in people's lives, there is a need to ask some hard questions about the plan and strategy laid out in the report.

A Question of End and Means

The one very important – and positive – aspect of the Report is that it has laid out the basis and assumptions of its projection and plans.

In estimating the requirement of electricity, the Report has assumed certain elasticities (declining over the years) of GDP vs Electricity together with 8% GDP growth rate. (The elasticity is a measure of how much the energy use grows for every percentage point increase in the GDP).

In this method, the goal of the GDP growth



itself remains unquestioned. However, to those being asked to pay the price of this huge increase in power and mining infrastructure, the ultimate goal of this electricity is an important question.

It is clear that for all the appropriate noises made, increase in power generation is not essentially for the poor or the deprived classes. As a recent publication “*Electricity for All : Ten Ideas towards Turning Rhetoric into Reality*” by the Prayas Energy Group (www.prayas-pune.org) points out,

“Though electricity generation has increased by 60% in the last decade, it has only led to about a 10% increase in access for households,” and “Half of

households in India do not have access to electricity.” This is the scene after almost 20 years of power sector reform. There is little reason to believe that the focus will shift to the poor and deprived in the next 20 years.

So it is imperative to ask the questions – what exactly is this growth going to deliver, and to whom? The answers to these questions need lot more detailed work. However, a basic dis-aggregation of the current GDP structure and its growth is enough to reveal the essence. Table 1 below shows the well known sectoral composition of India's GDP and its growth. As can be seen, an overwhelming 63% of the GDP is from the services sector, which is also the fastest growing sector. While the figures in the table are for a particular year, the trends (not given here for want of

Table 1: Sectoral Composition of GDP, Sectoral Employment and GDP Growth Rates

Sr. No.	Sector	Growth Rate in 2007-08 of Sectoral GDP (in %)	Share of Sector in Total GDP in 2007-08 (in %)	Share of Sector in Total Employment (in Millions, and % for 2004-05)
1	Agriculture and Allied Activities	4.9	17.8	225 (54%)
2	Industry	7.4	19.2	55.3 (13%)
3	Services	10.8	63.0	136.2 (33%)

Source: Central Statistical Organisation (In, Data for Use by Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission, 5th April 2010

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space) also show that agriculture continues to have the lowest growth rate, and its share in the GDP is shrinking, while it continues to employ the greatest number of people. In effect, growth is bypassing – or throwing crumbs at – the largest and the poorest sections of our citizens. And it is precisely this skewed and unequal growth that the energy/electricity plan is designed to cater to.

Admittedly, the economy is complexly interlinked. Some may argue that agriculture in India cannot support its huge population, and hence it is necessary for other sectors to grow faster, and absorb the working population. Others may argue that even for agriculture to grow, it is necessary for other sectors to grow. Both arguments have their merits. However, neither has the service sector demonstrated that it can create the necessary employment, nor has the growth in other sectors led to a strengthening of agriculture. Indeed, there is enough evidence to show that growth in India has been lop-sided, creating islands of wealth and accumulation, even as inequity has increased, and agriculture and those dependent on it suffer.

Therefore, the important question that needs to be asked is whether the ends (the GDP growth) justify the means (the electricity and energy plan of the Planning Commission). That this question has not been asked by the Integrated Energy Plan is its biggest lacunae. For an electricity plan that proposes to use the resources of this country – coal, oil, gas, rivers, finances, spends further money importing substantial quantities of fuels – and

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creates massive social, environmental and cultural disruptions, the question of what are the ends is the most critical question. Since the planners have not asked this question, it is important for others, including civil society, to raise this question, and also seek answers. Till then, no plan can be acceptable.

A Question of Sustainability

While the Report proposes a sharp increase in total primary energy supply and electricity consumption per capita in order to achieve the goal of GDP growth, these projections do not really present what level of services will this energy / electricity offer, and to whom – that is, how much lighting, how much electricity for agriculture use, for small businesses, for large manufacturing etc. The figures are only derived as a requirement for meeting the 8% growth.

Another critical issue not answered – or even asked – by the Report is whether these levels of energy and electricity production are achievable.

To deliver this level of electricity, we will need to dam every river many times over, dig out all our coal, build many nuclear power plants, and over and above this, import huge quantities of oil, coal and gas. What if the oil, coal and gas are too costly for us to import? The Report does propose certain measures to increase the reliability of imports, but ultimately, a basic uncertainty remains, given the reliance on external elements.

What if communities living along rivers, on coal bearing strata, near proposed nuclear



To deliver this level of electricity, we will need to dam every river many times over, dig out all our coal, build many nuclear power plants, and over and above this, import huge quantities of oil, coal and gas. What if the oil, coal and gas are too costly for us to import?

It is questionable to ask the poor to wait 20 years before the benefits of growth trickle down to them. However, if it is clear that the growth itself is unsustainable

facilities protest their displacement, the destruction of their livelihoods and culture, the risks to their health? We could of course, continue to ride roughshod on them, persist in violating human rights and push the juggernaut through. But what if we find that even after doing that, we are running against the limits of our coal resources, as is apprehended in the Report?

What if we as a society start choosing that we need to keep at least some rivers flowing? That we need to conserve biodiversity? In other words, the massive extraction of resources required to maintain this level of electricity supply is likely to face several constraints – external constraints of costs and non-availability, possible resource extraction limits, and limits imposed by societal tolerance and by values. Thus, there is a compelling need to consciously, pre-emptively think about these limits.

Apart from the very practical question of whether we will be able to achieve the levels of electricity generation targeted, the question of limits becomes relevant for another, more important reason. If limits exist to the amount of electricity we can produce, then it is likely that the growth in the power infrastructure would peter out mid-way. This means that while the rich and the powerful would have their needs – and luxuries – met, as they are the first beneficiaries of the growth, the poor would be left high and dry along the path as only part of the targets are achieved.

So the issue of equity becomes all the more critical. As it is, it is questionable to ask the poor to wait 20 years before the benefits of

growth trickle down to them. However, if it is clear that the growth itself is unsustainable, then it is even more important that the poor and the weaker sections be given their share in the benefits right here, right now, and with the first priority. This would mean a substantial restructuring of the current growth model, and redirecting the benefits.

Conclusion

The Integrated Energy Plan prepared by the Planning Commission is an important document for it lays down estimates for our energy and electricity needs for the next 25 years making explicit its basis, assumptions and methodologies. It also lists possible supply options, giving several scenarios, and emphasises the importance of Demand Side Management and energy efficiency. At the

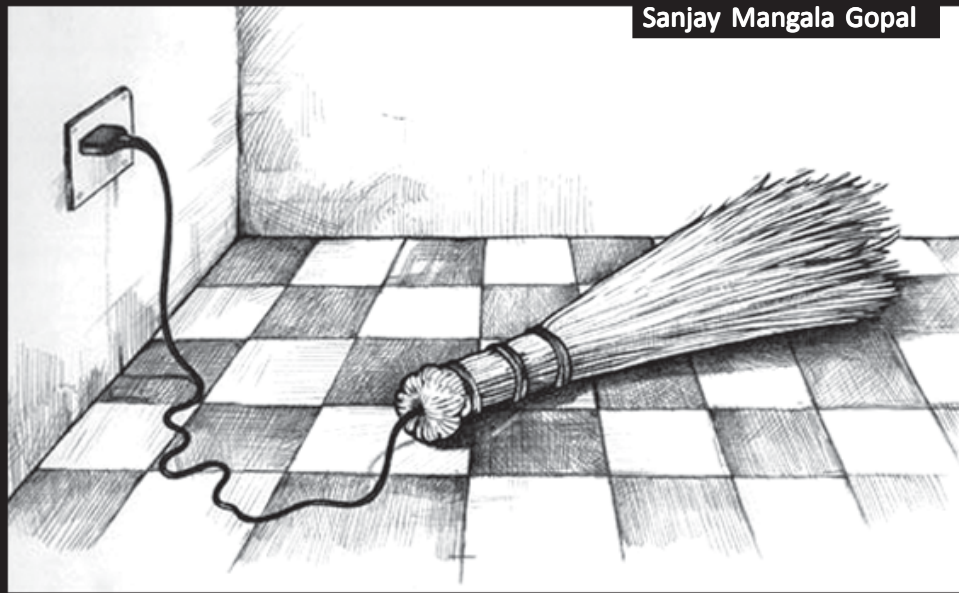
same time, it suffers from two critical problems. One, that the ends to which the electricity generation is to be deployed is not explicit in terms of what services will be delivered, and to whom. Secondly, in preparing the plan and strategy to meet the projected energy needs, there is little thought given to the massive impacts of rolling out this infrastructure, as well as its feasibility and sustainability. Even on just these two counts, there is a need to comprehensively rework and rebuild a new energy and electricity plan for the country that will place at its centre equity, justice and sustainability along with productivity and efficiency.

Shripad Dharmadhikary is a B. Tech. from IIT Bombay and currently works with Manthan Adhyayan Kendra which is engaged in Research, Analysis and Monitoring of Water and Energy Issues. In the past he has been an activist with the Narmada Bachao Andolan.

manthan.shripad@gmail.com



Sanjay Mangala Gopal

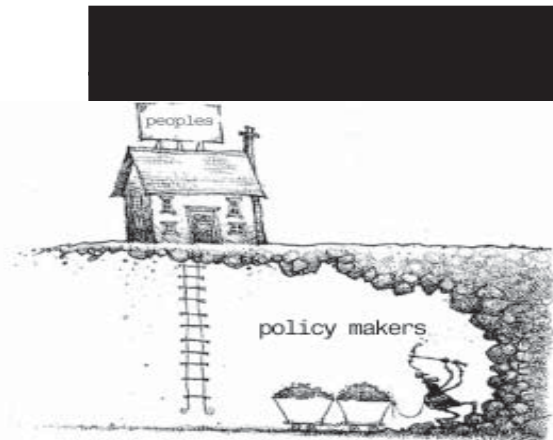


Towards Local Scale Renewable Energy : *Need to Shift the* Politics of Energy Economy

Efforts are on by nation states to safeguard the market whereas the same nation states are participating in processes like Agenda 21 to safeguard the environment. In reality the market interests are pushed ahead of the environment. Herman Scheer has proposed seven fold strategies for the required transformation. It includes immediate transition to environmentally sustainable and renewable energy resources and thereby end of the dependence on fossil fuels. According to Scheer, economy based on solar energy and solar resources can safeguard our common future. Targeted replacement of fossil fuels by solar resources is necessary to make the diverse economic development which will be sustainable with lasting benefits to both individual and society. It can reestablish relation between development and environmental cycle, cultures and democratic institutions, and security of human society. Taking into account the state privileges like subsidies provided to the fossil fuels, it is a myth that solar resources are costly, moreover they are more clean and easy to harness. Laws of nature must have natural supremacy over the laws of market because visible impact of sun is better than the invisible hand of market!

In 2030, according to International Energy Agency (IEA), Paris, world's energy consumption will increase by 66% of that in 2005.

Globalization is based on global trade which needs faster global transport infrastructure. That is why fuel duty for shipping and aviation is exempted, benefiting large freighters and cargo planes. Airports are not liable for property tax! On the one hand local trades who can't afford such mega scale transportation in front of big players are at loss, and on the other hand, tremendous use of fossil fuels degrades climate.



Government initiatives as well as public awareness are vital. Mere declarations at government level do not serve the purpose. Unless there is initiative at the level of alert citizens, things won't move ahead. Civil society groups, educational institutes, political organizations, NGOs must come forward.

In coming years world energy industry has to face four challenges, namely, growing oil scarcity, achieving energy security, combating environmental degradation, and meeting growing needs of developing world. All out efforts will be necessary to make renewable energy competitive by way of cost cutting in technologies, government tax credits and economic incentives. Options of Nuclear and Hydrogen energy are not going to be attractive and feasible. With world population expected to touch 8 billion in 2030, increasing energy availability for the poor is critical for maintaining the uniform growth. Without major government support about 18% poor in developing countries would be still deprived of energy access.

Globalization is based on global trade which needs faster global transport infrastructure. That is why fuel duty for shipping and aviation is exempted, benefiting large freighters and cargo planes. Airports are not liable for property tax! On the one hand local trades who can't afford such mega scale transportation in front of big players are at loss, and

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on the other hand, tremendous use of fossil fuels degrades climate. Shipping and aviation account for around 15% of global oil consumption. Emissions from aircraft cause three times as much damage to the atmosphere as the ground level emissions. Cost of shipping food products out of USA has fallen by 80% from 1960s. Without heavy subsidies global trade flows could never have reached their present scale. Thus globalization gives preference to global over regional trade flows and to large industrial corporations over small and medium sized enterprises. It promotes separation of product from consumer and anonymity of economic process counter to the purpose of market economy. Freight subsidies are thus an attack on society and on the natural world! Abolition of these subsidies will only see the revival of regions.

Climate Change (CC) and Peak Oil (PO means attainment of the maximum conventional oil output extracted per day) are impacting the global trade and eventually it would lead to Peak Globalization (PG). Trade liberalization policy, advent of technology especially in transportation and communication, and low cost of labor from developing countries have helped globalization. Global trade depends upon reliable inexpensive freight transportation along complex and long distance supply chains. However Global Warming (GW) and oil depletion have adversely impacted globalization due to their effects on transportation costs and reliable freight movement. CC policies are also framed to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and oil consumption. All this will affect transportation of perishable items as well as just-in-time delivery mechanisms introduced to curtail inventory. This will eventually lead to PG and then decrease in ton-miles freight. The production and trade thus will become more local or regional though not quite easily, cheaply and quickly.

The dependence on renewable energy re-

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sources is increasing in both developed and developing countries at a pace faster than that of fossil and nuclear energy sources in past. The increase is not a result of political desire but rather a need of the hour. Twentieth century witnessed globalization of world energy economy through oil from Middle East and twenty first century is going to witness the localization of the same through solar, wind and geothermal energy sources. However, proper government support is required through various policy decisions, tax restructuring and incentives.

Wind, water and solar technologies can provide 100% of the world's energy, eliminating all fossil fuels. It will depend largely on technologies chosen and availability of critical material, economic and political factors. Land required for clean technologies would be less than that required for the conventional power plants. Smart mix of different renewable energy options can give good reliability. GT energy for base load, solar for day time loads, wind for night loads and hydro to fill the gaps would be an effective combination.

Low cost of labor from developing countries have helped globalization. Global trade depends upon reliable inexpensive freight transportation along complex and long distance supply chains.



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It would also be cost effective. Coal miners and other fossil fuel workers' unions may object, however strong political will can resolve the problem.

Political, technological and economical autonomy is possible by adopting renewable energy resources immediately.

Energy autonomy means, political strategy of autonomous initiative by individuals, organizations, businesses, cities and states. 'The new politics of renewable energy is about opening up spaces for these initiatives, spaces in which the initiatives can develop unhindered!'

Understanding the politics of energy economy and fixing the onus of shift is very important. Government initiatives as well as public awareness are vital. Mere declarations at government level do not serve the purpose. Unless there is initiative at the level of alert citizens, things won't move ahead. Civil society groups, educational institutes, political organizations, NGOs must come forward. Every sensible citizen and every sensible organization in the society which strives for better life on the earth for all, must realize that energy consciousness and energy awareness is very much connected with their day to day activism. On the one hand, it will enhance creative and experimental initiatives on part of citizens, and on the other hand, it can create required pressure groups for the implementation of government declarations. Politicians, bureaucrats, activists, scientists, experts, teachers, students and enlightened citizens need to form a wider platform for this purpose at every level.

Sanjay Mangala Gopal has been associated with NAPM from its beginning. He is Assistant Professor, Mechanical Engineering, VJTI Mumbai, and is currently pursuing PhD in Renewable Energy for Sustainable Development at the Center for Energy and Environmental Policy, College of Engineering University of Delaware, USA.

sanjay.mangalagopal@gmail.com



Prem P Verma writes about a significant experiment underway in some tribal villages of Jharkhand to establish a small-scale, village-owned and village-managed electricity generation and supply system..

A Non-Displacing, People-Owned Energy System

INSTALLATION OF VILLAGE MANAGED MICRO THERMAL POWER PLANT IN JHARKHAND

November 15, 2008, the day Jharkhand was born, was the most satisfying and happy day of my life since on this day our organisation, Jharkhand Alternative Development Forum, with the active help and guidance of Dr. Mithilesh Dangi of Azadi Bachao Andolan, installed and put in operation a micro-thermal power plant in a remote village inside the jungle in Jharkhand, 68 kilometres from Hazaribagh. The village, Kekoria Tand in Keradari Block of Hazaribagh district, is quite inaccessible and perhaps has not been visited by any politician or bureaucrat since the independence of the country. Yet the people have survived, are more happy than us and the community spirit is alive and kicking. Main occupation is farming and we have never been welcomed in a more memorable manner in our memory.

The installed plant runs on coal and water only through a steam engine coupled with an alternator and is of 4 KW capacity, enough to light up the entire village and its lanes. When the micro-thermal plant started and the bulbs got lighted, one had to be there to see the wonder and happiness on the faces of the neglected tribal population to whom Jharkhand really belongs. We will be running this plant on trial for the next several months to iron out any problems. The entire plant will be operated and maintained by the people of the village who have been trained in the methodology and will have ownership of the equipment. For the first time the control of generation and distribution of electricity will be in the hands of the villagers without any governmental support or interference. This is true development and empowerment of the people which Gandhiji dreamt of and which we have conveniently forgotten in our web of selfishness. India will shine only through this methodology when people power will prevail.

The next step in the village which we have adopted will be to improve their farming and make it a sustainable and attractive occupation. We will train the farmers and implement ecological and organic farming methods using multi-crop farming so that yield per acre is increased and bio-diversity is protected. The migration from village to city must be stopped and back-to-farm movement initiated.

Our energy / electricity and farming experiments are an effort towards enabling a people-owned, people-managed, small scale and sustainable model of economic empowerment.

The task is immense and we require all your blessings and support in this endeavour.

- Prem P Verma works with the Jharkhand Alternative Development Forum

In present times, barring ritual voting in elections, the will of We the People of the Republic of India rarely receives recognition. A people's victory is rarer still in today's dispensation by central or state governments which are imposing on the people a pattern of development that is increasingly being questioned. Thus, people's victories, howsoever small or fleeting, need to be made known so that others who struggle to assert their rights may take courage and perhaps adapt the methods of the victorious struggle to their own circumstance. One such victory won by peaceful means was commemorated on July 24, 2010, at Chamalapura, a village outside Mysore in Karnataka.

In 2007, Government of Karnataka (GoK) announced its proposal to construct a Rs. 5,500 crores 1,000 MW coal-fired thermal electric power generation plant (CFTPP) on 2,000 acres of land in Chamalapura, a village 15 km from Mysore, 15 km from the Nagarahole Forest, and 20 km from the KRS dam reservoir that supplies water to Mysore. The opposition to this project from people was immediate and huge, and quite unexpectedly, from the directly affected population at and around Chamalapura and indirectly affected populations in Mysore City and sur-

rounding towns. Even more surprising was that while displacement of around 20,000 people was the fundamental issue, very closely competing issues were water shortage and pollution, environmental destruction (pre-construction and plant operation) and degradation, and threat to wildlife in the nearby forests. Technical and legal arguments opposing the CFTPP were also raised.

The agitations cut across socio-economic barriers and the urban-rural divide. Also, agitations were conducted independently by several civil society organizations at different levels, each according to its individual style and capability. There were 24x7 vigils at and around the proposed project site with village folk including women offering physical resistance to visitors in favour of the project, and street demonstrations and *rasta roko* in Mysore where peaceful protestors were beaten by police, arrested and charged under criminal law. There were lectures and seminars conducted in Mysore by intellectuals and activists, documentary films made by creative artists, students' protests, meetings organized between village folk and city folk making common cause and explaining the environmental ill-effects of a mega power plant, and meetings to raise public awareness about the social and environmental ill-

S G VOMBATKERE

Continued public pressure and agitations caused the Karnataka Power Minister to announce that the power plant would not be constructed against the wishes of the people

KARNATAKA

PEOPLE'S VICTORY AGAINST A MEGA THERMAL Power Plant



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effects of the project. There were petitions to all levels of government, and a formal petition was made on October 19, 2007, to the Karnataka Electricity Regulatory Commission (KERC), cogently arguing that the project was quite unnecessary and undesirable. People lobbied with elected representatives, and delegations went to Bangalore to argue with government officials and political figures. A very significant event was a huge rally of around 5,000 people at the Town Hall in Mysore city centre on September 12, 2007, with leaders of all political parties and groupings excepting of course the ruling party at that time, and many intellectuals. Even some religious leaders lent support to the agitation. The local media covered all aspects of the agitations. An apolitical alliance of agitating organizations and individuals was formed and named as Chamalapura Ushnavidyut Sthavara Virodhi Horata Samithi (CUSVHS).

GoK for its part made the statement that the CFTPP was for development of the area by providing electric power, and that the proposed site was dry land useless for agriculture. Not to be taken in, protestors noted that the generated power would be sent to Bangalore while all the social and environmental ill-effects would be left to the villages around Chamalapura, KRS reservoir, Mysore and small towns around, all within a 20-km productive well- and tank-based traditional agriculture. However, the petition argued before KERC starting January 2008, caused the Chairman and a Member to visit the site on March 20, 2008, to meet the affected people. This resulted in KERC issuing an advisory to GoK to re-consider its decision to construct the CFTPP at Chamalapura.

Continued public pressure and agitations following this advisory caused the Karnataka Power Minister to announce in late 2008 that the power plant would not be constructed against the wishes of the people. While there has been no official statement withdrawing

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the project proposal, it is reliably understood that the Chamalapura site has been dropped. This victory of the people was confirmed when CUSVHS decided to erect a granite stone tablet (Vijayagallu) on July 24, 2010, next to a Malleshwara temple on a hill very near to Chamalapura. The 150 plus people who gathered for the simple ceremony under a cloudy sky threatening to rain, were village folk and city folk, women, old people and students, organic farmers, intellectuals and activists, and representatives of farmers' and Dalit organizations. A students group sang songs about nature and the environment, and the stone tablet was inaugurated by a four-year-old girl placing a simple garland on the stone, symbolism for Earth belonging to the coming generation. The lettering on the tablet speaks of nature's bounty, its life forms, forest wealth, wildlife and the environment in the same breath as it mentions people. This is especially significant in anti-people projects. Here is a translation of the words on the Victory Stone:

“The Chamalapura Ushnavidyut Sthavara Virodhi Horata Samithi (Forum for Opposing the Chamalapura Thermal Power Plant) has placed this commemorative stone as a symbol of people's victory against the Karnataka Government's proposed stroyed nature's life forms, forest wealth, wildlife, environment and people's lives and livelihoods. All the people who participated in the movement against the Chamalapura Thermal Power Plant hereby warn any government that may come in the future, not to undertake such destructive, anti-people projects. SAVE THE ENVIRONMENT; PROTECT NATURE'S ABUNDANCE.”

Maj Gen (Ret.) S G Vombatkere is a member of National Alliance of People's Movements (NAPM) and People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL).

sg9kere@live.com



PUBLIC HEARINGS ON POWER PROJECTS:

Cleared, Denied, Cleared, ...

The environment clearance process continues to make a mockery of the law. As the Athena case shows, when a project is pulled up, the Ministry simply finds another channel by which to continue it.

The committee found the Public Hearing in order and based on the discussions held and the clarifications provided by the project proponent the Committee decided to grant the environmental clearance to the power project in the instant case and recommended that the Ministry may inform the project proponent accordingly.”

So reads the confident set of minutes of the meeting of the Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) on Thermal Power projects, held in New Delhi on 30th April 2010. The committee members observed for the second time that 2x660 MW Coal Based TPP of M/s Athena Chhattisgarh Power Ltd should be granted an environmental clearance.

In the above sentence the words “second time” is of critical relevance. This is because not so far back on 8th March 2010, the envi-

ronment clearance for the above project located in Janjgir-Champa district of Chhattisgarh was quashed by the National Environment Appellate Authority (NEAA). The NEAA located in New Delhi is the legally mandated redressal body where environment clearances of industrial and infrastructure projects listed in the appendix of the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification 2006 can be challenged.

8th March 2010 was an important date and one that had a few unexpected smiles. It was only the second time in the history of the NEAA’s existence that an environment clearance had been quashed. The first one being that of the Indira Sagar (Polavaram) irrigation project in Andhra Pradesh, back in 2007. On 15th January 2009, the mandatory public hearing for Athena’s thermal power plant was held under the chairmanship of the Additional District Magistrate (ADM), Janjgir-Champa, A K Tiwari. But the public hearing tion of several of the clauses of the mechanism prescribed in the EIA notification. Other than the impacts of the project itself, this became a core point of debate at the public

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hearing.

Ramesh Agrawal, a social and environmental activist of Jan Chetana, highlighted to the panel something that they should have been aware of already. Agrawal affirmatively pointed out that the EIA notification requires that a public hearing is arranged in a “systematic, time bound and transparent manner

ensuring widest possible public participation at the project...” However, in the present instance most of the people who are likely to be directly affected by the construction of the project were un-

aware that a public hearing was being held and the administration had made no effort to bring it to their notice.

The notification also requires that the concerned officials including the District Magistrate and the officials of the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) widely publicise the existence of an Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) report. Otherwise, a public consultation process remains meaningless. Being the custodians of law, there is absolutely no excuse for such oversight.

But the next point was even more critical. As per law, a public hearing can be held only after the EIA report is prepared as per a Terms of Reference (ToR) specified by the MoEF. Members of Jan Chetana, brought to the notice of the panel that the ToR for the Athena Thermal Power plant required a study covering an area of 10 km radius around the plant

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site, but it was instead limited to 7 km. As a result the most affected village Singhitari was not part of the assessment.

Based on all these contentions the ADM made a public announcement that the public hearing was cancelled. Thus, the application for environment clearance would require a second hearing to be decided. And there is where

the predictability comes in. The EAC on Thermal Power didn't bother to reconvene the hearing. Instead, it took on board the project and recommended the clearance, which was subsequently stamped by the MoEF on 17th August 2009.

The decks were

now clear for the construction of this thermal power project of Rs. 5700 crores.

Ramesh Agrawal, with help of pro-bono lawyers as part of Legal Initiative for Forests and Environment (LIFE) challenged this clearance before the NEAA. By this time this already dilapidated authority, never having functioned in full capacity, had only one member sitting in judgment - J C Kala, a retired Indian Forest Service Official.

The NEAA issued a one-page order on 17th November 2009 stating that the proceedings of the public hearing did not have any validity. The order asked the Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) on Thermal Power projects which granted the clearance to reconsider its decision. Subsequently, on 15th February 2010 the Authority directed the MoEF to submit their response on the issue by 26th February 2010 failing which the matter would be de-



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cided on grounds of whether or not the environment clearance can be upheld.

Following the NEAA order, the 60th meeting of the EAC was held on January 11-12, 2010. It is only now that the members of this committee saw the video recording of the public hearing where the ADM had rendered the public hearing cancelled. Written clarifications from the ADM and other officials were sought and deliberated upon. Once done, the EAC members made an unstated admission of their blunder, and asked for the public hearing to be completed, post facto.

The hearings before the NEAA continued. Advocate for the applicant, Ritwick Dutta, argued that as per the law the comments of the public hearing must be incorporated into the draft EIA report. The modified report will then need to go back to the EAC for fresh appraisal. Agreeing with him, the NEAA quashed the clearance on 8th March 2010.

But what goes around the EIA notification circle often lands up in the clearance corner. The concluding statement of the Executive Summary of the EIA report had perhaps already laid out its "importance" when it stated that "the project will help meet the growth of demand for electricity in Chhattisgarh state. It will strengthen the regional power supply system and stimulate industrial development, and improve living standards of the people." Perhaps this is why the EAC does not penalise or punish any official and the project proponent in violation of the law.

The minutes of the EAC meeting held on 30th April – 1st May 2010 bring to light that the members were content with the fact that the "project proponent subsequently got the public hearing re-conducted again on 05 April 2010". Ramesh Agrawal, who attended the public hearing says, "For the MoEF, public hearings are simply a non-cognizable formality. Not a single project has been rejected on grounds of severe irregularities with public hearings. This time the venue of the public hearing was 25-30 km away from the project

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site and only 10-15 villagers could reach there. But the EAC chose to ignore this vital fact that managed to restrict the maximum possible participation of project affected people.

Almost equally critical were the steps taken towards the subversion of the free discussion at the public hearing. The Bhartiya Janata Party MP Smt Kamla Patel and Zila (District) Panchayat President Smt Suraj Vyas Kashyap were invited to be on the dais by the convening authorities. They spoke for more than an hour and in favour of project. But, the committee members claim to have discussed the entire range of issues raised during the second public hearing and through written responses. These included, "location of public hearing site; impact on environment due to number of proposed power plants in the region; availability of water from Mahanadi River; compensation of land; inaccessibility of EIA report in CECB website; employment of locals; storage of fly ash; medical facilities; community development activities proposed; insurance for agriculture produce affected due to power plant emission; protection of tribal cultural heritage; rehabilitation by providing pucca houses instead of kutcha houses; not to use ground water for the project etc."

There is no disclosure of conclusions in the minutes of the meetings. Nonetheless, the committee found that the public hearing was in order for the second time, and the project was granted clearance.

What next? The circle of clearance can only lead Athena to the corridors of the NEAA yet again. There might not be much punch this time around. With the passage of the National Green Tribunal Bill on 30th April 2010, the NEAA is on its last leg before it shuts shop. But then as they say, the show must go on!

Kanchi Kohli is a member of the Kalpavriksh Environmental Action Group and is based in New Delhi.

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In 15th July 2010 the U.S. Export-Import Bank (Ex-Im Bank) board was scheduled to reconsider an application to provide hundreds of millions of dollars in financing to India's Reliance Power Ltd. for the 4,000 megawatt Sasan coal power and mine project. Three weeks ago, the board appropriately rejected financing for Sasan based on its massive carbon dioxide emissions. The project would generate some 26 million annual tons of CO₂, more than the bank's annual emissions for all fossil fuel projects approved by Ex-Im Bank in 2009. "Clean energy provides more jobs and does more to advance American competitiveness and security than fossil fuels," said Friends of the Earth President Erich Pica, noting a recent study showing that investing in clean tech exports generates twice as many jobs as a comparable investment in the oil, gas or coal sectors. "Scarce public resources should ensure that the U.S. leads the world in transitioning to a new clean economy, not prop up dirty and dangerous fossil fuels."

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Ex-Im's new carbon policy allows the Ex-Im Bank board to decline a transaction due to its detrimental effects. But after intense lobbying from Bucyrus, a Wisconsin-based coal mining equipment company, Ex-Im Bank backtracked on the Sasan decision by allowing Reliance Power to submit a new application, which reportedly will include an additional solar energy component but will not lower the pollution of the coal plant.

"It appears as though Ex-Im Bank went to the Enron school of energy accounting," said Doug Norlen, Policy Director of Pacific Environment. "Adding a solar energy project does nothing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from Sasan. This is just business as usual, which is to support dirty energy projects at the expense of green jobs. Ex-Im Bank should reject the Sasan project and instead use its money to support America's clean energy jobs to support renewable energy exports around the world."

"The White House's swing state politics forced the Ex-Im Bank to botch the agency's first major test of its new carbon policy," said Steve Kretzmann, Executive Director of Oil Change International. "It also puts the agency at odds with the Administration's other climate efforts, including a G20 commitment to phase out fossil fuel subsidies and a recent decision to

How the **US** Government is **Funding** Mega Fossil Fuel Projects in India



In this report, four non-profit organizations from the US working to promote clean environment and clean energy, expose a plan by the US (Obama) government to fund fossil fuel projects of large corporates in India and other developing countries.

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not support the massive Medupi coal project in South Africa with World Bank funding.” Environmentalists also worry that the reversal of the Sasan decision would set a dangerous precedent for other coal projects in the Ex-Im Bank pipeline, including the 4,800 megawatt Kusile coal power project in South Africa, which would emit 30.5 million tons of carbon dioxide annually. Over 95% of Ex-Im’s energy portfolio is already based on fossil fuels, and a series of politically-motivated decisions to fund high-carbon projects would put Ex-Im even further out of step with the Administration’s pledges to promote clean energy jobs and tackle climate change. “Ex-Im Bank’s consideration of the provision of U.S. taxpayers financing for further fossil fuel projects in South Africa, while the World Bank Inspection Panel is considering a formal investigation into the \$3.75 billion

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loan for the Medupi project, shows how unwilling the Obama administration is towards committing to real change,” said Sunita Dubey of Groundwork, a climate justice network based in South Africa.

If approved, the two projects combined would total 56.5 million annual tones of greenhouse gas emissions, more than tripling the volume of emissions supported by Ex-Im Bank in 2009, which was a record year in itself for emissions.

Pacific Environment
(www.pacificenvironment.org)
Friends of the Earth (www.foe.org)
Oil Change (www.priceofoil.org)
Groundwork
Rebecca Harris, Information Services
Coordinator, Bank Information Center,
Washington, DC, USA
rharris@bicusa.org



JOIN NAPM

National Alliance of People’s Movements (NAPM) started as a process in 1992 and took a definite shape in 1996. It is an alliance of over two hundred people’s organizations and movements in India struggling for people’s right over natural resources, a just, sustainable and egalitarian development, and is opposed to neo-liberal imperialist globalization, religious fundamentalism, and any discrimination based on caste, religion, gender, race or physical abilities. NAPM combines Gandhian, Marxist, Socialist and Ambedkarite perspectives along with the emerging paradigm of environment friendly development, peace and justice. We have built our strength and made an impact through its allies - the fishworkers, farmers and farm labourers, dam affected and development induced displaced, hawkers and construction workers, various sections of the unorganized workers, women and dalits, across all classes struggling for annihilation of caste system to various organizations challenging World Trade Organization (WTO), World Bank and other imperial global powers. We have initiated nation-wide campaigns like - Desh Bachao, Desh Banao (Save the Nation - Build the Nation) and Sangharsh / Action aiming at evolving a National Movement to bring our ideal of alternative world into reality. Do join this movement! Become an organisational / individual member, write to us at:

National Alliance of People’s Movements

6/6, Lower Ground Floor, Jangpura B, New Delhi – 110 013. Tel: +91-11-24374535.
OR ‘A’ Wing, First Floor, Haji Habib Building, Naigaon Cross Road, Dadar (E), Mumbai –
400 014. Tel: +91-22-2415 0529.

Email: napmindia@gmail.com / Website: www.napm-india.org

People's Movements Damn the Politics of 'Power' and 'Energy'

A National Consultation on Energy, organised by NAPM, demanded a comprehensive national perspective about all the sources of Energy, the actual requirement and sustainability oriented consumption pattern in planning energy security for the nation, and not assuming energy as electricity alone. The Integrated Energy Policy (IEP) of the Central Government falls short and misses the very chance to be anything but comprehensive.

The IEP projection of 8,00,000 MW power demand by 2030 based on 8% economic growth is an exaggerated projection. This demand is calculated on the basis of GDP centered projection instead of a need based projection. Experts opined that the 13.8% national deficit in the power can be met by bringing down the Transmission and Distribution (T&D) loss, which is at 28.65%. Instead of more fossil fuel and big dam based projects, the government should tap the renewable sources to meet the energy needs, the consultation demanded.

The workshop on the 'Energy Scenario and Power Projects in India : Conceptualisation and Strategy', held in Bhopal on August 1-2, 2010, was attended by scientists, activists, journalists, film-makers, researchers, lawyers and others from several states. Key organisations included National Forum of Forest People and Forest Workers, Bharat Jan Vigyan Samiti, Andhra Pradesh Vyavasaya Vritidarula Union, Narmada Bachao Andolan, Lokhit Sreejan Samiti, Bargi Bandh Vistapit Sangathan, Chutka Parmanu Virodhi Sangharsh Samiti, Kisan Sangathan, Jhansi Ghat, Matu Jan Sangathan, Pennurumai Iyekkam, Greenpeace, Bank Information Center, and Delhi Forum.

The Central Government, the Planning Commission and all the state agencies have been

working up the Energy and Power 'paranoia' for the past several years, especially since initiation of the Globalisation process. The need of the hour is sustainable development and promotion of the renewable and traditional sources of energy rather than the huge investment in the thermal, hydro and nuclear power projects.

Mr. Shankar Sharma, energy expert, said, "There is a need for an essential vision where more significant issues need deliberation such as how much energy needs to be produced and at what cost to society. There is no actual deficit or gap between the quantity of power produced and required. However, India needs to stop the criminal waste of close to 40% of T&D losses".

J.V. Ratnam, a journalist and activist from Sompeta, Andhra Pradesh presented a film that showed police lathi-charging and firing at peacefully resisting local people who were opposing the thermal power plant that is proposed to be built on a Beela (wet land) in Srikakulam District. Avdhesh Trivedi of Srijan Lokhit Samiti, Rajukumar Sinha of Bargi Bandh Visthapit Sangh and Ummaid Patel of Kisan Sagathan described the situation of numerous thermal, hydro power and some nuclear plants coming up in their region. They narrated the story of a completely apathetic government that is implementing these power plants without any understanding or assessment of their impact. The massive environmental and human destruction caused in Singrauli continues to haunt the people but the government is ignoring all that and has planned 13 more thermal plants in the region.

Vimal Bhai of Matu Jan Sangathan presented the situation in the Himalayan states with regard to power generation and impacts on local people and their other developmental

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and environmental issues. Talking about run of the river projects in Uttarakhand, he explained their devastating impact on ecology and people. He emphasised that, though claimed to be ecologically harmless and categorised as clean energy, in reality the run of the river projects too destroy local life, livelihood and ecology.

Nishant, representing the National Forum of Forest People and Forest Workers (NFFPFW), explained the negative impacts of the implementation of wind energy production, especially as a part of the global game of providing CDM status to these, such as noise pollution, displacement of small farmers, requirement of high inputs and making the life of local people difficult. The Consultation deliberated upon the new technological developments with regard to wind turbines based energy production and cited new experiments with regard to avoiding sound pollution etc.

Dr. Gabriela Dietrich from Tamil Nadu pointed out that while renewable energy presents 'alternatives,' these alternatives also lie within the market economy, and the same companies that invest in thermal power plants are the ones investing in renewable technology, which is problematic. The workshop condemned the criminal lack of R&D focus on small-scale, clean, people-oriented alternatives by the Government.

People's Scientist, Mr. Soumya Dutta, associated with Bharat Jan Vigyan Jatha, pointed out that India cannot look at renewable or alternative sources of energy unless we make a commitment to reducing the consumption of energy as a whole with an understanding of the energy consumption patterns and the way capitalism has worked. He also emphasised the problems related to increasing our excessive focus on electricity.

The workshop concluded that a key challenge is to overcome the lack of a political force that opposes large scale and destructive energy production, which is being driven by the

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strong industrial lobby, that none of the political parties want to upset.

While the National Consultation decided to step up the struggles on many fronts, it demanded that:

- The energy demand needs to be analysed from the point of view of meeting the energy and requirements of majority of India's have-nots and not just the corporate industries or the urban greed.

- There is a need to drastically decrease dependency on fossil fuel and large dam based power projects and to immediately shift to solar and other renewable alternatives.

- The government should put a halt to diverting water resources, including from dam reservoirs, for thermal projects.

- The government should maximise efficiency of existing projects – thermal and hydro – and take measures to check T&D losses on a war footing.

- Instead of the Eminent Domain principle, which grants government the power to acquire people's lands without even a notice in some cases, communities should be given ownership over resources, without whose consent, those should not be taken away for any projects.

- The government should immediately declare moratorium on new thermal, nuclear and large hydel power projects and the land acquisition for the same, engage in truthful cost-benefit analysis and audit of ongoing power production process, and increase the R&D support for alternative energy production.

The Consultation has decided to hold a national convention on energy soon. A Working Group is formed to plan and consolidate different action programs across the country. Audits would be held in key states and regions – Andhra Pradesh, Narmada valley, Singrauli and other places – to assess the social and environmental damages caused by large power projects.

National Alliance of People's Movements (NAPM). napmindia@gmail.com

The fact finding team (FFT), under the leadership of Justice P.K. Misra, former judge of the Orissa High Court, was an initiative of certain public-spirited individuals and organizations who were deeply concerned at the firing on the people protesting against the proposed thermal power plant by the Nagarjuna Construction Company (NCC) near Sompeta in Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh. The firing occurred on 14th July 2010 in which two persons died and five were injured by bullets (including a cameraman of TV-9 Telugu channel). In the events prior to the firing, about 300 people belonging to the neighbouring villages opposing the power plant and about 50-60 police personnel were injured.

During 24-25 July, the FFT visited Palasapuram, Lakkavaram, Isakalapalem and Ramaiahpatnam villages in Sompeta Mandal and talked to the local people who are resisting the proposed power plant to protect their life and livelihood. The Team

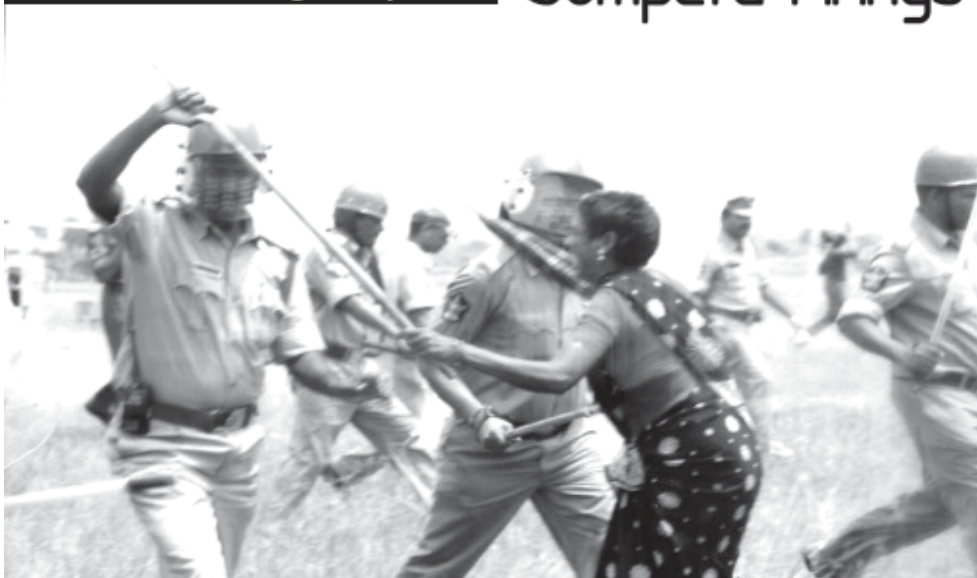
met the District Collector, Mr. Srikanth (on the evening of 24 July), held discussions with the representatives and members of Sri Sri Kanakadurga Taapi Mestri Sangam and Kalinga Vysya Sangam in Sompeta town, and visited the Government Community Hospital in Baruva Panchayat to meet some of the injured persons undergoing treatment. (Our effort to meet an injured police officer undergoing treatment in the Seven Hills Hospital in Vizag did not prove successful as he was discharged by the time we went there on the evening of 25 July).

The Team confined its enquiry to the 2-3 days prior to 14 July and also the incidents on 14 July including the firing. Some of our observations and recommendations are as follows:

1. Despite an Injunction Order by the Principal Junior Civil Judge, Sompeta (I.A. 116/2010 in O.S. 33/2010, C.A. No. 454/10) on 7 May 2010 restraining the NCC from entering into the properties of the petitioners (i.e. some of the villagers), the NCC tried to enter into the lands and perform certain works on 14 July. As a Respondent, the NCC is very much aware of the Injunction Order.

Fact- Finding Report

Sompeta Firings



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2. The police seem to have mobilized a disproportionately large force at the behest of the NCC and moved in the villages threatening the local people during 11-13 July. They even conducted flag marches in some villages. On 13 July the police have told in some villages to remain peaceful and unarmed if they want to protest. In some villages they distributed leaflets and threatened the villagers not to come towards NCC lands. (The leaflets of the police reflect an impression of it being the NCC's leaflet).

It should be mentioned that in the several months before July 2010 the police have been foisting false cases on the protesting leaders and villagers and harassing them in various ways. Among the villagers, an impression has gained ground that the police have been behaving at the behest of the NCC rather than as protectors of law and justice.

We also would like to state that the allegation that this movement of the villagers is the handiwork of extremists is not found to be true. It is mostly led by the local individuals under the broad umbrella of Paryavarana Parirakshna Sangam. Its leaders enjoy respect and credibility among the villagers and also the townfolk in Sompeta.

The Team has also noticed that the lives and livelihoods of the villages are intricately linked to the wetlands (Bela lands, in local parlance) and there is a strong determination to protect those lands at any cost. Further, there is a significant level of awareness on the negative effects of the proposed thermal power plant if located in the same area. Together, this situation has been rallying the villagers in an unprecedented show of unity against the proposed plant.

3. On 14 July the police mobilized the force in a big way. There were also private persons (estimated to be about 250) who were wearing blue scarves around their necks, travelled in police vehicles and were also staying in the fields under tents with lathi sticks closeby along with the police. The villagers, appre-

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hending that the NCC is about to start civil works, also gathered in groups at several villages and tried to proceed towards the proposed works. They were unarmed and peaceful. At some places there were arguments and the police allowed the protestors to have a dialogue with the concerned persons. At other places, the ladies were pleading with folded hands (some even touching the feet of police officers) not to take away their lands and livelihoods.

4. The police suddenly started lathicharge and severely beat up the women and men causing severe injuries to many. The private persons mentioned above also joined in beating up the protestors. The protestors ran helter skelter in an attempt to escape. After some time, the retreating men picked up the locally available sticks and attacked the policemen also causing injuries to the latter. As mentioned in the beginning, about 300 protestors and 50-60 policemen suffered injuries. Some vehicles were also burnt. Teargas shells were also fired but was not effective as the lands were marshy. The whole tension went on for about three hours.

After around 12.30 PM or so, the tension seemed to have subsided and the protestors as well

as the police started withdrawing from the scene.

5. Firing: At this time, suddenly the firing was done from inside a police van on the road (Sompeta-Baruva road, the fields are located on either side of this road) and the police van started moving towards Sompeta while the man inside continued firing.

There was no warning.

There was no provocation for firing.

There was no apprehension of breach of peace.

The firing was done from a close range (20-30 feet).

The bullets hit the victims above waist level (except two who were hit on the thigh and the ankle).



Two persons died on the spot (G. Joga Rao of Lakkavaram, and G. Krishna Murthy of Palasapuram). Five persons sustained bullet injuries (including a camera man of TV-9 channel).

All of them were unarmed, scattered and very close to or on the road.

The Team visited the spot of the firing and talked to several people including eye-witnesses. They were emphatic in saying that the Sub-Inspector of Sompeta, Mr. Ashok Kumar, was the person who fired from inside the moving police van.

6. The Collector admitted that he was not aware of the Injunction Order issued by the local court. The Team tried to solicit some response from the Collector regarding –

- Who ordered the firing,
- Who were the people in civil dress with blue scarves along with police,
- Whether NCC made a request for police,
- What is the present state of affairs etc. etc.

The standard response from him was that all this will be known only after the magisterial enquiry (now seems to be going on by the Joint Collector). He was refusing to give a commitment on when the enquiry will be over. When we asked for a copy of the order of enquiry, he casually told us to file an application under the Right to Information Act. The Team is disappointed to note that throughout the conversation the attitude of the Collector, Mr. Srikanth, was casual and non-serious given the gravity of the situation.

7. The magisterial enquiry by a government officer has no credibility among the affected people. There is an urgent need for a higher level judicial enquiry for the purpose of expeditious interim relief and compensation to the affected people so that their lives and livelihoods are not affected. And also create a confidence in the government.

8. The Team feels that the following compensation package should be adopted:

Rs. 20 lakh each for the dead, Rs. 5 lakh each to those hit by bullet injuries, Rs. 5 lakh each to those spinal injuries, Rs. 2 lakh each to those who suffered fractures, Rs. 1 lakh each to those who suffered serious injuries

9. The government should take immediate steps to prevent the NCC from entering the area and disturb the peace and tranquility in the villages.

10. Keeping in view the Order of the National Environment Appellate Authority, New Delhi (dated 14 July 2010) the government should undertake a survey of all the wetlands in Srikakulam district “pending which no project should be cleared on such locations”.

26th July 2010, Hyderabad

Justice P.K. Misra, Former Judge of the Orissa High Court.

Prof. C. Ramachandraiah, Social Scientist, Hyderabad.

Mr. Clifton D’Rozario, Advocate and Alternative Law Forum, Bangalore.

Prof. Arun Patnaik, Political Scientist, University of Hyderabad.

Dr. K. Laxminaryana Reddy, Economist, University of Hyderabad.

Dr. M. Thimma Reddy, Peoples Monitoring Group, Power Sector, Hyderabad.

Ms. Saraswati Kavula, Documentary Film Maker, Hyderabad.

Mr. D. Suresh Kumar, Law Student, Hyderabad and Coordinator of the Team.



Karla SEZ Scrapped:



People's Movements Emerge Victorious

In another major victory to the sustained struggle by determined agriculturalists in the Maval Taluka of Pune district, the Special Economic Zone (SEZ) proposed by Mahindra and Mahindra Company near Karla has fi-

nally been scrapped. As usual, the location proposed for the SEZ near Lonavala city covered 1,188 hectares of agro-rich land, spread across 8 villages, amidst the temple of Goddess Ekvira, and also housed the historical Karla caves.

The original plan by the Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC) and M/s Mahindra and Mahindra Gesco Developers, as stated through a joint announcement was to acquire about 3,000 acres of land from village Karla and seven more villages in the vicinity in order to establish a multi-product SEZ. Both these firms signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to this effect on 22nd February, 2006. Another MoU between the Government of Maharashtra and the company was signed on 24th March, 2006. The Central Government gave an in-principle approval to the SEZ on 3rd April, 2006. Except for a paltry 19 hectares of government owned land, the remaining land to be acquired – measuring 1,169 hectares – was privately owned agricultural land in the eight villages, namely Takave Khurd, Shilatane, Dahivali, Vehergaon, Devaghar, Karla, Mundhavare and Karandoli. Acquisition proposal was sanctioned and notification under section 6 was issued on 21st March, 2006.

This mandatory acquisition of fertile lands was questioned and opposed by the local land holders right from the beginning, since it would divest them from their only source of livelihood. All the eight villages unanimously passed Gram Sabha resolutions recording their strong opposition to the proposed forced acquisition. Villagers also expressed their dissent through hunger strikes, road blockings, rallies, public meetings, dialogues at various levels of the Government (from Tahsildars to the Ministers). Veteran leaders and activists like N. D. Patil, Bhai Vaidya, Medha Patkar, Ulka Mahajan, Manav Kambale and Maruti Bhapkar supported the agitation whole heartedly.

Considering the intense opposition to the

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proposed SEZ by the local communities, the Government appointed a review committee of officials, which concluded and recommended that:

1. As the land proposed to be acquired is close to the highway, the market rates have increased now.
2. Much of the land has been converted into irrigated land by the farmers themselves and their crop-yields are fetching them good market prices and hence they are not willing to sell their land.
3. Some of the land is converted into non-agriculture land and farmers have constructed residential buildings, houses and have started agriculture farms and nursery businesses.
4. All these villages are very close to famous tourist spots like Khandala and Lonavala, on the Mumbai-Pune Expressway, National Highway No. 4 and Mumbai-Pune railway line, due to which the value of the land has enhanced remarkably over time and the land holders, therefore, are not willing to vacate the land.
5. Due to the historical and religious importance of the temple of Goddess Ekvira and Karla caves, this area has become a tourist place and small vendors, hotels, dharmshalas, and other small self-employed businesses have flourished very well here. They are also not willing to move out.

Considering all these issues and the strong opposition of villagers and people's movements against the SEZ, the Committee recommended that irrigated land and residential land of the local farmers may be excluded from the proposed SEZ. In light of this report, on 25th November, 2009, the government enquired with the proposed developers as to whether they were still interested in pursuing the project. Later in a meeting on 23rd March, 2010, MIDC officials made it clear to the government that due to the opposition of the communities and other difficulties, it would not be possible to go ahead with the SEZ project. Later in July 2010, Arun

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Nanda, the Chairman and Executive Director of Mahindra and Mahindra decided to withdraw the SEZ.

Thus, similar to Man, Vagholi, and Greater Mumbai, people of Karla have also registered a victory by getting the SEZ project in their area scrapped. This was possible only due to an aggressive opposition of local people and staunch support from all over country. The Karla SEZ is a re-affirmation of the victory of peaceful and non-violent people's movements against the inequitable and non-participatory development policies.

The danger of forcible land acquisition and unjust displacement is not yet over. Under the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMICDC) Project, it is proposed to set up one Multi-Model Logistic Park in the state. Now DMICDC has opined that Karla sector is the most suitable for this project.

A minimum 400 hectares land will be required and the same is proposed to be acquired from the 1,188 hectares land of Karla. It is advised to look for land where there is no opposition to acquisition. Though the District Collector of Pune has shown readiness to acquire 350–400 hectares of the said land for this project, the activists of Shri Ekvira Jameen Bachao Andolan have resisted this proposal strongly, asserting that they will not give away even an inch of land without their consent and agreement.

They have also reiterated their stand that if the Government tries to use force for the acquisition, they will intensify their agitation.

Prasad Bagawe, Ganapat Padwal, Pratap Dimble, Bhau Hulavale, Tanaji Bhanusghare, Balasaheb Waghmare, Mohan Aher, Sunil Garud, Ankush Mavkar, Suniti S R, Prasad Bagwe

National Alliance of People's Movements (NAPM)

napmindia@gmail.com



An anonymous “threat letter” was received by Shri EAS Sharma, IAS (Rtd). This letter was received by Sri Sharma on the 4th of August 2010, written by two persons, supposed to be Shri Sitarama Raju and Shri T. V. Krishna. The tone of the letter is such that it seems to have been written on behalf of some industrialists of A.P. The language is not civil. The letter alleges that Shri Sharma has come in the way of new industries coming up in A.P. It says that both the Central and the State governments are more dependent on the industrialists, not on a retired officer like him. It further says that the industrialists have kept a close watch on him and have apprised the “concerned” agencies in Govt. of India and in A.P. about the details of his assets and income to take such action against him as needed. They warned him that the concerned agencies will put a stop to his civil society work soon, unless he voluntarily withdraws from his work. They warned him that they would see his end if he

continued with his campaign on conservation of environment and questioning the clearances given for the various projects.

Lawlessness is prevailing all over. Rules famed by rulers are violated by themselves without any impunity and iota of guilt for selfish gains. Under this scenario proactive citizens like Shri EAS Sharma are raising their voice against misrule and maladministration of the state by the so called law makers. Shri Sharma is emphasizing the need to adhere not only to the rule of the land but also to one’s own conscience to uphold democracy in its pristine form. Shri Sharma is fighting against the destruction of environment, livelihoods of the peasants and the under privileged.

Certain unscrupulous elements are trying to subdue Shri Sharma by writing anonymous threatening letters. We, National Alliance of People’s Movements, strongly condemn this example of the criminal-industrialist and political nexus that has become a continuous pattern in our country. For instance, the State Machinery including the Chief Minister, State Revenue Minister, the district administration, the Police are all supporting the setting up of NCC’s Thermal Power Project in an ecologically sensitive zone, against all laws of the land, against public protests and despite the death of two people and injury to four others in the uncalled for Police Firing in Sompeta on 14th July.

The threat letter received by Shri Sharma only goes to show the extent to which criminal elements in the garb of “industrialists” are emboldened by the insulation they are receiving from the State and Central Governments. That a person involved in democratically critiquing the government and its policies and that too a person of esteemed repute like Shri Sharma is facing death threats, only demonstrates that “democracy” in this country is “under threat”.

*B Ramakrishna Raju, State Convener, NAPM
– AP. napmhyderabad@gmail.com* ●

Sandeep Pandey

Sandeep Pandey writes from the middle of a India-Pakistan peace yatra in which a group of peace activists is traveling from Mumbai and another from Karachi and the two groups will meet at the Wagah border on 14-15 August.



KASHMIR

Needs a Permanent Solution

It seemed like we were very near to a solution on Jammu and Kashmir. The Musharraf regime Pakistani Foreign Minister Kasuri claims that merely the formality of Manmohan Singh visiting Pakistan and making the announcement had remained. But lawyers' movement and elections in Pakistan intervened and we're back to square one with the new government. Then Mumbai happened and any semblance of resolution of vexed India-Pakistan issue disappeared. And when the dialogue between India and Pakistan was restarted it ended in a fiasco.

Independently, trouble has started brewing in Kashmir again after a very successful elections in which large number of masses participated and Farooq Abdullah even publicly thanked Pakistan for letting peaceful elections happen. But this time the resistance is home grown. It is clear from the weapon being used – stones. When the insurgency was imported sophisticated weapons and trained militants were used. But this time it is common men, women, youth and children who

have come out on streets. Although this is not the first time they have come out on streets.

Kashmir, like Northeast, has been subjected to a prolonged subjugation by security forces. With 5 to 7 lakh security personnel, which includes police, CRPF, BSF, Indian Reserve Police and the army, in J&K it has the dubious distinction of highest ratio of security personnel to civilians anywhere in the world. The presence of such large number of security men has had the natural outcome – killings, tortures, disappearances, rapes, etc., not to talk of everyday humiliation that an ordinary Kashmiri has to face when he is asked to establish his identity in his own city, town or village by men mostly from outside. It should be a matter of shame for any government that citizens have to form an organization called 'Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons.' Estimates vary but on the conservative side some 7-8 thousand youth have gone missing since insurgency erupted in Kashmir. Most of them have not crossed

border to receive training from terrorist organizations but have been picked up by our own security forces for interrogation. Their parents fear that their children may not even be alive by now.

It was one such fake encounter which has triggered the recent round of violence in Kashmir. But what is important to note is that in this phase while 49 civilians got killed by security forces, the security personnel only got injured. We can imagine the imbalance in the use of force and also the scale of violence from either side. In the situation of Kashmir it would not be improper to call it a peaceful protest by people. One must compliment the people that having gone through traumatic experiences all these years they have restrained themselves from using anything more than a stone.

But the crucial question is how will this vicious cycle of violence end. Omar Abdullah had raised lot of hopes as an idealistic young politician. He had made statements like he was in favour of repeal of Armed Forces Special Powers Act, he favoured withdrawal of army from Kashmir and that he would never sign the death warrant of Afzal Guru. If he was actually free to take some of these important decisions he could have hoped to turn the situation around. But J&K is a special State. It has a history different from other Indian States. It has an international dimension. There are many vested interests. There are vested interests outside and inside the country which would not like to see resolution of Kashmir issue. This has backfired for Omar Abdullah. The impression that is being created of him is that he is not in control because he is an inept politician. The reality is that he is not even empowered to take independent decisions which could change the face of Kashmir. We are expecting his to fight with one or probably both of his hands tied. But there is no denying that he is a well

meaning politician and must be given more time to prove his worth.

It is quite clear if one places oneself in the situation of a Kashmiri that no peace can return so long as outside security forces, which are symbol of Indian domination, will be present there. The security forces must go even if it has to be done in a phased manner. The withdrawal of security forces must be accompanied by more empowerment of the elected government of J&K. They should be able to take important decisions concerning themselves. This will have the soothing effect of reduction in human rights violations. Once the ordinary Kashmiri feels that he is control of his destiny normalcy will return.

It might be argued that how could India agree on unilateral withdrawal of its security forces. This may require engaging with Pakistan and convincing it too to take a similar action in its part of Kashmir. But even if Pakistan doesn't immediately agree to such a suggestion given the history of mistrust between two countries, India must demonstrate the magnanimity and begin withdrawing its forces unilaterally. The interest of Kashmiri people should be uppermost and India and Pakistan have to rise above the politics of one-upmanship and prestige.

Kashmir's autonomy worked out in agreement with the people of J&K preferably with the approval of Pakistan is a permanent solution which could end the vicious cycle of violence there. India must strive towards that. If India delays this time then the present problem could snowball into something more unmanageable with the interference of cross border terrorist organizations. Right not it is a Kashmiri problem and India can resolve it with Kashmiri people in the hope that one day Pakistan too would come along.

- Sandeep Pandey is a peace activist and a National Convener, NAPM.
ashaashram@yahoo.com

Celebrating Diversity and Inclusiveness in the Age of Consent

One year ago, on July 2nd 2009, a Delhi High Court division bench of Chief Justice A P Shah and Justice S Muralidhar said “We declare that Section 377 IPC, insofar it criminalizes consensual sexual acts of adults in private, is violative of Articles 21, 14 and 15 of the Constitution.” It upheld one of the primary principles of natural justice, ‘right to consent,’ and restored the dignity and rights of millions of those whose existence in the society was not even acknowledged. Needless to say that while it was a result of a long struggle by a lot of people that a judgement of this kind came in, and that is not a mean achievement, however, implementation of this is important. Just having a law is not enough.

In this one year we have seen many changes in the society and do hope this will go a long way in ending the life-long harassment and discrimination in schools, colleges, workspaces, homes, the streets and everywhere. The fight against the discrimination in the name of caste, class, patriarchy and religion has to be led at this front too and everybody will have to come to the fore of it. After all in this age of consent, the cardinal principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity have to be upheld not only by states but also by the civil society.

We need to note that in spite of having a law to prevent the atrocities and discrimination against the dalits and tribals, they are still being subject to all kinds of discrimination and violence in everyday life. What is needed is a political will for enforcing the law and people recognizing the value of dignity and a societal acceptance of these values. With dignity, the right to life and dignified livelihood of everyone has to be respected and that is why it becomes important that queer community joins hands with dalits, adivasis, farmers, workers, fisher folks, forest dwellers and others in their struggle for a better life. These struggles are not of one community alone but are linked. This would make a true rainbow alliance and ensure diversity and plurality within the movement.

Justice Shah and Muralidhar cited Dr. Ambedkar’s notion of “constitutional morality” and Pt. Nehru’s idea of equality, and recognized that: “If there is one constitutional tenet that can be said to be underlying theme of the Indian Constitution, it is that of ‘inclusiveness’.” And further that, “It cannot be forgotten that discrimination is antithesis of equality and that it is the recognition of equality which will foster the dignity of every individual.”

NAPM joins hands with the queer movement in celebrating a year since this judgment and urges the movement to also come forward in tune with the struggle of millions for a dignified livelihood and to end continuing violence unleashed by the neo-liberal policies of the government on the people. The challenges are many and we have to spread far and wide and lend our shoulders with struggling people everywhere and take the movement to hitherto unreachable places in villages and smaller towns as well. As a movement let us make sure that round the year we are on the streets fighting the injustice everywhere. As a movement we have to stand with everyone and everywhere against discrimination, oppression and injustice.

Celebrating diversity, plurality and for a rainbow of resistances against injustice & violence

Medha Patkar, Sandeep Pandey, Gabriele Dietrich, Maj Gen S.G.Vombatkere (Retd), Anand Mazgaonkar, Mukta Srivastava, Rajendra Ravi, Ramakrishna Raju, Vimal Bhai, Srikanth, Madhuresh Kumar

National Alliance of Peoples’ Movements (NAPM). napmindia@gmail.com

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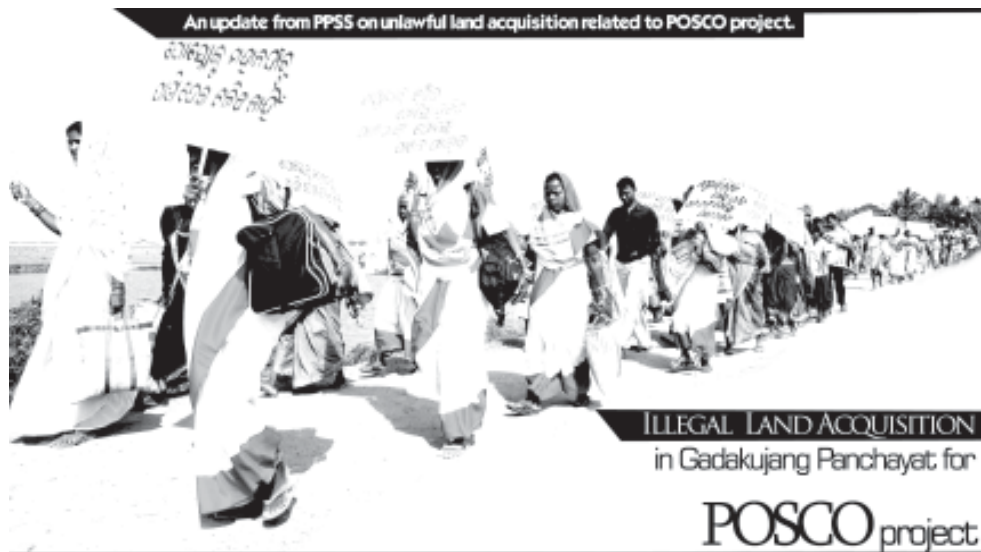
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The MoU between the state government of Odisha and POSCO steel company expired on 21st June 2010. Despite that the land acquisition and eviction from beetle vines in Gadakujang area is continuing by the district administration of Jagatsingpur and IIDCO in presence of the office bearers of POSCO! What is the locus standi of the district administration in occupying the land in the area? Since 27th July 2010, land acquisition, eviction, providing compensation and re-survey through GPS (Global Positioning System) is going on unhindered in Gadakujang Panchayat of Jagatsingpur district by the officials of the district administration and IIDCO officials with the help of the United Action Committee (UAC) – a pro-POSCO outfit.

There is all likelihood that the people will come out with more vocal forms of demonstrations and opposition to the process. Such situations are fraught with the risks of turning violent as has been witnessed before when the police force opened fire on the peacefully demonstrating people.

All the areas now being acquired come under forest area. Out of the total of 4,004 acres of land the government aspires to acquire for the project, about 2958 acres come under the category of forest land. The land acquisition process is going on despite the declaration of the process as ‘illegal’ by the central committee constituting representatives from the Ministries of Environment and Forest and Tribal Affairs of Government of India, which recently visited the area to look into the violation of Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006. One of the team members Asish Kothari said to media on 27th July 2010, “Under section 7 of the FRA, 2006, officials involved in the process of land acquisition at this stage are liable to be punished.”

Back on 14th July the High Court of Odisha held that the grant of Prospective License to the Korean Company for Khandadhar iron ore reserves is “not in accordance with law.” In the meantime the Ministry of Environment and Forest has appointed a four member committee headed by the former secretary Meena Gupta to probe if the state government has complied with the FRA law in the area before acquiring land there. Jairam Ramesh, the Minister of State for Environment and



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Forest, told Rajya Sabha on 2nd August 2010 that POSCO is under investigation for the alleged violation of government guidelines. Continuous protest is going on by the people from these areas against POSCO. Demonstrations have been held against the increasing diversion of water to industries. Recently Mahanadi Bachao Andolan and Jala Surakshya Samiti in Cuttack district of the state opposed the diversion of water from Mahanadi for POSCO. Similarly the Jatadhari Bachao Andolan in Jagatsingpur is demonstrating against the proposed captive port for POSCO. Despite these protests, Naveen Patnaik, the Chief Minister of the state, who made promise to the people of proposed POSCO area to visit and discuss the matter with them, has reneged from his promise. If the process of land acquisition spreads to the areas where people have been fiercely

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opposing POSCO project, there is all likelihood that the people will come out with more vocal forms of demonstrations and opposition to the process. Such situations are fraught with the risks of turning violent as has been witnessed before when the police force opened fire on the peacefully demonstrating people.

Therefore, we appeal to all likeminded people, intellectuals, activists, academicians, and leaders of movements to lodge strong protest against the unlawful land acquisition process going on by the state government. You are requested to build pressure on the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and the state Chief Minister's Office (CMO) by writing protest letters/emails so that the government respects the voice of the people and reverses the ongoing process.

- Prasant Paikray
Spokesperson, Posco Pratirodha Sangram Samiti (PPSS)

Azad's Murder Derails Peace Process

A statement released by senior activists on behalf of the Campaign for Peace and Justice..

We, as concerned citizens, feel extremely disturbed by the recent events of violence in the region of Chattisgarh and other parts of Eastern India. We condemn the spiral of violence and counter-violence between the State Security Forces and the Maoists. Though the violence has been continuing unabated, yet following the Peace and Justice March by a group of concerned citizens from Raipur to Dantewada, a peace process has been initiated. Letters were being exchanged between the Home Minister Mr. P Chidambaram and the spokesperson of the CPI (Maoist) Mr. Azad.

However, the recent murder – it was not an encounter as reported widely – of the person who was leading the peace process on behalf of the Maoists, Mr. Azad, has shocked us all. It has derailed the peace process. We condemn this killing and expect the State to:

1. Set up an independent enquiry into the killing of Mr. Azad and Mr. Hem Pandey and take appropriate action,
2. Clarify its position on the peace process, and
3. Initiate steps to facilitate the peace process and take it ahead.

*Prof. Banwarilal Sharma, Medha Patkar, Radha Bhatt, Ajit Jha, Dr. V N Sharma,
Rajeev Lochan Shah, Neeraj Jain*

Campaign for Peace and Justice

July 3, 2010

Since July 12th, 2010, M.J. Joseph is no longer with us physically. We had to bid him farewell at the Dynamic Action Office in Thiruvalla on 14th July. The extremely diverse crowd which attended this occasion spoke volumes of his wide contacts in the Church, among activists from far and wide and a large circle of friends. For those of us who have known M. J. Joseph since nearly four decades, it is not difficult to recall the atmosphere of the student movements during the sixties, which shaped his spirituality with a passionate concern for social justice and people's capacity to struggle for political and cultural self-expression.

M.J. was born in 1932 as the ninth of eleven children to Mrs. Achaiyamma Joseph and her plantations superintendent husband M. M. Joseph at Peerumedu (Idukki Dt.). M.J. studied at his ancestral place Kanjikuzhi (Kottayam Dt.) and later graduated in Mathematics from C.M.S.College, Kottayam. He taught Mathematics for a while and then studied Theology at Serampore College near Calcutta and obtained a Masters Degree at UTC Bangalore, after having been an organizer of the Students Christian Movement (SCM) in Bihar with intensive exposure to rural poverty.

It is easier to understand M.J.'s life options if one also remembers the life of his senior friend Dr. M. M. Thomas, Director of the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society (CISRS) in Bangalore. In the last two years of the sixties. M.J. was the Programme Secretary of CISRS for Kerala. After that, he served as the Development Secretary at the NCCI in Nagpur. I came to know him in the early seventies when I was a research fellow of the CISRS.

The Christian radicals in Kerala at that time had to do a balancing act between their vision of social transformation through struggle, rooted in their faith, and the discouraging reality of the churches which had



He was compassionate and angry, loving and full of sharp criticism, a writer of books and articles, and also of poetry and songs. His funeral reflected many of these contradictions and brought together people of many diverse backgrounds,

a much more conservative mind set. They tried also to balance their leftist (mostly Marxist) leanings, while facing the mistrust of the Party against established religion, and at the same time encountering the lack of democracy in political life, which had to do with the history of Stalinism and the Cold War. M. M. Thomas, a Mar Thoma Christian, had as a young man been refused ordi-

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nation by the church due to his leftist convictions and denied party membership because of his Christian Faith. M.J., belonging to the CSI, remained an ordained pastor, but had to struggle with severe pressures from the church, which also took a toll of his health.

M.J.'s life can also not be understood without the struggles of Annamma, to whom he got married in 1969. Annamma was a young teacher with a passionate love for her profession. But she had to give up her work in college because as a pastor's wife she was not at that time expected to hold on to independent employment. This remained a sore point for decades. As the daughters Asha and Shoba came along during that period, family life got its due for a while, but the radicalizing influence of the Emergency Period also worked on Annamma. I remember her turning up in our house in Madurai one fine day in 1977, telling me that she wanted to go more actively into women's organization.

The mid-seventies were the period of the emergence of "non-party political formations" and M.J. took active parts in the debates and organizational processes of that time. In the meantime, Annamma spent several years of her life with the Democratic Women's Organisation of the CPI-M. This raised eye-brows in religious as well as political circles. Side by side, since the late eighties and early nineties, Dalit struggles found deeper articulation, inside and outside the church. Part of this struggle was located in Pennama Bhavanam, the ancestral home of Dr. M. M. Thomas' late wife. M.J. and Annamma were in deep solidarity with Dalit struggles and got into substantial conflict with the casteist attitudes in the church. The work with People's Movement of Faith for Liberation in the early nineties deepened the conflict with the church. M.J. stood for justice and peace throughout. He also supported the Chengara land struggle of Dalit landless labourers, which hit many hurdles from the

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State Government. M.J.'s firmness on this issue had to do with the deep conviction that Bhumi was the base of people's Right to Life and Livelihood.

When NAPM was launched all over the country in early 1996, we stayed in Pennamma Bhavanam, at that time still inhabited by Dr. M. M. Thomas, former governor of Nagaland, who also chaired the hall meeting. Dynamic Action, SCM, secular Left of different hues, and ecological movements were present in broad formation. Early on in the new millennium, during the NAPM National Conference in Bangalore, M.J. was an active participant together with Annamma. He was always concerned about carrying forward the debate on the role of People's Movements. In his earlier years, while he was still with the NCCI, he had published a book "The Church a People's Movement," in which he pointed out that the movement around Jesus and his followers had consisted of peasants, workers, fisher people, slaves and roaming women of different ethnic and religious backgrounds. He depicted this as a challenge to the existing institutions. At the same time, he had very deep roots in the church of Central Kerala. This very specific cultural combination was sometimes not easy to understand for those who encountered him in the secular national context. For him, there was no contradiction between these different dimensions.

He was compassionate and angry, loving and full of sharp criticism, a writer of books and articles, and also of poetry and songs. His funeral reflected many of these contradictions and brought together people of many diverse backgrounds, all of whom will miss him, even though some had felt that he was a pain in the neck. Many people will miss that he is no longer there as a challenge and as a loving support.

- D Gabriele
reach.gabriele@gmail.com



A Tribute:

Masaniji: A Ceaseless Advocate for the Marginalized

Advocate Masani was an advocate of the poor and the needy and his approach was towards the rights of the marginalized

Veteran Constitutional expert and noted advocate B. M. Masani is no more. He passed away at Parsi General Hospital in Mumbai on 29th May, 2010, after suffering from lung ailments for quite a while and being under extended medical care. Eighty-six year old Masanaji was not only an expert on legal rights, but was fully committed to the human rights of the marginalized communities, particularly the displaced.

Knowing him as father of Pervin Jehangir, all those who are associated with Narmada Bachao Andolan and who know Pervin as a supporter of all people's movements felt aggrieved at the loss incurred by the family. It is however, not known to many people as to what Advocate Masani was, who along with his wife, brought up their daughter Pervin as a motivated and spirited person, always smiling and ever willing and available to render selfless service, in an unassuming way.

Advocate Masani was an advocate of the poor and the needy and his approach towards the rights of the marginalized was well exhibited through his commitment. to take up the cause of the displaced as the victims of the present development paradigm and the conspiratory nexus between the State and the corporate builders. Masaniji took up cases of Narmada, especially those families affected by the Sardar Saorvar Project and helped file and fight their cases in the Madhya Pradesh High Court.

Apart from his involvement in various institutions related to law and education in Mhow, which was his native place for decades, he was perturbed while investigating the issues

related to land rights of original dwellers of Mhow, the birth place of Baba Saheb Ambedkar. Masaniji took up the cause to every democratic channel and raised the issue at various levels up to the Central Government. The Defence Ministry and the Army administration had taken over much of the lands of the original residents, converting the farmlands into cantonment.

There were instances when he stood up even at late nights and odd hours with evictees who were facing the brutal force and powers of the Army. It was always his dream to take up a successful legal action on these issues which was also studied by his daughter Pervin at the Bombay University. Pervin won special merits for her human rights dissertation on the violation of people's rights emanating from the Mhow cantonment. It was indeed his last achievement to have won the battle of the Mhow residents in the High Court of Madhya Pradesh at Jabalpur. The judgement delivered by the Former Chief Justice A. K. Patnaik stands witness to both Masaniji's and Pervin's detailed data collection and analysis, support of the people in Mhow in that long battle and the commitment to the constitutional rights exhibited by Patnaikji.

After having wound up his office and house in Mhow, he moved to Mumbai, where as well he was associated with some Trusts and social organizations and provided legal advice on people's issues. Masaniji had a peaceful demise after prolonged illness. We are sure that Pervin Jehangir and her family would continue to live up to the legacy of her father and contribute to social causes for ever.

*- Medha Patkar, Kamla Yadav, Kailash Awasya
Narmada Bachao Andolan
nba.badwani@gmail.com*

NEWS & NOTES

FROM PEOPLE'S MOVEMENTS

August 3, New Delhi: A public meeting is held protesting against the Killing of Azad, Spokesperson



of CPI (Maoist) and Journalist Hem Chandra Pandey and demand for constituting judicial inquiry is made. Meeting is attended by Varvara Rao, Swami Agnivesh, Arundhati Roy, G Hargopal, Prashant Bhushan, Sujato Bhadra, Amit Bhaduri, Manoranjan Mohanty, Sumit Chakravorty, Radhika Menon, G N Saibaba amongst many others.

August 2, Bhopal: National Consultation on Energy, organised by NAPM, demand a comprehensive national perspective about all the sources of Energy, the actual requirement and sustainability oriented consumption pattern in planning energy security for the nation.

July 31, Tuticorin: Fatima Babu and four others lead a team of more than 50 people to the District Collector's office to demand closure of Sterlite. The case that Pushparayan filed against Sterlite in the Madurai High Court challenges the grant of Environmental Clearance without holding a public consultation for the doubling of capacity at the Sterlite copper plant.

July 30-31, Bhopal: NAPM Conveners meeting held in Bhopal.

July 29, New Delhi: A huge demonstration at Jantar Mantar to pressurise the UPA to place and pass the Women's Reservation Bill in Parliament under the banner of 'Coalition for 33 now'.

July 28, New Delhi: In the biggest ever indictment of the country's judiciary, an extensive CBI probe into the fraudulent withdrawal of Rs 6.58 crore from the provident fund accounts of class III and IV employees in the Ghaziabad district court, finds a former Supreme Court judge along with 23 other sitting and retired judges of Allahabad High Court and lower court judges guilty of misdemeanor.

July 28, London: Nearly 250 people demonstrate against Vedanta for their environmentally damaging operations in Niyamgiri at Vedanta's Annual General Body meeting.

July 28, New York: The United Nations General Assembly votes unanimously to adopt a resolution recognizing the human right to water and sanitation.

July 28, Orissa: Orissa government halts the land acquisition process overnight for Posco's Rs 51,000 crore mega steel project after facing stiff



opposition from villagers. In further trouble for South Korean giant Posco, the Centre set up a four-member panel to probe alleged forest rights violations at the multinational's proposed steel plant in Jagatsinghpur in Orissa.

July 27-28, Barwani, MP: Thousands of adivasis affiliated to Jagrit Adivasi Dalit

start a sustained agitation against the



rests of 3 adivasis, including Valsingh Sastia, senior leader of Jagrit Adivasi Dalit

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Sangathan, on serious non-bailable charges, on a complaint filed by the Forest Department. Around 2000 adivasis participate in a two day protest dharna at 5 police stations of the district on 27-28th July.

July 27, New Delhi: Medha Patkar addresses a press conference on the Implications of the Railways Catering Policy, 2010 for the Railways and catering services.

July 26, New Delhi: Indefinite dharna by Bhopal Gas Tragedy Survivors groups start at Jantar

Mantar with the aim to bring to light their disagreements with the recommendations

made by the Group of Ministers on Bhopal (GOM) / Central Government and present their corresponding demands.

July 25, Srikakulam: National Alliance of People's Movements national convener Medha Patkar has alleges that the nexus between politicians and corporate circles is the root cause for the killing of two innocent persons in Sompeta on July 14. While addressing a public meeting in Sompeta on Saturday, she condemns the police firing to suppress people's movement against the move to establish a thermal power project by the Nagarjuna Construction Company.

July 24, Gopeshwar: Vimal Bhai is granted Bail by the Magistrate Court in Gopeshwar. He was arrested for protesting the construction of Devsari dam as the landscape of the holy rivers & mountains was being exploited in the name of development and life of locals being disturbed.

July 24, Thiruvananthapuram: The Kerala Swathantra Matsya Thozhilali Federation (KSMTF) appeals to the government to include provisions to ensure the livelihood security and traditional rights of fish workers before presenting the revised version of the



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Kerala Inland Fishery Bill in the Assembly.

July 21, New Delhi: The Supreme Court expresses concern that the path of development by depriving landowners of their land seemed to give rise to insurgency and political extremism. A Bench of Justices Aftab Alam and B.S. Chauhan, in a judgment on Monday, said: "to millions of Indians, development is a dreadful and hateful word that is aimed at denying them even the source of their sustenance."

July 21, Orissa: A Dalit man from Kuimunda village of Balangir district in Orissa is arrested for raising issues of forest rights.

July 20, Lalgah: around 50,000 women under the banner of "Committee to save honour of women" try to march



into Jhargram town to protest against the recent incidents of raping of women in Sonamukhi village by the joint security forces. The marchers carried posters demanding the hanging of CPI(M) leader Prashanta Das who has been known to have identified the houses of anti-CPI(M) villagers in Sonamukhi following which women from these families were raped by policemen.

July 19, New Delhi: Right to Information (RTI) activist Amit Jethwa is murdered near the Gujarat High Court in Ahmedabad. The number of such killings of whistleblowers goes up to eight in this year.

July 17, Surat: A city court today grants bail in lack of any any evidence to an alleged Naxal, Sulat Puwar, who was among the 14 arrested from across the country for links with the ultra-left outfits during a drive launched by the city police a few weeks ago.

July 17, Orissa: The Union ministry of environment and forests decided to send a joint committee headed by N C Saxena to hold

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public meetings on POSCO project.

July 16, Karla: In another major victory to the sustained

struggle by determined agriculturalists in the Maval Taluka of Pune district, the Special Economic Zone



(SEZ) proposed by Mahindra and Mahindra Company near Karla is finally scrapped. As usual, the location proposed for the SEZ near Lonavala city covered 1,188 hectares of agrorich land, spread across 8 villages, amidst the temple of Goddess Ekvira and also housed the historical Karla caves.

July 16, Sompeta, AP: Five injured persons as well as the driver and others, who were being taken in Ambulances from Palsapurm village to Sompeta Govt. Hospital, are stopped by Police and beaten up. After this incident, injured persons from surrounding villages do not dare to go to hospital for fear of police.

July 15, New Delhi: A Civil Society Representative meeting is held on recent killing and human rights violations in Kashmir at Youth cafe (near Ansari Auditorium, Jamia Millia Islamia).

July 15: Responding to a letter written by Vimal Bhai of Matu Jan Sangathan, World Bank asks the Indian government to address allegations about improperly held public hearings for the clearance of the Vishnugad-Pipalkoti dam in Chamoli district.

July 14, Srikakulam: Police fires on the

people protesting against the proposed thermal power plant by the Nagarjuna Construction Company (NCC) near



Sompeta in Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh. In the firing two persons die and nearly 100 are injured. .

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July 14, Punjab: Himanshu Kumar (while on his cycle yatra), and other activists are slapped with criminal charges (non-bailable) by the Punjab Police, following a minor brawl that was instigated by the police themselves at one of his public talks.

July 14, Orissa: The Orissa High Court rejects the recommendation of the government for providing prospecting license (PL) to Posco for Khandadhar iron ore mines and directs the state government to again hear all 226 applicants for Khandadhar mines and then issue license.

July 14, Orissa: Vedanta's deploy goons to cut the fragile mangrove forest on the Zuari river banks to put up the loading point for its company Sesa Goa. Villagers of Panchwadi challenge the goons on site and force them to stop deforestation and flee from the site.

July 11, Orissa: Leaders of Posco Pratirodh

S a n g r a m Samiti (PPSS) and other agitators said the residents of three gram panchayat in Jagatsinghpur



district would "never allow" the mega steel plant to come up there. The protesters hold a public meeting near Dhinkia and erect barricades to prevent authorities from entering.

July 10, Mumbai: The Committee for the Release of Dr Binayak Sen, Mumbai holds a public meeting on the issues surrounding the Bhopal Gas Disaster at St.Xaviers' College, Mumbai.

July 9, Mumbai: A Public Consultation on the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Bill 2010 holds it unconstitutional and violative of the right to life and demands that it be scrapped.

July 8, Netherlands: Asset manager PGGM withdraws its investments in Indian mining company Vedanta Resources for "persistently ignoring" the environment and human rights.

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July 7, Chikhalpada, Dharampur, Gujarat: Around 1200 Adivasi farmers from 21 villages protest the proposed Par-Tapi-Narmada project aiming to connect the water of west flowing rivers from Par to Narmada – diverting “surplus” water from southern Gujarat to northern Gujarat through a 395 km canal link. Six of the proposed seven dams are along the Eastern Adivasi belt of Gujarat, while one is on the Maharashtra side (Nashik district) of the border.

July 7, Orissa: The scared Niyamraja idol of the Dongri Kondh is demolished by Vedanta company goons and Kalahandi police goons as part of their strategy to terrorize the villagers.

July 6, Bhopal: Yuva Samvad Bhopal organises a successful public program on Honour Killing to generate awareness in society and demand a law against Honour killing.

July 4, New Delhi: NAPM supports the struggle of farmers from ten affected villages who will lose their land, 3364 acres, in proposed Industrial Model Township in Sonapat, Haryana. More than 500 people attended a meeting from different villages which was addressed by Medha Patkar.

July 2, New Delhi: The Judgement by the Delhi HC decriminalising homosexuality last year is celebrated in an evening of music and dance at Jantar Mantar. Similar programmes are held in Thrissur, Mumbai and other parts of the country.

July 2, Andhra Pradesh: A public meeting is organised by NAPM AP, at Visakhapatnam on the issue of the proposed Nuclear disaster Site - at Kovvada in Srikakulam district.

July 1, Shimla: Maintaining that there was no justification for harnessing water sources from far-off places like Himachal Pradesh to cater to the needs of the national capital, prominent social activists, environmentalists and intellectuals of Delhi urge Chief Minis-

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ter Sheila Dixit to withdraw from the Renuka Dam project.

July 1, New Delhi: RTI activists call for transparent selection of info commissioners. Presenting a series of documents accessed under the transparency law, Magsaysay award winner Arvind Kejriwal said the PM-led selection committee for ICs had become an “endorsement committee” while the actual selection was being done by the department of personnel and training.

July 1, New Delhi: Delhi HC recognizes Child Marriage as Human Rights violation.

July 1, New Delhi: The government’s new litigation policy calls for petitioners to be slapped with costs for stoppage of projects that are in public interest.

July 1, Orissa: The Environment and Forests Ministry constitute the four-member committee to make recommendations on a proposal to divert over 660 hectares of forest land for the Lanjigarh Bauxite mines, submitted by the Orissa Mining Corporation for a project to be implemented jointly with Vedanta Aluminium.

June 30, Madurai: National Alliances of People’s Movement (NAPM) holds an agitation in support of the people who were affected by Bhopal Gas Tragedy and against the intention of the Central Government to pass a law to grant liability cap for companies who import nuclear equipments into our country.

June 29, Chhatisgarh: In Village Mahrabera falling under Police Station Dhourai in Narayanpur police district of Bastar range, Naxals kill 26 CRPF Jawans with the help of



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ambush. 15 injured become victims of deceitful method of Naxals.

June 28, Madhya Pradesh: Justice Shraavan Shankar Jha Commission of Inquiry constituted by the M.P. High Court in August 2008 to enquire into the multi-crore scam of fake registries of Sardar Sarovar affected victims starts its next phase of proceedings in Alirajpur today.

June 25, Kathikudam: Indefinite satyagraha started in front of NGIL prompting the Panchayat to issue a stop Memo to the company. Reports reveal highly toxic contents in river water, drinking water and solid waste including heavy metals due to the company's operation.

June 25, Orissa: Three workers are killed and at least five others seriously injured in an explosion at a Coca-Cola bottling plant in Khurda in the state of Orissa.

June 24, Bhopal: Independent People's Tribunal on dams in Narmada (Sardar Sarovar, ISP, OSP canals and Jobat) Award is released by the Tribunal member Justice A.



P. Shah (retd. CJ, Delhi High Court) and other panelists, in the presence of representatives of various organizations and eminent persons from Bhopal.

June 21, Mangalore: Gregory Patrao along with the members of various organisations supporting him meet the Commissioner of Police Seemanth Kumar Sing, demanding change of investigating officer to look into his land issue, which is to be acquired in Mangalore SEZ.

June 19-20, Hyderabad: NAPM – AP State convention is held in Hyderabad.

June 18, Lucknow: Three months after the Dalit and tribals of Magardah village were allegedly brutally beaten up, women raped and their leaders illegally detained by the forest department personnel, the Sonebhadra

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police finally lodges an FIR in the case.

July 18, Mangalore: A relay hunger strike is started in front of the Deputy Commissioner's office in support of Gregory Patrao, a farmer who has been fighting against the acquisition of his house and land for phase three of Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd. (MRPL).

June 17, Kochi: Union Minister of State for Environment and Forests Jairam Ramesh says that the Athirappilly hydro electrical project will be a recipe for environmental disaster,

June 17, New Delhi: A Panel Discussion on '1 Year of UPA-II: A Response to National Governance' is organized at India Islamic Cultural Centre, New Delhi by Wada Na Todo Abhiyan.

June 17, Bilaspur: Hon. Justice Agnihotri of the Bilaspur High Court in Chhattisgarh order the State of Chhattisgarh to pay compensation to 3 widows and a survivor Shri Somdu of the Matwada massacre of March 2008. 15 SPOs and police ASI Patel were accused in the massacre which took place in a Salwa Judum camp.

June 17, New Delhi: A human rights and NGO worker Abdul Shakeel Pasha is unlawfully arrested on alleged charges of being a member of the banned Communist Party of India (Maoist), in a joint operation by the Gujarat Police and the Delhi Police Special Cell at R.K. Puram. This makes him the 14th person arrested in a FIR filed by Gujarat police alleging rise of Maoists activities in Gujarat.



June 17,

Narmada: Legal Notice is issued by the Narmada Bachao Andolan to the Ministry of Environment and Forests on the issue of continued land acquisition and excavation for the large canals of Indira Sagar and Omkareshwar, which is causing an irrevers-

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ible damage to the best of agricultural land in the region.

June 15, Suratkhah: People affected due to the Mangalore SEZ project stage a protest and stop the project vehicles and bring work to halt.

June 12, New Delhi: Friends of Bhopal organise a protest demonstration against the judgment in the Bhopal gas tragedy case at Jantar Mantar.

June 9-10, Narmada: Upper Veda Dam oustees protest against attempt to submerge without rehabilitation and wide-spread corruption

June 9, Bhopal: New Delhi: The Centre, under fire from the victims of the Bhopal gas tragedy for the way the legal case has panned out over the last 26 years announces the re-constitution of a Group of Ministers (GoM) to go into the relief and rehabilitation measures for those affected by the world's worst industrial disaster.

June 7, Bhopal: In the Bhopal Gas Tragedy Case, after 26 years the Court find eight accused as convict and orders two year imprisonment leading to huge public furore all across.

June 5, Guwahati: A Tripuri woman is beaten up and paraded naked through her village by panchayat members in Dhalai after a kangaroo court accuses her of sexual misconduct.

June 4, New Delhi: At a meeting convened by the home ministry, the Parliamentarians belonging to worst-Naxal hit regions they demand that the government should carry out development activities with a holistic approach.

June 4, New Delhi: Civil society organisations protest against the spate of arrests of activists in Gujarat working on various issues from workers' issues to communalism by the Gujarat government in the name of 'tackling' Maoists, in front of Gujarat Bhawan, Kautilya Marg, Chanakyapuri.

June 2, Madhya Pradesh: The Union Min-

istry of Environment and **JULY-AUGUST 2010**

letter to the Government of Madhya Pradesh asking for a R&R Plan which will ensure rehabilitation and resettlement for all oustees affected by the Maheshwar Project, including those affected by the back-water submergence.

May 31, Mumbai: 45 houses of the Baradevi Pavement Community in Sewri, Mumbai,



considered ineligible for the Mahatma Gandhi Pathakranti Yojna(MGPKY) are forcefully demolished by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC). The said Yojna of the Maharashtra State Government is meant for the rehabilitation of the pavement dwellers and is applicable for about 45 roads across Mumbai.

May 25, Mumbai: A protest against forceful land grabbing by POSCO and the police attack on people in Jagatsinghpur in Orissa takes place at Churchgate Station (East), Mumbai.

May 24, Anna Bhau Sathe Nagar: Hundreds of slum dwellers from Anna Bhau Sathe Nagar participate in a post card campaign, demanding his intervention in the matter of the gross violations of the rights of the residents of the slum that was demolished and burnt down on 13th May.

May 24, Bagheri: Massive demonstration takes place against the JAYPEE cement and thermal project at TIKRI-Bagheri, NALAGARH, HP.

May 20, Orissa: The agitation against the

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steel plant project of Posco-India gets a shot in the arm with senior leaders of six Opposition parties joining hands with the villagers of three gram panchayats in Orissa's Jagatsinghpur district.

May 20, Bhubaneshwar: The Orissa government decides to initiate talks with the anti-Posco activists to find a solution to the conflict. (HT)

May 19, New Delhi: Former Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Dr. B D Sharma and others write to the President requesting her immediate intervention in establishing peace in the tribal areas, and restoration of people's trust in democracy by implementing PESA and FRA in letter and spirit.

May 18, Chennai: The Madras High Court directs the Tamil Nadu government to take a decision on extending tax concession to the dubbed version of feature film 'Dr Balasaheb Ambedkar' and ensure its release in the state within the next four weeks.

May 17, Chattisgarh: 31 people, including 15 civilians, are killed when a landmine blast triggered by Maoists blows up a private bus going from Dantewada to Sukma. SPOs and security forces travelling in the bus were returning to their bases after a combing operation near Sukma.

May 15, Orissa: Over 100 people are injured and many shops, tents and houses in Balitutha village in Jagatsinghpur district, the site of the anti-POSCO dharna, are set on fire by the police in an operation involving nearly 40 platoons of policemen.

UPCOMING EVENTS

October 24-26: NAPM bi-annual Convention on the theme of 'Peace, Justice and Democracy' to be held in Badwani, Madhya Pradesh. For details write to napmindia@gmail.com

October 22-23: Programmes celebrating the completion of the 25 years of Narmada

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Bachao Andolan to start from Dhadgaon, Maharashtra to reach Badwani in Madhya Pradesh. For details write to nba.badwani@gmail.com

September 4 : NAPM AP to organise a day long convention on 'Corporate Crimes in Contemporary India'. Details @ napmhyderabad@gmail.com

August 29: NAPM Karnataka State Convention in Bangalore. Details @ napmkarnata@yahoo.co.in

August 21-22: NAPM Maharashtra State Convention at Kharghar, North Panvel, District Raigad, Maharashtra. Details @ andolan.napm@gmail.com

August 9: on occasion of Quit India Day NAPM and others call for a national day of action denouncing SEZs and Corporations Quit India. Details @ napmindia@gmail.com

August 9: A massive gathering in Lalgadh denouncing violence and the exploitation in the adivasi regions to be organised by *Santrash Virodhi Manch* and attended by Medha Patkar, Swami Agnivesh, Mahashweta Devi, Mamata Banerjee and other prominent social and cultural activists from the region. Details @ napmindia@gmail.com

August 7-9: Second meeting of the representatives of the social movements, organisations and activists to take place at Almora, after the first meeting at Allahabad in March. Details @ azadi.bachao.andolan@gmail.com

August 7-8: NAPM Kerala State Convention to take place in Thrissur. Details @ napmindia@gmail.com

August 6-8: Fourth national convention on the Right to Food and Work at Meera Bhawan, Rourkela, Orissa to be organized by the RTF Campaign. Details @ righttofood@gmail.com

Note: All dates mentioned here are in 2010.

Compilation: Sumit Mandhwani

Indian peace activists collect funds for flood victims in Lahore

As the 10 Indian peace activists arrive at Labour Relief Camp at Regal Chouck Mall Road Lahore, slogans were raised by political and trade unions activists, “long live peoples friendship of India and Pakistan, we want peace not war, welcome Indian friends, reduce the army budget on both sides”. The peace caravan started from Mumbai had arrived in the afternoon at Wahgha border and then drove to Regal Chouck.

The delegation included Zaid Ahmad, Feroz Mithiborwala, Sandeep Pandey, Mazhar Hussain, Monica Wahi, Ramneek Mohan, Shetal, Darshan, Rajeshwar Ojha, Feroz Hudda. After initial remarks from Sandeep Pandey, the group went out to collect funds from the road. The group also brought Indian Rupees 29,000 from India and contributed to flood victims.

Within three hours, they had collected a total sum of Pakistani Rupees 1,21,000 including the donation they brought in. There was a great enthusiasm at the camp. The traffic stopped several times to donate funds. The camp next door was from Jamaati Islami who was totally taken aback by the positive response of Lahorites to Indian peace activists. A lot of media was present who were taking photographs of every move of the delegation. It was the rare show of people’s solidarity where the Indians asking money for flood victims of Pakistan, a total negation of the religious fanatics who want war with India all the time.

Faisal Khan

National Alliance of People’s Movements
 peaceglobal@gmail.com



A Rare Show of Solidarity:

Faisal Khan reports on 15th August 2010 from the Peace march undertaken by peace activists from India and Pakistan ..



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