

1. Ghosts of Fukushima reign supreme in Koodankulam

Protesters view Jaya as 'opportunistic' after she chooses political expediency over defending them

Sai Manish, New Delhi



The protests over the nuclear power plant in Koodankulam have been mopped up without hesitation by the Tamil Nadu government even as some protesters including the head of People's Movement against Nuclear Energy (PMANE), P Udayakumar, holding out with their fast unto death. There have been fears among the coastal communities and residents living near the plant that their worries have been completely bypassed in clearing the project. For the protesters, the last nail in the coffin came after Tamil Nadu CM J

Jayalalithaa gave her nod for carrying on the work in the proposed 2000 MW power plant. Jayalalithaa's assent meant not just activists being held and charged for sedition and waging war against the state, but also the imposition of Section 144, which prevents peaceful assembly. Reports

coming out of Koodankulam suggest that the situation that has been tense since morning is now showing signs of abating with little option before the protesters except that of a surrender. Failing to do so would prompt the police to move in and make arrests. In doing so, the CM has dealt a blow to the four-month long protest that has been targeted not just by Jayalalithaa but by the PMO as well. Even as the PMO alleges that these protests against the Russian project are orchestrated, activists have slammed this attitude as being too overbearing for a democracy.

Jaya's volt face on the issue has led to considerable heartburn among activists who were banking on her support to tackle the onslaught of the PMO that had claimed a foreign hand behind the protests. Udayakumar has, in fact, blamed Jayalalithaa for "betraying the people" in their movement against the nuke plant. But before the CM's iron-handed move to clear the surrounding villages from protesters, there had been a concerted attempt to counter the arguments against the plant. This was done not just by the Centre through its 15 member expert group but also by the expert group appointed by the Jayalalithaa government—both invariably had the same conclusions of being in favour of the plant being erected at the site. But amidst the scientific facts that have been advocated by both the Centre and state groups is that it is pertinent to understand the fears of the local communities.

The fact that despite the clamping of Section 144 in Koodankulam, fishermen from surrounding villages are still landing on the beaches to enter the village only to be detained by police stationed there on their patrol boats. What is driving these fishermen to skip their fishing routines and pour into the protest site is that they believe their means of sustenance will be wiped off by the nuke power plant. The fisher folk of surrounding villages believe that their catch, which is directly proportional to the marine life in the vicinity of the plant will be adversely impacted—not only will fish be sucked into the huge tubes that

feed the desalination plant, but the rising temperatures due to heated water discharge will also kill fishes, lobsters and crabs. This fear was sought to be allayed by the expert group, which suggested that the plant will host fish protection systems “where in all the fish which are coming into the intake will be separated by means of a unique air curtain and Oogee weirs”. That, however, failed to placate the fishermen who are already facing the brunt of illegal fishing from foreign trawlers that scavenge the sea bed for precious catch. Adding to that were fears of temperature rise, which would disturb the marine ecology and force fish to migrate further away from the coast.

The project was also slammed by local residents of CASA Nagar who believed that they were being made sitting ducks in the radiation trap. Most of these people are survivors of the 2004 tsunami, which explains their heightened fears of a nuclear project coming up on the coast whose fury they now dread. Fukushima in 2011 gave them a glimpse of what was heading their way if the nuke plant came up. And sustained campaign from activists further heightened those apprehensions with the entire protest becoming a question of the survival of their future generations. The expert committee tried to assuage these fears too but to no avail. “In the case of Koodankulam, the nearest off shore fault line (Andaman Nicobar Sumatra fault) capable of generating a tsunami, is located about 1500 km from the plant. Thus, unlike in the case of Fukushima, there is no possibility of a tsunami and an earthquake occurring together at Koodankulam. All important structures and components including emergency power supply equipment at Koodankulam are located well above this elevation. Thus, unlike in Fukushima, where the emergency power supply equipment failed due to flooding from tsunami, even the strongest tsunami cannot disrupt the emergency power supply at the nuclear power plant and cooling of the reactors can be maintained without interruption.”

However, with villagers pouring in despite the arm of the law coming down heavily on them one thing becomes clear that these communities, who survive from what the sea provides, are not willing to take a chance with a form of power whose destructive powers was seen not so long ago in Fukushima. The ghosts of Fukushima, it seems, cannot be so easily buried in Koodankulam.

Cited Source:

http://www.tehelka.com/story_main52.asp?filename=Ws210312Koodankulam2.as

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2. Thanks to Kudankulam, NGO working on tsunami relief has funds frozen

Pallavi Polanki

Mar 21, 2012

In the new regime regulating foreign-funded NGOs, the Home Ministry seems to have made it quite clear that it is in no mood to justify or explain its actions to those are affected by it, even when the action is as prohibiting foreign contribution or freezing bank accounts.

An NGO in Tamil Nadu, despite its 30-year record of complying with the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) has been slapped with an order freezing its bank accounts without providing any evidence of irregularity on its part.

Since late 2011, many foreign-funded NGOs in Tamil Nadu have received notices – which contains a list of 32 questions – from the monitoring unit of the FCRA division of the Home Ministry seeking to examine their accounts. See the questionnaire [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

While the notice makes no reference to the context for the examination into the NGO's accounts, the Prime Minister in February made government's motivation abundantly clear. In an interview to Science magazine, he blamed international NGOs for supporting the ongoing public protests against the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant in the coastal district of Tirunelveli in Tamil Nadu.



The government has blocked funding to NGOs it said had funded the anti-Kudankulam nuclear power plant protests. First post

Going by that theory, one of the factors that seem to have cost the Kanyakumari-based Rural Uplift Centre (RUC) its foreign contribution seems to be its past association with Idinthakarai village, which during the last seven months has become the centre of the struggle against the nuclear power plant located in the neighbouring village of Kudankulam.

In the aftermath of the tsunami that hit the Tamil Nadu coast in 2004, the RUC was entrusted by the district administration five villages – among them Idinthakarai – to carry out rescue and rehabilitation work. RUC's work in Idinthakarai – which ended in 2008- involved medical assistance, building temporary shelters and toilet facilities, providing boats and nets, repair work and providing equipment to village school science lab.

“From 1982 onwards we have been filing FC-3 (annual return of foreign contribution) to the Home Ministry every year, within the time frame and in the prescribed format. You'll find it on the FCRA website. And for 3-4 years now, we have also been filing a brief activity report, which is not mandatory,” says Maria James, secretary, RUC.

When RUC received the notice with 32 questions in October, James wasn't completely surprised because ten years ago they had received a similar notice of inspection, following which a team had come from the FCRA. At that time, however, no questionnaire was sent.

“They came, spent three-four days and went back. So we thought, that this notice was also a routine inspection. We didn't think that it had anything to do with trying to implicate us in Kudankulam anti-nuclear protests,” she said.

It took RUC, 12 full days to put together documents sought by the FCRA questionnaire. They had been asked to submit accounts for the last 30 years! Even

though, says James, the income tax law requires accounts of only the last six years to be kept.

“Much of the information they had sought was only duplication of details we’ve already submitted to them. We had to make copies of transactions dating back to 1982. Getting copies bank passbooks from 10-15 years ago was a challenge. We couldn’t find one and even the banks couldn’t give us a copy since all records are computerised now. The package, with all documents, weighed 3.85 kg. We had to courier it,” James said.

But that wasn’t the end of it.

The inspection team from the FCRA arrived at RUC in early January. During their three-day inspection, they made oral requests for more documents.

“The documents they asked for, we had already sent in response to the questionnaire. That means the team hadn’t even gone through the material we had sent them in October. The same questions they asked again and again,” she said. And so some documents were re-sent.

Then came a third request for documents, which James handed over personally when he was in Delhi on other business.

“Then they wanted some more details. And on February 8, I dispatched the final set. But before it reached them, they sent an order prohibiting foreign contribution and freezing the bank account on February 9,” James said.

The order reached RUC on Feb 13.

Based on the kind of details the FCRA officials were asking, did James guess which way the investigation was going?

“They were asking for purchase bills, receipts, beneficiary details and acknowledgement. We gave those copies of tenders, agreements from suppliers, bills, receipts, acknowledgment of beneficiaries. We also submitted decisions of the executive committee, stage by stage approval of the quotations. We wanted them to

be satisfied. It didn't strike us that it had anything to do with the protests because we were not involved," she said.

It was when the team took 17 vouchers that belonged to 2011-12 that they, says James, had a suspicion that it could have something to do with Kudankulam protests.

"The vouchers were for a training programme on organic farming and some of the resource persons were government officials. So verifying beneficiaries of those vouchers shouldn't be a problem. On that night, because of a power-cut, we couldn't find the documents immediately. The hotel bills, the daily allowance details of the participants, and the training and the attendance report of the programme are all on record," she said.

RUC has received no response to its revision petition to the Home Ministry sent on February 21. It has now filed a writ petition in the Madras High Court.

Appealing to the government, James said, "Since 1982, we have been involved in supporting the various initiatives of central and state government. None of the activities are in anyway detrimental to the public or national interest. We are upholding the Constitution. We hope govt will do justice."

Cited Source:

<http://www.firstpost.com/india/thanks-to-kudankulam-ngo-working-on-tsunami-relief-has-funds-frozen-251776.html>

3. Tamil Nadu and India take cue from Sri Lanka's Mullivaikal

Program:

War model to contain people's resistance against Kudankulam Nuclear Power Project

Kudankulam region resembles a war-zone: thousands of heavily-armed policemen, paramilitary forces and coast guard helicopters have encircled fishing villages which have steadfastly opposed the Kudankulam nuclear power plant – the largest nuclear power project in India – in a non-violent manner. The forces have cut off electricity, water, milk, drugs and other essential services and goods to these villages. Policemen have detained anyone coming out of these villages and taken to unknown destinations. Those on vigil at the Kudankulam plant's gates, with permission from the Tamil Nadu authorities for the past few months, have been arrested; two functionaries of the People's Movement Against Nuclear Energy (PMANE) who were in this non-violent vigil, now face the charge of sedition and waging a war against India!

While these words are being typed, 48 hours have elapsed since 15 persons –seven women and eight men – commenced an indefinite at Idinthakarai fishing village. Calm and composed, they sit on the portals of the Lourdu Matha Church at Idinthakarai, facing north, like the *samana munis* of yore, opting for the final act of their lives, namely the act of *Sallehana* which means opting not to take food or water till the end comes, exactly when one decides that one could no longer continue one's existence in this world. As they renounce their lives, they silently pray, at the wee hours of their lives, to the Almighty to ensure that those in power in turn renounce their greed and insanity; they believe that their prayers would make the violently-inclined State to reverse its decision to impose war on its own people – whose only anxiety is to protect their own successive generations from the harmful effects of potential radiation from the Kudankulam nuclear power plant.

The people who resist the commissioning of the Kudankulam nuclear power plant have witnessed the Fukushima accident via their television sets. They have been threatened by the unannounced hot run conducted by plant authorities in September 2011. These events have led them towards a collective spiritual reflection over the consequences of the nuclear disasters at Hiroshima and Nagasaki and also at Chernobyl. A sense of deep anguish prevails among the people of Kudankulam region about the future health of their successive generations and the integrity of their genetic pool. This has led them to decide to urge the Indian and Tamil Nadu governments to stop commissioning this project. To ensure that their demand does not economically hurt the Indian government, these pious and unassuming fisherwomen and men proposed even to somehow pay, from their meager daily earnings, the Indian government massive investment of 130 billion rupees for the project so far.

The Indian and the Tamil Nadu Governments responded, first by reducing the spiritual crisis suffered by these fisher folk as "unreasonable fears" about nuclear power spread by a few anti-nuclear activists and groups. Science will cure this fear, declared the Indian government. In order to simulate this remedy called science and to put it in currency, in early November 2011, the Indian government set up a 15-member committee of scientists and technocrats. This committee produced its first report and went on to state that this report would annul the fears of the people of Kudankulam region. When the PMANE and several other eminent personalities requested this committee to meet the people of Kudankulam region and explain the contents of their report, the committee members rejected it saying that their mandate did not include any meeting with the people of the Kudankulam region.

This led the PMANE to form an independent group of experts to compile and present its scientific concerns over the project. This group, consisting of 29 eminent people from the civil society across India, gave its first press release¹ on 27 November 2011 and presented its first report to PMANE on 12 December 2011. PMANE duly presented this report to the people of the Kudankulam region. When

the people of Kudankulam region requested PMANE to bring its experts to answer questions relating to the doubts, unlike the expert committee set up by the Indian government, the expert group formed by PMANE promptly met the people on several occasions and presented the results of their report.

The 15-member expert committee set up by the Indian government submitted its second report to the Tirunelveli district collector on 15 December 2011. PMANE shared the report compiled by its independent group of experts on the same day with the Tirunelveli district collector and the expert committee set up by the Indian government. It requested once again, that the members of the expert committee set up by the Indian government need to meet with the people of the Kudankulam region and the members of its own independent group of experts and address two basic issues

- The spiritual crisis suffered by the people of the Kudankulam region
- The scientific content of the report submitted by the independent group of experts which have questioned the suitability of Kudankulam site for establishing nuclear power plants.

The expert committee set up by the Indian government once again rejected these requests.

Indeed, the site where Kudankulam nuclear power plant is located and the surrounding region have the geological signatures of Holocene volcanism[1]; they also have the geological signatures of a karst terrain; they have submarine structures prone for massive landslides capable of causing near field mega tsunamis; also, sea water recession ranging from 500 meters to two to four kilometers have been observed on several occasions since the December 2004 tsunami thus putting the reactors to multiple risk of dry intake hazards; moreover, several independent studies, over the last decade, have found that the shoreline at Kudankulam faces heavy erosion due to beach sand mining for garnet minerals; three major studies have indicated that the crust of the Kudankulam site and the surrounding region have undergone extreme thinning due to mantle upwelling observed in the region – certain areas of the Kudankulam site have been found by a study conducted as recently as 2010 to possess a crust thickness of just 200 meters, when in fact the

normal thickness of the continental crust is 40,000 meters – thus making the possibility of land subsidence at the site very real! To cap all these, the reactors at Kudankulam depend on a single artificial source of water – namely the ocean – for all its coolant needs, but the project authorities have not undertaken any effort to dynamically study the ocean to help determine conditions that could jeopardize the sea water intake systems!

Based on the above conclusions, the independent group of experts formed by PMANE, in its 12 December 2011 report, demanded that the Indian and the Tamil Nadu governments direct the Nuclear Power Corporation of India to undertake volcanic, tsunami, karst, shoreline stability hazard studies along with a study that would reveal the ocean dynamics which could jeopardize the sea water intake systems. The group also pointed out that various safety rules set by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the various nuclear energy regulatory bodies like the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission (USNRC) have made all these studies mandatory before constructing a nuclear power plant in a coastal location.

The third and the final report of the expert committee set up by the Indian government, which is dated 31 January 2012, attempts to answer all these questions, albeit evasively and incorrectly.²

The independent group of experts formed by PMANE prepared its second report on 25 February 2012 and submitted the same to the Tamil Nadu chief minister on 29 February 2012. This report gives categorical proof as to how the answers given in the final report of the expert committee set up by the Indian government are either evasive or incorrect.³ The final report of the expert committee set up by the Indian government has not given any firm, scientific reasons as to why volcanic, tsunami, karst, shoreline stability and ocean dynamics hazard studies need not be performed for the Kudankulam site prior to the commissioning of the nuclear power plant there.

The Tamil Nadu government, instead of directing the expert committee set up by the Indian government to meet with the people of the Kudankulam region and also the independent group of experts formed by PMANE, chose to constitute a new four-member expert committee in February 2012. A former chairperson of the Atomic Energy Commission chairman who happens to be among those who had first selected the Kudankulam site was named as a member of this committee! This committee's mandate was to review the reports and also to look into the issues raised by the people of the Kudankulam region. Once again, PMANE requested this four-member committee to meet with the people of the region as well as the members of the independent group of experts formed by itself. Both these requests were rejected.

The PMANE coordination team along with the member of its independent group of experts was invited for talks by the Tamil Nadu chief minister on 29 February 2012. They presented to her all the above reports and briefed her about the contentious issues that need to be resolved before the nuclear power plant is commissioned. They requested her to direct the expert committees set up by the Indian and the Tamil Nadu governments to meet with the people of the Kudankulam region as also with the independent group of experts formed by PMANE. Both these requests were not met till date.

The Indian and Tamil Nadu governments, instead of choosing a path of genuine dialogue and debate with the people of Kudankulam region and independent group of experts formed by PMANE, have resorted to encirclement of the entire coastal region, by land, water and air, deploying thousands of policemen and central paramilitary forces since the afternoon of 19 March. This amounts to a literal declaration of war on these pious people. As stated above, these forces have imposed a full-fledged embargo of essential goods and services for these villages. They have also asked the media personnel present at Idinthakarai to move out so that there can be a war without witnesses there, a war not on armed guerillas or militants but on peaceful non-violent protestors.

The present embargo on the life sustaining essential supplies into Idinthakarai and other coastal villages look like the total embargo on food and drug supplies imposed by the Sri Lankan Army at the Omanthai check post during the final stages of Fourth Eelam War which culminated at Mullivaykkal pogrom. The police demand that the media leave these villages bring back memories of this war that was conducted by the Sri Lankan State as a War without Witnesses.

So, there remain the people of the south east coastal region of Tamil Nadu, being terrorized in the name of democracy just because they had demanded a dialogue with those in power regarding a nuclear power plant being located in their backyard. The answers doled out by the Governments make a mockery of the democracy and science practice. They demand that their diktats need to be accepted. Any dissent, even if it is based on the laws framed by the Constitution of India and a rigorous science practice, would be dealt with in the Rajapaksean way. That seems to be the meaning emanating out of the current events unfolding at Idinthakarai and around.

Ten thousand lives remain huddled together with a deep hope that St. Francis Xavier, who came to their homes 400 years ago to save them from a tyrannical war, would come once again in the form of the Mahatma to save them from the tyranny of the current State. Women and Children without water and food are singing prayers in hushed voices. Sixteen Souls of utmost purity are fasting facing the north in *Sallehana*, at the portals of the Lourdu Matha Church at Idinthakarai, inviting their own death.

Bells of the temples and churches of Kudankulam region toll, but for whom?

Are we going to allow the state forces to simulate and emulate the Sri Lankan War model? Or are we going to ask these governments to direct NPCIL to stop the work till the expert committees of the state and the central governments meet these people and the independent group of experts formed by PMANE and scientifically and democratically address all the issues raised so far?

References:

- 1) PMANE expert committee press release dated 27 November 2011
- 2) The Central Expert Committee Reports - 1, 2 & 3
- 3) PMANE Expert Committee Report - 1 & 2
- 4) Short Note on the UN addressed site related scientific issues of KKNPP - presented by PMANE expert committee to the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu on 29 February 2012
- 5) Power Point presentation of the UN addressed site related scientific issues of KKNPP
- 6) IAEA, "Volcanic Hazards in Site Evaluation for Nuclear Installations", May 2011
- 7) USNRC, "Tsunami Hazard Assessment at the Nuclear Power Plant Sites in the USA", March 2009

All these and other references can be downloaded from the following link:

<http://darkenergy24.wordpress.com/2012/03/21/kknpp-reports-and-presentations/>

4. New Delhi, March 20: Jan Sansad Resolution on Kudankulam Police Action

New Delhi, March 20: We, the representatives of the social movements, trade unions and other civil society organisations attending the first Rashtriya Jan Sansad in Delhi today condemn the inhuman violent attack and arrest on the struggling groups at Idinthakarai, Kudankulam. This is a direct onslaught on the democratic rights of people who are non-violently fighting for protecting their rights to live. While the Prime Minister has maintained that the greatest danger to the Indian state is terrorism, there is zero respect for non-violent struggles of people's movements for people's livelihood.

Kudankulam nuke plant will definitely affect the lives and livelihoods of the people living in that area. The radioactive particles leaked out will be harmful to the health of people and the environment of the marine system.'

If any accident, as in the case of Fukushima, happens that will destroy the lives and livelihoods of thousands of people. The cooling water released from the plant will increase the temperature of the seawater and will harm the marine life in the coast, hence the livelihood of the people.

Govt's are highly undemocratic by installing such a highly destructive plant without considering the protest of local people. This action shows the real disaster of denying people's right over development planning. This is clear violation of the principles of democratic decentralization. The officials could not provide satisfactory answers to the questions raised by the people. In the international context also Nuclear energy is not accepted by scientists and governments. Most of the countries who are depending on nuclear energy had changed their stand because it is highly expensive and risky. Nowhere in the world scientists could find a safe method to process or keep the nuclear wastes including the spent fuel.

The arguments raised by some technical experts that Russian VVER reactor is safe, is not acceptable to common peoples because even in Russia, there are many experts who had raised the concern of the safety of this reactor. After the disastrous accident

at Fukushima, triggered by earthquake and Tsunami, even the nuclear lobby will not deny the high risks associated with the plant.

We demand both Union and State govts to withdraw all police actions, TN Govt. revoke the clearance, and close down the Nuclear Plant as demanded by the local people.

Currently Jan Sansad has decided to focus on this issue which is a symbol of misplaced development priorities of the country as well as the undemocratic manner in which such policies are implemented by the government in its March 23rd, 2012, protest at Jantar Mantar.

5. Kudankulam: NPCL, TN govt to review situation

India | Updated Mar 22, 2012 at 10:01am IST



Chennai: Protests escalated at the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant site, after the state government gave a go ahead for the work on the plant to begin by August this year. Security has been tightened at the site and police have started cracking down on the protestors under the banner People's Movement Against Nuclear Energy.

"The government is treating as bunch of terrorist, we are not unruly people. Thousand of villagers are coming to support our protest, it's my duty to join them and lead them. Even if I am arrested the protest will continue as the protest is by original people and not any outsiders," said activist SP Udayakumar.

"Our experts are not consulted on the security issue. Our experts have raised doubts on the security. The government report are made by government people," he said.

After a long gap, officials of the Nuclear Power Corporation Ltd (NPCL) will take part in a power project review meet called by the Jayalalithaa government.

Meanwhile, a PIL petition has been filed in the Madras High Court challenging the prohibitory orders clamped in about 50 villages in Radhapuram taluk in Tirunelveli District as part of measures taken for commissioning the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant.

The petition contended that the depriving the people of their fundamental right of free movement in the name of maintaining public peace and tranquility was a violation of constitutional norms.

Petitioner P Pugalenti, advocate and Director of Prisoners Rights Forum, claimed that the restraint orders under section 144 CrPC curbing the rights of the people was a virtual arrest of them for no fault of theirs.

He said the protest against commissioning of the nuclear power facility at Kudankulam was a non-violent and peaceful by people to express their legitimate grievances.

Pugalenti sought an order to declare as null and void the prohibitory orders in force till April 2.

Cited Source:

<http://ibnlive.in.com/news/kudankulam-npcl-tn-govt-to-review-situation/241478-3.html>

6. KKNPP: Idinthakarai fast venue, a big draw

Express News Service

Last Updated: 22 Mar 2012 10:27:39 AM IST

TIRUNELVELI: With more and more number of fishermen expressing solidarity with PMANE coordinator S P Udayakumar and his associate M Pushparayan's fast-un-to-death which entered the third day at Idinthakarai on Thursday, the police have allegedly blocked all routes to the fast venue.

Hundreds of women along with their children turned up at the venue to listen to Udayakumar, who said, "If the police want to arrest, let them arrest all of us." Children in the area have stopped going to school and participated in the protest. Protestors claimed that they could not send their wards to school as the police have blocked all the routes.

PMANE functionary M Pushparayan told Express that Idinthakarai has been isolated and the police have blocked the supply of commodities, including milk and water. Power supply to was suspended suddenly from Tuesday morning to 8pm on Wednesday. "Nobody is allowed to enter or leave Idinthakarai," he said. As the district administration had clamped

Section 144, residents from Punnakayal to Kootapuli has been prevented from participating in the protest.

Cited Source:

<http://expressbuzz.com/topnews/kknpp-idinthakarai-fast-venue-a-big-draw/374801.html>

7. Kudankulam row: Situation improves at protest site

NDTV Correspondent, Updated: March 22, 2012 09:45 IST



Idinthakarai (Tamil Nadu): There is significant improvement at the Idinthakarai village, Ground Zero of the protests against the Kudankulam nuclear power plant in Tamil Nadu. The check post blocking the entry into the village has been removed. The police are allowing the entry of vehicles into the area which has been seeing heated protests over the nuclear plant.

There was speculation last night that the police could arrest Dr S P Udhayakumar, the man who has led the charge against the controversial power project. That did not happen but the villagers continued to remain vigil the whole night. There are reports that he may be arrested today.

Mr Udhayakumar is facing charges of sedition and waging war against the country. He is on an indefinite hunger strike in Idinthakarai ever since Tamil Nadu chief minister J Jayalalithaa gave the go-ahead to begin work at the controversial plant earlier this week. Villagers who have been protesting along with him for the last seven months say that they too would court arrest with him. But the police allege that the activist is using the locals as a human shield to evade arrest.

The anti-nuclear campaigner, meanwhile, said they are all prepared to be arrested. "If police want to arrest us, let them arrest all of us here. All of us here are overstepping the law, so let them arrest all of us. It is not appropriate to arrest one or two of us. We are all prepared to be arrested."

"I have not stolen any public money. I have not done anything wrong to anybody... I am not a politician... why should I be arrested?" he added.

The check posts were removed after allegations that the police had stopped essential supplies like milk and drinking water from reaching the village. The Tamil Nadu police chief, however, denied these allegations.

The upcoming Kudankulam nuclear plant is within a radius of a kilometre from the village where regular work has resumed after the state government order. Nearly 300 scientists keep moving into the plant on regular shifts. According to V Narayanasamy, Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office, the work will be completed within two months.

Meanwhile, the Madras High Court will today hear a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) against the prohibitory orders clamped in the area.

The petition, filed by P Pugalenth, an advocate and Director of Prisoners Rights Forum, contended that depriving the people of their fundamental right of free movement in the name of maintaining public peace and tranquillity was a violation of constitutional norms.

The petitioner sought an order to declare as null and void the prohibitory orders in force till April 2.

Dr Udhayakumar points to the recent Fukushima tragedy in Japan to bolster his argument that the Kudankulam plant is not safe for those who live in close proximity. He has struck a chord with the villagers and that has catapulted him to be the face of the anti-nuclear campaign in the area.

In September, the state Cabinet had passed a resolution demanding that the Prime Minister order a halt of operations at Kudankulam till those living in the area were convinced that they are not at risk. Dr Manmohan Singh then deputed experts and ministers to assess the plant and answer the questions of villagers. Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa had also commissioned her own panel of experts to study the plant. Her clearance for the project came right after an important by-election in the Tirunelveli

district, where the plant is located. In an attempt to pacify the area, she announced a Rs. 500 crore package to improve roads and infrastructure in the area.

The nuclear power project, worth Rs. 13,000 crores and being set up with assistance from Russia will upon completion have six reactors, making this will India's largest power-generating complex. A pair of two 1,000-megawatt reactors will kick start production.

The protesters, mostly fishermen from three districts, are worried that the seaside plant may damage the ecosystem with nuclear waste and ruin their livelihoods. The Prime Minister's recent remarks that protests against Kudankulam were possibly receiving foreign funding provoked much anger among NGOs.

Cited Source:

<http://www.ndtv.com/article/india/kudankulam-row-situation-improves-at-protest-site-188706&cp>

8. Anti-Kudankulam stir continues as activist refuses to surrender

The logistics of arresting the core activists against the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Project (KNPP) continued to engage the top brass of the Tamil Nadu Police on Wednesday, as the anti-KNPP Struggle Committee's convenor S P Udayakumar nonchalantly pressed his "Gandhian defiance," rebuffing a request to surrender.

Sitting amid hundreds of relay fasters at the coastal hamlet of Idinthakarai, 2 km north of Kudankulam, for the third day, Udayakumar said though the police wanted him and his close associates to "surrender" for going on an "indefinite fast" defying the prohibitory orders in force, "the police should in fact arrest all of us on fast; we will cooperate if they peacefully take all of us into custody." This has created a fresh impasse, as police do not want a showdown at any cost.

Amid an uneasy calm in and around Kudankulam with thousands of police personnel, including Central Rapid Action Force (RAF), encircling the area, mobility has been extremely restricted except for emergency services like ambulances. "They have even cut off power supply and we are in darkness," cried Pushparayan, a core member of the Struggle Committee.

"The overall situation is peaceful; but I cannot comment on operational things," Tirunelveli District Superintendent of Police Vijayendra Bidari told Deccan Herald over phone when asked to confirm rumours that Udayakumar and his key aides could be arrested under NSA "anytime now".

Apparently, the police, through dialogue, hope to disentangle the relay fasters from the 16-member "core group" of the People's Movement Against Nuclear Energy, who are spearheading the agitation.

Meanwhile, a private school run by Udayakumar and his wife in Nagercoil in neighbouring Kanyakumari district was reportedly the target of attack by some miscreants on Tuesday night.

Cited Source:

<http://www.deccanherald.com/content/236389/anti-kudankulam-stir-continues-activist.html>

9. N-plant on, Koodankulam tense

March 22, 2012, DC, Koodankulam



Tension is rising in nearby Idinthakarai village, where anti-nuke protesters continued 'fast-to-death' for the third day Wednesday even as nuclear scientists and technicians, assisted by Russian experts, stepped up work for getting the first 1,000-MW reactor operational at Koodankulam Nuclear Power Project.

"The state government has ensured security through police deployment. We will work round-the-clock to get the plant running as soon as possible. People and industries badly need power and we will deliver on our promise," a senior plant official said.

Protesters led by S.P. Udayakumar of People's Movement Against Nuclear Energy remained unfazed by the huge police deployment though complaining the government had cut supply of essentials such as water, milk and electricity to break their resolve.

Meanwhile, unidentified miscreants broke the compound wall and ransacked classrooms of a school run by Mr Udayakumar in Nagercoil, about 20 km from Koodankulam, in the early hours of Wednesday.

His wife Meera Udayakumar, school principal, alleged the attack took place immediately after a police constable posted following an attack by Hindu activists on March 3 left. She said she had been receiving threat calls.

Mr Udayakumar, sitting on a hunger protest at Idinthakarai, was quick to see police hand in the attack. He said a protester arrested by police had phoned his wife to say his life was in danger.

Police denied harassment. "In fact, we are scaling down presence at Idinthakarai and surrounding areas. We are not interested in going there to get Udayakumar. We will wait. Let's see who blinks first," said a senior police officer.

Cited Source:

<http://www.deccanchronicle.com/channels/nation/south/n-plant-koodankulam-tense-527>