

Narmada: non-suspension of dam work TODAY is risking people's lives, irreversibly!

Tuesday 2 May 2006, by [NBA](#), [PATKAR Medha](#), [ROSARIO Clifton](#) (Date first published: 1 May 2006).

NARMADA BACHAO ANDOLAN (NBA) to intensify the Campaign when 'Democracy' is shying away!!

The Narmada case of 35 000 families, already affected and to be affected if the dam is built to 122m, pleaded before the Supreme Court of India today, by the 48 representative oustees from Madhya Pradesh, has met with a stalemate once again. This is neither technical nor financial, but a political stalemate. When all the parties, including the state governments, the Union of India and the aggrieved affected Adivasis, farmers have already put forth all their views, facts and analysis, including the legal violations. After our submissions, what only remains is the decision to be made. This, as it was made clear today, will have to wait till Monday, i.e. 08.05.2006, with no justifiable reason for this delay.

As at today's hearing Shri Shanti Bhushan, Council for the Petitioners, demonstrated that the official documents including submissions themselves, vindicate NBA's position that Resettlement and Rehabilitation (R&R) is incomplete and the decision to raise the dam is illegal. Moreover, the game of numbers exposed clearly shows the deliberate attempt to underestimate the number of PAFs while drum beating the benefits especially to Gujarat, which can't be ignored. It was, therefore, clear that no one can argue completion of R&R and compliance with the law; which implies an immediate suspension of the work at the damsite. It is unfortunate but also indicative of the democratic mockery that the irreversible damage to life and livelihood of thousands of families that is being done by the construction is still not stalled - neither by the PM, who is authorized, nor by the Apex Court of India.

We feel aghast to know the great and unacceptable risk to human life that the highest echelons of power have decided to take by postponing the judgement to Monday, May 8th. We will have to wait, watch and test the powers that are to take responsibility for justice but we don't think everything that is happening is just. We, on the other hand, have to intensify the voice raised and actions taken by the development victims all over, which will question callous politics with all strength and conviction.

Medha Patkar
Clifton Rosario