

Protesting Against Nuclear Radiation

Nuke protester murdered in India as police open fire on peaceful crowd

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Authorities responded to peaceful protest of a proposed nuclear power plant site in India by shooting at the crowd, [killing one and injuring eight](#). Over sixty others were arrested. Killed by police on Monday, the body of 30-year-old [Tabrez Sayekar](#) was carried through the streets at a funeral march attended by more than 2,000 people yesterday. No one has been charged in his murder. (Image: The funeral procession of Tabrez Sayekar being taken out at Sakhri Nate Village in Ratnagiri district of Maharashtra on Wednesday. Photo: Vivek Bendre for [The Hindu](#))

The Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL), along with the French nuclear energy giant, Areva, plan to build the world's [largest nuclear power plant complex](#) generating nearly 10,000 megawatts of electricity in an agricultural area at Jaitapur in the Ratnagiri district of Maharashtra.

In December, the world renowned Tata Institute of Social Sciences published a social and environmental assessment of the proposed project conducted by Jamsetji Tata Centre for Disaster Management last April, calling it a potential disaster. According to [DNA India](#), the report charges that the government has hidden and suppressed important and relevant information, and "has subverted facts" by labeling the proposed 968-hectare site as barren land that the locals use for agriculture, horticulture and grazing.

"Farmers and horticulturists have spent lakhs of rupees to make the land cultivable over

years and even the government has supported them. This includes Alfonso mangoes and cashews. Now, when the time has come for them to reap their investments, they are afraid of losing their land as the government now claims it is barren land,' says the report. It adds that even the fisherfolk of the region are against the project."

Even the level of seismicity was changed, from a high severity earthquake zone to moderate seismic severity zone.

"The government is not only hiding facts, but also manipulating them,' the report alleges."

NPCIL, an agency of the Indian government, defends the moderate label. "Seismicity is one of the key criteria in site selection for nuclear power plants and the Jaitapur site meets the requirements for siting as stipulated in the atomic energy regulatory board's code on safety," it said in [response](#) to TISS.

However, last month, [Times of India](#) reported:

"[T]he Geological Survey of India shows that between 1985 and 2005, there were 92 earthquakes [in the area].

"The ground is unstable, say activists and geologists, and there is no guarantee that the government's safeguards will protect the people and ecologically sensitive Konkan coast from a nuclear disaster should there be another earthquake.

"Environmental activist Pradeep Indulkar said: 'The third explosion at the Fukushima plant in Japan on Tuesday confirms that in the event of an earthquake, precautionary measures and safeguards will not avert a disaster. It is better not to have a nuclear power plant in this seismic zone region.'

"At Shivane village, 20 km from Jaitapur, Chandrakant Padkar remembers the day the earth shook and the road outside his house vanished. The unreported earthquake took place two years ago, and the village still bears the scars."

Greenpeace India plans to deliver a petition to the Maharashtra Chief Minister on April 26, the 25th anniversary of the nuclear disaster in Chernobyl, Ukraine. You can sign the [petition here](#).

"Instead of ignoring and ruthlessly suppressing the protest against the Jaitapur nuclear reactor park, Prithviraj Chavan, Maharashtra Chief Minister, needs to scrap the project. The CM needs to know that he cannot build Jaitapur against the people's will when alternatives exist."

Sane Response to Deadly Energy Source

Nuclear power is the deadliest, costliest form of energy on record, according to Dr. Benjamin Sovacool of [Project Syndicate](#). "Not counting the Fukushima catastrophe, there has been more than one nuclear incident and \$330 million in damage every year, on average, for the past three decades."

In a [policy brief](#) on nuclear power published in January, Sovacool notes, "The nuclear fuel cycle involves some of the most dangerous elements known to humankind. These elements

include more than 100 dangerous radionuclides and carcinogens such as strontium-90, iodine-131 and cesium-137, which are the same toxins found in the fallout of nuclear weapons.”

The damage done to Earth by nuclear accidents and waste is permanent, for a mere [20-30 years of electricity](#), a dirty secret that the nuclear industry has not resolved. In the U.S., for example, the waste is stored in holding pools at [four to five times](#) the pool’s capacity.

Despite the world’s clean water shortage, Sovacool reports:

“Nuclear plants use 25-50% more water per unit of electricity generated than fossil fuel plants with equivalent cooling systems.... The average US plant operating on an open-loop cooling system withdraws 216 Million litres of water every day and consumes 125 Million litres of water every day.

“Nuclear plants and uranium mining also contaminate water and the methods used to draw the water and exclude debris through screens kill marine and riparian life, setting in place a destructive chain of events for ocean/river systems.”

[Der Spiegel](#) writes, “The Chernobyl Exclusion Zone, for all the attention it gets, is far from the only nuclear no-go area on the planet.” In its recent catalogue of several now-uninhabitable spots on the planet as a result of nuclear use, leaks, waste and accidents, Spiegel documents thousands of square miles in the U.S., Germany, Kazakhstan, Japan, India, Britain and Northern Africa contaminated by radiation, areas which produce high rates of birth defects and cancers. Their report doesn’t even touch the depleted uranium used in the Middle East by the U.S. and its allies.

While we watch Fukushima’s radiation fall on the northern hemisphere, contaminating our milk and water in the U.S., Canada and Europe, it’s notable that, like previous nuclear accidents, governments lie about the severity. Fifty years after the [UK’s worst nuclear disaster](#), experts advise that the radiation released was twice what was originally reported.

Chernobyl was no different, as a recent book published by the New York Academy of Sciences reveals. Government authorities reported 3,000 casualties from that disaster, but in [Chernobyl: Consequences of the Catastrophe for People and the Environment](#), the authors conclude that, based on now available medical data, 985,000 people died as a result of the Chernobyl disaster, as of 2004. The researchers based their conclusions on 5,000 radiological surveys, scientific reports and health data.

Because of the Fukushima nuclear meltdown, EnviroVideo released a video based on that book: “Chernobyl: A Million Casualties.” Watch it at <http://blip.tv/file/4922080>. The film will air nationally on Free Speech TV (freespeech.org) on April 23rd.

Neither is Japan any different. Engineer Keith Harmon Snow writes:

“In a recent [WikiLeaks diplomatic cable](#), politician Taro Kono, a high-profile member of Japan’s lower house, told U.S. diplomats that the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (MITI) — the Japanese government department responsible for nuclear energy — has been ‘covering up nuclear accidents and obscuring the true costs and problems associated with the nuclear industry.’ In 2002 ‘the chairman and four executives of TEPCO, the company that owns the stricken Fukushima plant, resigned after reports that safety records were falsified.’”

Corporate-run governments will not stop destroying the planet for profit. It is up to humanity to do all in its power to end the ongoing ecocide. Sometimes this means putting your life on the line, as Tabrez Sayekar did on Monday, just short of the 25th Anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster.

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