

# **1. Mobile phone based report for Community Radio from Idinthakarai, Kudankulam**

**MARCH 22, 2012**

**Tags: anti-nuclear protest, community radio, Kudankulam, Udayakumar by  
ponni**

Recording of a report by Sundari from Idinthakarai, the village in Kudankulam where many are on fast unto death and 15000 people have gathered in protest of the Nuclear Plant. Sundari is a long time local activist in the region who has been part of the struggle against the nuclear plant.

Police have cracked down on the village and there is now a complete blockade. Journalists are not being allowed at all. This is an effort to get news out regularly. This recording has been made possible by the efforts of activists who work with enabling reporting for community radio through mobile phones. These broadcast and others that will follow will be sent to community radio networks within Tamilnadu and around the country. Please spread the news. A translation is available below.

Sundari reports from Idinthakarai here.

I am calling from Idinthakarai. Can I speak now?

My name is Sundari. I am from Idinthakarai. We have been in a protest against the Nuclear Plant since the past 219 days. Till now, we have not caused any nuisance to the government or the public. We are holding a Peaceful Protest. The Chief Minister told us that she will stand by the people. When Manmohan Singh declared that he will open the nuclear plant, she said that the wishes o the local people is what matters to her. She closed the plant saying it is against the wishes of the people. Now suddenly, in a completely unexpected manner, has brought it the paramilitary and police. We are being tortured as much as the people in Sri Lanka must have been. There is no water. They have stopped the electricity

connection to our village. Even milk packets have not been allowed in for the children. They are not allowing any journalists inside. They are not allowing anyone from the nearby villages to come in. No one is being allowed out of the village. All forms of transport have been stopped, including buses. Any people who come to help us are being arrested immediately. They sent the police and told us to ask Udayakumar to surrender. They are forcing us to make him surrender. They are threatening us with harm and say they can do what they want and there is nothing we can do about it. Here we are, women, children, pregnant women- we are all here. Around 15000 of us have gathered here. This is not an individual struggle of Udayakumar. This is a struggle that all of us people here, who live here, are fighting for our soil, our ocean and our livelihood. This struggle is for that. Now why the state pretending like this individual person is has fought this struggle. That is a huge crime. We are all in this struggle together. How can they isolate him like this? We cannot have Udayakumar surrender. We have said, brings vans for all 15000 of us and we will climb into them calmly and peacefully and court arrest. We are ready for that. But they won't accept that. From Kuthakuli 180 people have been arrested. About 48 among them are women. They have small children that they have left behind. Their cattle are standing unfed. They have taken these women put them in a dungeon and tortured them. This is wrong. What crime have they committed? They have simply performed their democratic right and duty to protest. This is not a struggle that began yesterday. It has been on for seven months. How come we don't have the right to protest? People who have murdered ten people can roam free in this country. But here, our children don't have milk. My heart breaks to think of the brutality of the government. We are unable to silence the cries of the hungry children. This is manifold of what has happened to the people in Sri Lanka. The world knows what is happening. What has happened to us should not happen to any people across the world. All we ask for is that you give milk for our children. We are asking that you arrest all 15000 of us. We will not allow

for Udayakumar to be arrested alone. We are struggling peacefully. Tell us if we have harmed a single person. This is a fast unto death through peaceful means. Tell us if this is wrong. And all this for the nuclear plant that is so harmful for all of humanity. How is this fair? In a situation where women in labour have not been able to leave. We have kept her at home. What if something happens to that mother or child? Where will we go? All I am asking is- What have we done wrong? Why are we being tortured? We are in the midst of so much torture. They have blocked our village of completely. They have not let any journalists in. Every five minutes the security personnel come and intimidate us with guns and people run helter skelter. And they retreat and come back again. They are intimidating us. It breaks my heart to think that this is a democracy and that the Chief Minister is a woman. Many of us are on fast unto death. Nobody has come to our support. So I plead with you- the plant has not even been opened yet and already we are in this state. How are we going to live on this earth at this rate? I plead to with you to let the world know and this should not happen to anybody else. I plead with you. Thank you

**Source:** <http://kafila.org/2012/03/22/mobile-phone-based-report-for-community-radio-from-idinthakarai-kudankulam/#more-12101>

## 2. Kudankulam protest: 'NGOs funding being probed'

**Last Updated: Friday, March 23, 2012, 00:16**

**New Delhi:** Government on Thursday said it was still not proved that the money received by NGOs in Tamil Nadu from abroad was being used for protests against nuclear power projects and a probe in this regard is underway. Speaking in the Rajya Sabha, Minister of State for PMO, V Narayanasamy also refused to identify the NGOs, which are under investigation, and said it cannot be divulged as long as the investigations are not completed. In his statement, he said preliminary reports indicate that NGOs in the country, especially those working in and around Kudankulam area and involved in the agitation against the nuclear power plant, are receiving funds from certain countries.

"Detailed investigation will reveal the source of funding and the expenditure pattern of these NGOs that are opposing the Kudankulam nuclear power project. CBI inquiry against two NGOs has been ordered. Two criminal cases have been referred to Tamil Nadu police for investigation," he said.

Quoting a recent interview of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, he said while Singh had very clearly said that the NGOs from US and Scandinavian countries are sending money to people who are involved in the protests here, "whether the same money is being used (to fuel protests here) is not proved."

To repeated questions, he said, "Investigations are going on... so far as investigations are not complete" and refused to identify the suspected NGOs. He said as far as the question about the name of NGOs is concerned, the entire investigation is being carried out by the Home Ministry.

Referring to an earlier statement of Home Minister P Chidambaram on the issue, Narayanasamy said, "We have identified four NGOs, which are actively involved near Kudankulam (nuclear power project in Tamil Nadu)."

**Source:** [http://zeenews.india.com/news/tamil-nadu/kudankulam-protest-ngos-funding-being-probed\\_765443.html](http://zeenews.india.com/news/tamil-nadu/kudankulam-protest-ngos-funding-being-probed_765443.html)

### 3. Kudankulam protests costing govt Rs 10 lakh a day

India | Updated Mar 23, 2012 at 10:10am IST

**Chennai:** As the renewed protests against the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant enter the fifth day on Friday, statistics show that the government is losing close to Rs 10 lakh a day due to the protests on the project that cost over Rs 13,000 crore to set up.

Work at the Indo-Russian project, which was at a standstill following eight month-long protests by locals spearheaded by People's Movement Against Nuclear Energy (PMANE), resumed since Monday after Tamil Nadu government announced its decision to go ahead with the project.

To commission the first unit as soon as possible, more manpower has been mobilised.



Meanwhile, anti-nuclear plant agitators said that food and water supplies are running low and blamed the government for blocking supply. The police,

however, claimed they are trying to restore facilities but villagers are preventing it.

However, anti-nuclear activists under PMANE convenor SP Udayakumar continued to observe their indefinite fast at Idinthakarai, epicentre of the stir against the nuclear plant, protesting the March 19 state Cabinet's decision to go ahead with the project.

"These people are treating us like terrorists. But we won't give up. Even if I'm arrested, the protest will go on," said Udayakumar.

Over 3000 police personnel were placed on guard outside the nuclear plant, prohibitory orders were enforced and roads leading to Idinthakarai were blocked.

But four days later, things have improved on the ground. The police force has reduced, vehicles are being allowed into the area and essential supplies like water, milk, electricity etc have been restored. The protesters though remain firm in their demands and refuse to relent.

**Source:**<http://ibnlive.in.com/news/kudankulam-protests-costing-govt-rs-10-lakh-a-day/241826-3.html>

#### **4. We feel cheated by the chief minister: Udayakumar**

V Mayilvaganan, TNN | Mar 23, 2012, 12.48AM IST Article

The most prominent leader of the protest at Idinthakarai against the Kudankulam nuclear plant, S P Udayakumar, tells V Mayilvaganan that protestors felt betrayed by the state government. , tells V Mayilvaganan that protestors felt betrayed by the state government. He also reflects on the lessons learnt from the struggle and the latter's future course: Do you feel let down by the major political parties? Right from the beginning there was no support from the political parties. We didn't start this protest expecting their support. All the political parties are dominated by Brahmins and they could not accept people like fishermen and dalits posing a challenge to the government. Of course, we feel cheated by the chief minister J Jayalithaa. She has been using us. She encouraged us all these days and allowed us to carry on with the protest. I visited the chief minister's office twice and met her and also visited the collector's office. Even then, there were cases against me. Why didn't the police arrest me then? She has let us down.

Do you have a sense of failure? What was your reaction when you learnt about the state cabinet decision favouring the commissioning of the plant? There was no sense of failure. But yes, I felt we were deceived. We were tricked. But I could a sense a pattern, a build-up in the direction of the state government's reversal of its decision to support the protesters. When I met the chief minister for the first time she was very cordial. I had a one-on-one talk for 45 minutes. But the second time she did not even talk to me. So the state government's decision was not entirely unexpected. It was only delayed by seven months.

Where is the protest headed now?

The plant could be shut down even after the plant is commissioned. There are several examples. It could be shut down a day after commissioning, two months

or even six months. We will continue the protest. We have become stronger now. Everyone is aware of the ill-effects of the nuclear plant. Police say that only you and a few other activists have violated the law. Why do you want the police to arrest all the villagers and put them into trouble? I am ready to surrender. I am happy to get arrested. But it is the people who insist that they will not let me get arrested alone. Police assume that once I am arrested they can clamp down on the villagers and thwart the protest. Then they hope to establish that it was me who is instigating the protest. But the protests would continue even if I am arrested.

In your latest list of demands, you have not called for stoppage of work at the plant. In fact, you have asked for conducting safety drills mandatory for commissioning the plant. Are you stepping down from the core demand of shutting the plant?

No. That is a standing demand. Our ultimate objective is to get the plant shut down. At this point our immediate objective is to get the arrested protestors released. Are you hopeful of closing down the plant? Yes. If there is an independent inquiry by impartial and fair-minded Indian and international experts including geologists, oceanographers and hydrologists, the flaws in the Kudankulam nuclear plant would be brought to light. What are lessons learnt from the seven-month long protest?

The key lesson learnt is that even an ordinary citizen has a mind of his own. He can grasp, analyse, understand and take a decision on policy. We have also learnt that the ruling classes have failed to take this seriously. The government's reaction to the protests has given us a feeling that India is being re-colonised.

**Citedsource:** <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/madurai/We-feel-cheated-by-the-chief-minister-Udayakumar/articleshow/12373656.cm>

## 5. Idinthakarai limps back to normalcy

V Mayilvaganan, TNN | Mar 23, 2012, 12.46AM IST  
Article

TIRUNELVELI: Power and water supply was resumed to Idinthakarai village on Wednesday night. Police forces deployed in and around the village were also in the process of moving out to the relief of villagers in Idinthakarai as well as adjoining villages like Vijayapathy and Kutapuli. However, people in Idinthakarai refused to venture beyond the village and remained in the protest pandal for the fourth consecutive day.

A senior police official admitted that some of the police force has been withdrawn. "There was no law and order problem and we felt the presence of the force was not required in such numbers," said the official. The withdrawal of police began on Wednesday night itself. Soon after the Madras high court order on Thursday, more personnel were withdrawn and a skeletal force is present in the area. However, a considerable number of police personnel and paramilitary troops continue to be deployed in Kudankulam, guarding the entry to the nuclear plant site.

With a visible lowering of police presence, there is also a mellowing down of anger against them.

Power and water supply were resumed to Idinthakarai on Wednesday night following severe unrest among the villagers. But bus services to Idinthakarai and adjoining villages are yet to be restored. Buses ply only up to Kudankulam. Two teachers from a government-aided school at

Idinthakarai who were deputed for Plus Two examination duty could not report for work due to absence of bus service. Buses had stopped plying to Kudankulam and neighbouring villages fearing damage to the vehicles since the

protests aggravated since March 19, when the state cabinet decided to back the commissioning of the nuclear plant.

Meanwhile, Kudankulam Nuclear Power Project site director R Sundar told the media that they were racing against time to commission the unit I of the plant. "We have invited experts from various nuclear plants in the country. Some of them have already reached Kudankulam and the rest would arrive shortly. Work is on full swing," he said.

MDMK leader Vaiko and Nam Thamizhar Iyakkam founder Seeman, who continue to support the agitation against the plant, are expected to visit the village on Friday.

**Cited source:** <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/madurai/Idinthakarai-limps-back-to-normalcy/articleshow/12373640.cms>

## 6. Kudankulam N-plant reactors get green signal

B Sivakumar, TNN | Mar 23, 2012, 03.57AM IST  
Article

CHENNAI: The two reactors lying unused at the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant since its closure in October last year following a series of protests by environmental activists are safe and functional, scientists of the Nuclear Power Corporation of India (NPCIL) said on Thursday.

Four days after the plant was reopened with the state cabinet giving the nod, scientists and other support staff has been engaged in cleaning the reactor and equipment.

"Around 700 of our workers are working in three shifts and we are also deploying staff from other projects like Kalpakkam to catch up with the lost time," said S A Bharadwaj, director NPCIL. Cleaning will take a lot of time and it is unusual for a reactor work on which was completed to the extent of 99.4%, to be kept unused for such a long time. Once the cleaning process if completed, the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board will have to certify about the condition of the reactor and ventilators.

**Cited source:** <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Kudankulam-N-plant-reactors-get-green-signal/articleshow/12375001.cms>