

India - Koodankulam Anti-Nuclear Struggle: A Chronology

Tuesday 10 April 2012, by [UDAYAKUMAR S. P.](#) (Date first published: 1 January 2009).

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Part I

(From *The Hindu*, *Frontline*, *The Times of India*, *India Abroad*, *The New York Times* reports, and other local publications in Tamil Nadu. This is a partial list of some of the events.)

1988

November 20: The Soviet Leader Mikhail Gorbachev and the then Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi signed the Koodankulam Nuclear Power Project deal in Delhi.

[It is important to note that this agreement came within just two years of the nightmarish Chernobyl accident that occurred on April 26, 1986 with disastrous consequences.]

December 19: The proposed foundation laying ceremony was put off indefinitely due to widespread opposition to the project among the local public.

December 19: The opponents of the Koodankulam project which included 'Samathuva Samudaya Iyakkam' (Social Equality Movement) of Rev. Y. David took out a massive rally at Tirunelveli. [Several groups such as the National Alliance of People's Movements (NAPM), the National Fish workers Forum (NFF), the Tamil Nadu Fish workers Union (TNFU), the Social Action Movement (SAM), the Palmyrah Worker's Development Society (PWDS), the Peace Association for Social Action (PASA), Group for a Peaceful Indian Ocean (GPIO), and several others have directly or indirectly opposed the Koodankulam project in various parts of Tamil Nadu.]

1989

January 11: Another massive rally was held at Nagercoil against the project.

May 1: The coastal march "Protect Waters, Protect Life" held at Kanyakumari was broken up by driving a local transport bus into it. Six fishermen were badly injured in police firing and false cases were slapped on the protesters.

August 27: Over 120 organizations representing farmers, fish workers, women, students, environment groups, and representatives of various political parties (except the Communist Party of India and the Communist Party of India-Marxists) organized a meeting in Kanyakumari district.

Thomas Kochery of the National Fishworkers Forum (NFF) and Dr. Kumaradhas, a local politician, led the Anti-Koodankulam Committee.

1990

April 29: Several organizations and the public demonstrated in Nagercoil against using Pechiparai dam water for the Koodankulam reactors.

1991

January 30: A bicycle rally organized by Murpokku Manavar Sangam (Progressive Students' Association) and Murpokku Ilaigai Ani (Progressive Youth League) started in Madras and went through Vellore, Dharmapuri, Coimbatore, Ramanathapuram and Madurai.

February 10: The rally concluded with a public meeting followed by a cultural program.

1989-1991

Soviet Union Collapsed; Gorbachev lost power; Rajiv Gandhi was killed; and Koodankulam project was shelved.

1997

March 21: The American President Bill Clinton reportedly put pressure on his Russian counterpart, Boris Yeltsin, at their Helsinki Summit to refrain from building the nuclear reactors in Koodankulam. Earlier this year, the American Vice-President, Al Gore, had brought up the issue with the Russian Prime Minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin, during a session of the bilateral joint commission.

March 25: Indian Prime Minister H. D. Deve Gowda and the Russian President Boris Yeltsin signed an agreement, a supplement to the 1988 agreement, to commission a detailed project report on the Koodankulam project. Gowda was accompanied by among others, two Chidambarams, the Finance Minister and the Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC).

According to the deal, Russia would deliver two Russian-designed standard high-pressure VVER-1000 water-cooled and water-moderated reactors that would produce 1,000 Mwt power per unit.

Moscow would extend a \$2.6 billion credit to India at four percent annual interest to be paid back over 12 years after the projected commissioning of the first reactor. The credit would be paid back in hard currency and part in clearing dollars and both sides were not decided on the exact proportion of this repayment scheme.

April 7: According to a report in The Hindu ("India: Koodankulam - experts express concern" by R. Parthasarathy in the issue dated April 7, 1997): "The State Government's request to the Centre to reconsider the proposal for a nuclear plant at Koodankulam with Russian collaboration in Tirunelveli district has caused concern among energy experts."

[Obviously, the Tamil Nadu Government had problem with the proposed project but was swiftly subdued by the nukedom and New Delhi?!]

April 15: The Koodankulam project's cost estimate in 1988 was Rs. 6,000 crores. The present start-estimate (as opposed to the end- cost) today is an alarming sum of Rs. 17,000 crores. [One crore is ten million]

September 5: The goal of producing 20,000 Megawatt nuclear power by the year 2020 was said to

have been established by the Indian nukedom in a "Vision 2020" seminar.

September 9: Dr. Hans Blix, the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), said that India's refusal to subject all its atomic installations to an IAEA governed international inspection regime was likely to stand in the way of India's imports of nuclear technology from the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG).

October 6: It was reported that the Russians "seem to agree to take back the (spent) fuel," but a clear agreement was yet to be reached.

December 20: It was reported that Dr. Alexy Yablokov, Chairman of the Russian National Ecological Security Council, stated that the Russian reactors were "highly unsafe."

1998

January 23: Agreement on financial terms was reached. India had suggested that a major part of the payment would be made in hard currency (dollar) and the rest in Rupees, but Russians insisted on making the whole payment in hard currency. It was agreed finally that the entire payment would be in hard currency with some compromises on the payment mechanism.

June 21: Russian Atomic Energy Minister, Yevgeny Adamov, and Indian Atomic Energy Commission Chairman, R. Chidambaram signed a supplementary accord in Delhi to go ahead with the Koodankulam project. Chidambaram told the press that a detailed project report for the construction would be prepared in the next two years and the actual construction work would take another six years after the report submission.

The Chairman and Managing Director of the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL), Y. S. R. Prasad, announced at the signing of the agreement that the spent fuel from Koodankulam "will not be sent to Russia just as we do not send the spent fuel from Tarapur. We can reprocess it and use it for our reactors." Prasad said later in November 1998, "it was too early to think about" setting up a reprocessing plant at Koodankulam (The Hindu, November 5, 1998). The Koodankulam reactor would use about 30 tonnes of fuel annually.

June 24: The US said that the Russian decision to build two nuclear reactors in Koodankulam was not good news and that it sent the "wrong signal at the wrong time." [The reference was to India's May 1998 nuclear tests.] The State Department spokesman James Rubin said: "Even before the latest test, we urged Russia's obligations as a member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group not to sell reactors to countries that didn't have so-called full scope safeguards on all facilities."

July 4: A Frontline report ("Koodankulam is back" by T. S. Subramanian in issue dated July 4, 1998) mentions: "The [Nuclear Power Corporation] sources said that up to six reactors could be built at the site. The area where the first two reactors would come up had been identified and the Russians were satisfied with it."

[It looks like the Indian nukedom has a larger plan for Koodankulam that is kept away from the Indian public. The Atomic Energy Act of 1962 (clause 18) states that we cannot ask, or gather or disclose any information about present, past or future or planned atomic plants. This officially sanctioned secrecy helps the Indian nukedom get away with anything and everything.]

October 18-22: The National Alliance of People's Movements (NAPM) organized a workshop at Nagercoil on Koodankulam and related issues.

November 4: Russian and Indian nuclear engineers have started working on a \$57 million Detailed Project Report (DPR). The reactors are expected to be ready by 2006 and the cost would be roughly \$3.1 billions.

November 5: The Indian nukedom organized a seminar in Chennai to take public into confidence on Koodankulam. The Atomic Energy regularly Board (AERB) Chairman, P. Rama Rao, said, without disclosing details, that “the site evaluation for Koodankulam had been done.”

December 5: The National Alliance of People’s Movements (NAPM) organized a seminar in Chennai (Madras) on “Today Pokhran, Tomorrow Koodankulam” with a lot of activists, journalists, researchers and the public.

1999

January: The National Alliance of People’s Movement (NAPM) organized workshops on the dangers of the VVER 1000 reactors (to be used in Koodankulam) with the help of an Australian scientist John Hallam at Nagercoil, Tirunelveli and Madurai. Several Kanyakumari district residents held individual consultations to initiate a mass movement against the project.

February 21: The Madras High Court upheld release of water from Pechiparai dam in Kanyakumari district to the Koodankulam Atomic Power Plant (KAPP). The annual demand of water at the rate of 10 cusecs a day would amount to nine million cubic meter by which 945 acres could be irrigated.

March 26: There was a leak of heavy water in the second unit of MAPS reactor at Kalpakkam, near Chennai. The Nuclear Power Corporation (NPC) claimed: “The release to the environment is maintained well within the limits specified by the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB).” [The AERB is just another wing of the Indian nukedom.] The NPC press release said further: “As per the design of the pressurised heavy water reactor, a small quantity of the heavy water escaping from the system is recovered continuously through vapour recovery dryers and recycled back to the coolant system.

April 12: Sergei N. Ivanov, director general of the Russian Electric Power Company that operates 29 Nuclear power plants in Russia said that his enterprise “lacks money to pay workers, perform maintenance and repairs, inspect crucial pipes and even buy fuel. “He said, “At times the plants have only two or three days of fuel on hand.” The New York Times reported (April 12, 1999): “The Russian company would like to close nine of older reactors, but it says it has no money for decommissioning them. It says its best prospect for earning that money is to build additional reactors and sell the power.

April 21: Private sector participation in nuclear power generation in India was welcomed by the NPC and AEC officials. In order to meet the 20,000 megawatt nuke power by 2020, they needed Rs. 80,000 crores and hence this plan.

July 15: The Hindu newspaper editorially noted: “There is also no unanimity of opinion on the operational efficiency of nuclear generation and its being more economical as well on matters relating to safety, all of which will have to be thoroughly assessed before decisions are taken on the projects now on the anvil.

July 28: The Indo-Russian Inter-Government Commission discussed ways and means of expanding bilateral trade and utilizing the funds for investments in Indian projects. Russia would open a rupee account with the Reserve Bank of India to utilize the debt funds for investments in India such as the Koodankulam project.

November 14: The opponents of the Koodankulam project met in Nagercoil, decided to revive the struggle against it, and founded the “Anumin Nilaya Ethirpu Iyakkam” (Nuclear Power Project Opposition Movement). The group started sending postcards to the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu requesting him to stop the project.

December 6: India and Russia today decided to explore jointly gas hydrates -a new form of energy source- in the sea surrounding India. This is one of the 25 joint projects of the International Long Term Programme (ILTP) of cooperation in science and technology.

December 26: The "Anumin Nilaya Ethirpu Iyakkam" (Nuclear Power Project Opposition Movement) organized a seminar at Nagercoil against the Koodankulam project.

2000

January: Several hundred organizations and individuals from around the world appealed to the Indian and the Russian authorities in a well-documented sign-on letter to scrap the Koodankulam nuclear power project. Copies of the letter were sent to the Presidents of Sri Lanka and the Maldives also.

2001

May 17: President Bush announces plans to revive the civilian nuclear power industry in the US as part of his energy policy.

May: Jadugoda mines in East Singhbhum district, Jharkhand produce radioactive Uranium Oxide. This "Yellow Cake" is sent to Nuclear Fuel Complex (NFC) in Hyderabad and wastes brought back to Jadugoda and dumped by Uranium Corporation of India Ltd (UCIL) in three tailing ponds causing serious health hazards to tribal people. Mr. Ghanshyam Biruli of Jharkhand Organisation Against Radiation (JOAR) is campaigning against it.

June 9: Twelve Russian experts concluded two-day visit to Koodankulam to finalize tender document.

June 23: Indian Government sanctioned Rs. 125 crores for carrying out the excavation work in Koodankulam. The Centre approved 229 MV third and fourth units at Kaiga.

September 3: NPCIL (Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd.) acknowledged that the company received a budgetary support of Rs. 586 crores to meet capital expenditure. Russian credit of Rs 134 crores for Detailed Project report work of the Koodankulam project was also received. The company raised RS. 659.50 crores from the market and Rs. 145 crores through infrastructure bonds. Russians would provide all materials, equipment, spares and fuel.

September 21: India's N-power capacity expected to be around 10,000 MW in 10 years.

October 4: Ground water in a radius of 10 Kms around the Nuclear Fuel Complex (NFC) has high level of Nitrates which limit oxygen-carrying capacity of blood and cause blue baby syndrome. The Andhra Pradesh State Pollution Control Board (APSCB) officials admit they are unwilling to go near the complex.

October 5: The Times of India editorially commented on October 5, 2001: "...A Chernobyl is waiting to happen here... Unfortunately, in India, nuclear issues are treated as something quite out of the preview of the ordinary citizen and which can only be comprehended by a select group...The kind of medical horror being visited on innocent people by a lax establishment ought to prompt the National Human Rights Commission to take up this issue."

November 3: The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) according financial sanction to commence work on Koodankulam NPP. It is expected to cost RS. 13,171 crores. India would spend Rs. 6,755 crores and the remaining would be Russian credit (at 4 percent interest). Rs. 2,129 crores was allocated to procure fuel (initial core and five reloads). Out of this, Rs. 367 crores would be in

equity form and the rest Russian credit.

November 3: Russia offered earlier this year to build four more reactors at Koodankulam. Although India welcomed it, Russia must overcome Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) restriction. NSG, a 27-member group, calls Russian cooperation in Koodankulam a violation of NSG guidelines on technology transfers. The guidelines require recipient country to accept complete international control over its nuclear program. But India has refused to place its nuclear program under “full-scope safeguards” of IAEA.

November 6: Prime Minister Mr. A. B. Vajpayee signed final agreement on Koodankulam NPP.

November 10: A broad umbrella organization, People’s Movement Against Nuclear Power (PMANP), was founded at Madurai.

December 2: PMANP Steering Committee met for the first time with a comprehensive agenda.

2002

January 6: Kanyakumari Chapter of PMANP planning meeting was held at Nagercoil.

January 19: One-day seminar was organized by the Madurai Chapter of PMANP.

January 29: Tirunelveli Chapter OF PMANP planning meeting was held at Palayamcottai

January 30: Thoothukudi Chapter of PMANP planning meeting was held at Thoothukudi.

February 17: PMANP Steering Committee met at Madurai.

February 28: A one-day seminar on “Health Hazards of Radiation” was organized at Nagercoil by the Nuclear Power Awareness Committee. Koodankulam project director Mr. S. K. Agrawal undertook publicly at a national seminar on “Health Hazards of Radiation” held at Nagercoil that he would share the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), that is said to have been done in 1988, and the Koodankulam site evaluation report with the public. He also expressed willingness to let a few people see the safety analysis report in Mumbai office.

February 29: A few PMANP leaders were shown around the Koodankulam project site by its director Mr. S. K. Agrawal. He said he would share the EIA and other reports as soon as he came back from his Mumbai trip.

April 4: While the Nuclear Power Corporation is on massive expansion drive, no EB in the country is interested in buying power from it because of high cost (Rs 4.20 a unit). NPC is not able to recover some Rs. 400 crores every year.

April 26: A one-day fast at Kanyakumari Collector office (by Nuke Power Awareness Committee).

May 11: PMANP Conference Planning Meeting was held at Radhapuram.

July 13 : Kanyakumari Chapter of PMANP met at Nagercoil.

July 26: PMANP Steering Committee met at Madurai.

July 27: In a major policy shift, NPC has decided to go for 700 MW plants from now on. These plants will come up near existing facilities in Narora, Kakrapar and Kota. Power Minister Mr. Suresh Prabhu said by the end of eleventh plan, nuclear power generation would be about 15,000 MV and in

another ten years, it would be 40,000 MW.

August 30: The Assembly Assurance Committee Chairman, Mr. C. Gnanasekaran, MLA, said Committee members appealed to Koodankulam authorities to allay the neighboring villagers' fears in a public meeting and their suggestions in order to obtain TNPCB consent.

September 8: Two prominent Al-Qaeda leaders claimed in a TV interview that they had initially planned to crash the hijacked plane into nuclear power plants (instead of WTC). It was abandoned as they feared it might "go out of control" but future nuclear targets are not ruled out.

September 20: Addressing the general conference of IAEA in Vienna, Mr. Anil Kakodkar warned that denial of nuclear technology or equipment will increase India's dependence on fossil fuel with associated damage to the global environment.

India cannot have another deal with Russia as they joined NSG. Finland has recently decided to set up a NPP (after a long break of 20 years) by citing the Kyoto Protocol (which requires countries to cut down emissions of greenhouse gases like CO₂ from burning fossil fuels that contribute to global warming).

September 20: KKNPP Director Mr. Agrawal announced in a local college seminar that a mini port would be built at Koodankulam in order to bring the heavy equipment from Russia.

October 1: Strategic Forces Command (SFC) to look after the country's nuclear assets is on the anvil.

October 1: A team of foreign scientists have found out people living by the Chavara-Neendakara coastal area near Kollam in Kerala exhibit a high rate of hereditary "point mutation" in their DNA because of high natural radiation. The monazite sands in the area contain radioactive thorium. Point mutation happens when one of the four bases (that make up the genetic code) along a DNA strand gets changed.

October 19: Mr. Anil Kakodkar said there are no plans to set up power plants in new sites as there are enough space in existing sites.

October 22: On a personal initiative, PMANP leader Mr. Gomez met Sri Lankan Minister for Environment and Forestry, Mr. Rukman Senanayake in Colombo about the dangers of the Koodankulam project to people in southern India and Sri Lanka.

November 9: PMANP Conference Planning meeting was held at Koodankulam. Some 100 people attended the meeting and several committees were constituted.

November 22: The Conference Committee met at Kooduthazhai and took important decisions.

2003

January 25: The PMANP Awareness Conference was held at Koodankulam.

January 30: An NAPM rally and public meeting was held at Nagercoil under the leadership of Medha Patkar.

2004

January 20: A one day hunger-strike was held at World Social Forum, Mumbai by PMANP.

Part II (2nd Half of 2008)

Events in the 2nd Half of 2008

[1] August 16-17, 2008 at Koodankulam

Coalition for Nuclear Disarmament and Peace (CNDP)'s National Coordinating Committee (NCC) Meeting

The first day meeting began at 10:10 am with a welcome Speech by Dr. S. P. Udayakumar. Mrs. Lalita Ramdas was elected to chair the proceedings. Prof. Achin Vanaik suggested that the meeting should begin with a discussion on the Press Release followed by a discussion on the CNDP Charter of Demands. Finally, it was decided that the Charter of demands would be addressed first. Prof. Vanaik started the discussion with the following input.

The Charter should include at least three aspects: viz., the Nuclear Deal, Indo-Iran Relations, and the question of Koodankulam. There are 3 aspects of the deal: Strategic-Political Dimension and the question of Indo-US Partnership, Weapons, and Energy. With respect to the three above noted aspects there are 3 major positions.

The first is the dominant position. From this position the view of the three above noted aspects are as follows. Strategic: The deal will strengthen India's relations with the United States. This is good. Weapons: This will lend legitimacy to India as a nuclear weapons possessing power and allow access to uranium that may be used for weapons production; good again. Energy: And thirdly the deal will help the expansion of civilian nuclear power. And this is of course highly desirable. Whatever price we have to pay in terms of some amount of international monitoring etc. is insignificant as compared to the gains.

The second position, held by many, e.g. that of the BJP, is as follows. The deal helps to improve relations with the US. That is good. But we could have got a better bargain and there was no need to go to the US with a cap in hand. Nuclear weapons are quite desirable but this deal does not permit nuclear testing. The deal does not give us equality with other nuclear weapons possessing powers. All this is bad. That the deal helps the expansion of civilian nuclear energy use is good. But nuclear energy is not going to be of great value in any future energy scenario for India therefore this aspect of the deal is not of much significance. This is essentially the "carrot" to the "stick" of the deal.

The third position is that of the mainstream left parties. The deal is bad. Because: Close strategic-political relationship with the US is bad. There is general silence on the issue of nuclear weapons. The aspect of nuclear power is of little significance as it is not a highly desirable energy source.

Fourth position is held by some of us in CNDP. The deal is bad on all the above counts. Close strategic relations with the US is bad. The deal opens the way to nuclear proliferation; that is bad. And it eases the way to expansion of nuclear power. That too is bad.

Sukla Sen noted, "There has emerged a frightening consensus within the mainstream political establishment. This is the consensus on the theme that considerations of so-called sovereignty and strategic autonomy have absolute priority over everything else. Thus while the government speaks of the deal in no way curtailing our right to conduct nuclear weapons tests, the mainstream opposition

of the Deal criticizes the Deal for the restrictions on nuclear testing that the deal will impose. There has even been talk of the desirability of the hydrogen bomb and the testing thereof. What is alarming is that the mainstream Left Parties are also couching their criticism in terms of sovereignty, strategic autonomy and restrictions on nuclear testing. This line of argument constituted a frontal assault on non-proliferation and global disarmament. We, in contrast, must speak of South Asia free of nuclear weapons."

Admiral Ramdas said that in discussing the Deal we should attend to the following: "We have strategic partnerships with various countries. How does the deal impact on these? The Deal and issues of weapons and energy security: Discuss. The specific points of rejection and/or addition in the Charter of Demands and the Press Release need to be addressed."

Lalmohan from Nagercoil said: "There are two issues here. The first is the short term issue of meeting energy needs. The second is the long term issue of whether in the name of addressing energy needs through nuclear power we are walking into a trap. Nuclear power is a trap for India because, first, this source of power is unsafe on account of radioactive hazards and secondly, as India has little uranium this source of power is unsustainable for India. Therefore with nuclear power India will, on the one hand, be confronted with the problem of disposal of nuclear waste and on the other, will become dependent on countries with uranium. Moreover the strategic alliance with the US will be too costly for India as India will become economically dependent on the US."

Admiral Ramdas said: "We are here in Koodankulam. So we should try to get maximum mileage of this fact. Nuclear plants have far reaching implications and we should stand unambiguously against them. We must strive to dispel the brainwashing that has taken place. In this Deal trading is the paramount interest of the US. What is being sold to us is very bad and on the other hand insignificant in terms of our growing energy demands. We are planning to invest colossal amounts in order to get only a meagre proportion of our future energy demands. Nuclear power plants are biggest guzzlers of water and they will have gravely deleterious effects on coastal ecology and environment."

Praful Bidwai said: "There is a great deal of rubbish being propagated about the deal. One of them is that national sovereignty is being threatened. This is simply not true. There is genuine concern over India's misuse of fissionable material to conduct tests. One must remember that India has already done so once in 1974, when she reneged on her 'civilian use' promise regarding CIRUS and produced plutonium for making the bomb. Incidentally, while we lack the uranium for all our power reactors, we have sufficient uranium for all the military plutonium that we are ever going to need. Nuclear power has proved to be unsafe and undesirable as an energy source. On the other hand we have wind power dramatically surging ahead both at the global level and in India. Investments in nuclear power in India have proved to be expensive and unrewarding and the thorium reactor has proved to be a fiasco. Nuclear power is now being proposed as the solution to climate change on the ground that it is emission-free. However, the term 'emission-free' only applies to the last stage of the nuclear fuel cycle, nuclear fission within the reactors. Everything else, from the mining of fissionable material to its transport and enrichment calls for large-scale energy use leading to the emission of greenhouse gases. Then the Press Release was discussed in great detail and approved unanimously (Please see attachment).

Debasis gave an account of the people's struggle at Haripur in West Bengal against setting up of nuclear power plants. The struggle was initiated sometime in May 2006, when it became clear that the government had surveyed the coastal area in Haripur and was proposing to set up a nuclear cluster in that area. The struggle peaked on 17-18 November 2006 when the NPCIL team was prevented from entering the area. Thereafter for many months there were ceaseless meetings, rallies and group discussions. Thereafter the government seems to have beaten a temporary retreat

and there is a lull. But we are on alert. Santanu said: "The battle was won at that point but the war is far from over."

Achin Vanaik brought the discussion back to the question of having a Convention on Potential and Actual Radiation Victims and asks whether the members were at least prepared to envisage having a preparatory meeting aimed at the Convention. Santanu responded by saying, "If we aim to create a Network on radiation hazards, then that network would need a punchline, a position on which to develop campaign. And that could be 'There are no safe levels of ionizing radiation'. It is on this basis that a network, aiming to address issues of radiation hazards ranging from dental X-Rays to nuclear power plants, could be formed. In such a network physicians would have to play an important role and indeed the issue of ionizing radiation would likely to have the greatest appeal to the more conscious members of the medical community. However, we must remember that radiation in general terms is likely to have less popular and emotive appeal than the question of nuclear power."

At 3:30 pm a Press Conference was conducted at the venue and several reporters from local newspapers and TV networks attended [and the event was widely reported in the local press the following day]. At 6:00 pm a massive public meeting was held in the west bazaar of Koodankulam. Besides the local people, several van loads of people from Kanyakumari, Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi districts came and attended the public meeting. Rev. M. P. Jesuraj presided over the meeting. S. P. Udayakumar introduced the national guests who were going to address the people. Rajalingam of Koodankulam welcomed everyone. Mrs. Lalita Ramdas, Praful Bidwai, Sukla Sen, Anton Gomez, C. Boaz, Initha, Helen Mary, R. S. Lal Mohan, Sandal Muthuraj and many others spoke. A. S. Ravi offered vote of thanks. The meeting came to an end at around 9 pm.

On the second day, the session began at 10:00 am. The "Demand of Charter" was discussed clause by clause; some changes were made and it was decided that the final draft would be distributed soon. Sukla Sen, Praful Bidwai, Lalita Ramdas, and S. P. Udayakumar will work on the changes and prepare the final draft.

As regards declaring Nepal as a nuclear-free nation, Admiral Ramdas asked why an Indian NGO should go and meet the neighboring countries' government leaders. Anil Chaudhry described the background of the decision and pointed out the new openings in Nepal and Bangladesh. It was decided that the CNDP should meet the foreign leaders when they came to India. Admiral Ramdas suggested meeting Indian leaders. The NCC mandated the CNDP to explore possibilities of dialogue in collaborating with local groups and political parties including the 'Communist Party of Nepal' in Nepal in the context of promoting peace and nuclear disarmament.

Achin Vanaik, Dalia, Sukla Sen, Adv. Rajendran from Chittoor, Lal Mohan from Nagercoil, S. P. Udayakumar from Nagercoil, Gabriella Dietrich from NAPM, A. S. Ravi from Koodankulam and Bharathidasan from Idinthakarai reported on various anti-nuclear activities that were held in their areas/states etc.

Many organizational matters were discussed and decided upon. The CNDP website was to be upgraded and redesigned. A pamphlet on Indo-US nuclear deal was planned. Praful Bidwai and Lalita Ramdas would explore ideas for preparing comic books on nuclear power and the Deal. Collin Gonsalvez of Human Rights Law Network could work with us and Praful Bidwai would facilitate that. Adv. Rajendran, M. V. Ramana and S. P. Udayakumar would head the nuclear law study group. And the next NCC meeting of CNDP would be held on December 13-14, 2008 at Kolkata and Wilfred would explore the modalities. The meeting was concluded around lunch time with national anthem.

[2] September 22, 2008 at Nagercoil

The People's Movement Against Nuclear Energy organized a one-day hunger strike in front of the Kanyakumari District Administrator's office at Nagercoil on September 22, 2008 with the three demands that the Koodankulam nuclear power project that was threatening the people of Kanyakumari, Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi districts must be stopped immediately, that the nuclear agreements India had signed with the US, Russia and France scrapped, and that the nuclear weapons program of India wrapped up completely. Sr. Assuntha presided over the event and flagged off the hunger strike. Tamil Nadu Fishworkers' Union president Peter Dhas, Human Rights Protection Movement president Gunaseelan, Tamil Nadu-Pondicherry Consumer Federation president Navaneetham, Create Trust president Ponnambalam, Koodankulam panchayat union councilor Sandal Muthuraj, Land Protection Sangam president Padmadhas, social activist Samji, Helen Mary, C. Boaz, Voice from the Margins convener S. M. Prithviraj, P. Saravanabhavan, R. Ariharasuthan, S. P. Udayakumar, S. Lidwin, Philomena, Joyce, Adv. Sivasubramanian, Fr. Jesuraj, and many others spoke at the event. S. Lidwin concluded the hunger strike in the evening. Some of the strikers handed a memorandum to the Kanyakumari District Administrator, B. Jothi Nirmala, that demanded immediate closure of the Koodankulam plants. Several activists sang thought-provoking songs throughout the day.

[3] September 29, 2008 at Nagercoil

Scores of school children from all over Kanyakumari district, who are members of the Children's Panchayat, made a representation to the Kanyakumari District Administrator on September 29, 2008. They expressed their fear that the Koodankulam nuclear plant would give rise to dangerous radiation that will spread through air and water and damage the health and well-being of all the people, especially the young children and their futures. They were concerned that the additional four plants at Koodankulam would further damage their futures and hence demanded that electricity be produced through alternative means. They wanted the Kanyakumari District Administrator to stop the Koodankulam nuclear power project immediately.

[4] October 11, 2008 at Alaththankarai (Near Rajakkamangalam, Kanyakumari District)

The People's Movement Against Nuclear Energy organized a one-day hunger strike from 10 am to 5 pm at Alaththankarai village near Rajakkamangalam on October 11, 2008 with the three demands that the Koodankulam nuclear power project that is threatening the people of southern Tamil Nadu and southern Kerala must be scrapped immediately, that the nuclear agreements India has signed with the US, Russia and France rescinded totally, and that the nuclear weapons program of India abandoned completely. Mr. Chellappan, Elluvilai panchayat councilor, presided over the event in the presence of Vellimalai panchayat councilor Mrs. Thangaleela. Mr. Vijayaraghavan, Alaththankarai community president, flagged off the hunger strike. Social activists Samji, C. Boaz, P. Saravanabhavan, R. Ariharasuthan, S. P. Udayakumar and S. Lidwin, the convenor of the Campaign Against Violence on Women spoke at the event.

[5] October 25-28, 2008; Cancer and Alternative Energy Awareness Campaign in Kanyakumari District

A four-day awareness-raising tour was organized to educate the people of Kanyakumari district coastal villages about the harms of nuclear power plants, cancer disease and alternative sources of energy generation. The vehicle tour began at 9 am on October 25, 2008 at Neerodi village with some 25 participants. Social activist Berlin flagged off the tour. Traversing through some 46 coastal villages across the Kanyakumari district and traveling almost 150 kms distance, the tour met with approximately 15,000 men, women and children. When we entered a coastal village, a few of us addressed the people through the public address system explaining the goals of the tour, general information about nuclear power plants, the high cancer incidence in our area, the possibility of

getting even more cancer cases because of the upcoming nuclear power plants at Koodankulam, the alternative and renewable sources of electricity generation. As the speakers spoke, several of us walked through the villages, distributed different fliers and booklets, talked to people, collected their signatures in a petition to the government to stop the Koodankulam nuclear power projects.

The villages were so enthusiastic about our awareness-raising tour that they offered breakfast, lunch, tea and snacks and dinner wherever we went. The tour came to a close on October 28, 2008 evening at Kanyakumari, the southernmost tip of India, with a cultural program and series of speeches. The tour demanded that a well-equipped and appropriately staffed cancer hospital be established in Kanyakumari district that has been affected by high natural radiation and higher incidence of cancer. The campaign also asked for a cancer research center in the district. It was further demanded that an insurance scheme to help the cancer victims and their families be instituted.

[6] November 4, 2008 at Thoothukudi

A one-day hunger strike had been planned in front of the Thoothukudi District Administrator's office on November 4, 2008. However, the local police informed the organizer just the previous day that we were not granted the necessary police permission to carry out the protest event. We were also threatened with "legal consequences" if we chose to ignore the notice and went ahead with the hunger strike. So the organizer, Sr. Assuntha, approached the High Court bench at Madurai to grant us the necessary permission to organize the hunger strike.

As the High Court was hearing our petition on November 4, 2008 at Madurai, three CID intelligence officers asked us not to gather there and to leave the place. We told them that we had to be there to share the news with our comrades who were coming from other parts of Tamil Nadu. Some 75 of us had gathered in front of the Thoothukudi District Administrator's office; we exchanged news and views with each other, distributed leaflets to the general public, organized an impromptu press meet, and announced our decision to organize a bigger event at a later date. By the time we were about to disperse, we received a word from the Court that they had ordered the DSP to give us a fresh date to organize the hunger strike. We decided to have the hunger strike on November 24, 2008.

[7] November 13, 2008 at Marthandam, Kanyakumari District

The People's Movement Against Nuclear Energy (PMANE) organized a one-day hunger strike from 10 am to 5 pm at Marthandam, Kanyakumari district on November 13, 2008 with the three demands that the Koodankulam nuclear power project that is threatening the people of southern Tamil Nadu and southern Kerala must be scrapped immediately, that the nuclear agreements India has signed with the US, Russia and France rescinded totally, and that the nuclear weapons program of India abandoned completely. S. P. Udayakumar, coordinator of the People's Movement Against Nuclear Energy, presided over the hunger strike in the presence of C. Boaz and others. Sakuntala inaugurated the program; Samji, Santhi, Mary Joyce, Flori, Sivasubramanian, Mathias, Venice, Anthony Dasan, and others spoke at the event. Sowmini, Venice and others sang songs. P. Saravanabhavan offered vote of thanks and concluded the strike. Thousands of handbills on the purposes of the hunger strike, cancer, alternative ways of producing electricity, and a Q&A on the Koodankulam nuclear power project were distributed to the shopkeepers in the area, pedestrians, bus passengers, students, and the general public. The people listened to the speeches attentively, read the leaflets carefully and encouraged the hunger strikers with much enthusiasm and warmth. Two CID intelligence officers were with us throughout the day and took elaborate notes on our speeches, and the day's proceedings. There were several policemen posted around the strike site.

[8] November 21, 2008; Thoothukudi Hunger Strike

The People's Movement Against Nuclear Energy organized a one-day hunger strike in front of the Thoothukudi District Administrator's office on November 24, 2008 with the three demands that the Koodankulam nuclear power project that is threatening the people of southern Tamil Nadu and southern Kerala be scrapped immediately, that the nuclear agreements India has signed with the US, Russia and France rescinded totally, and that the nuclear weapons program of India abandoned completely. Advocate S. Sivasubramanian welcomed the hunger strikers. Sr. Assuntha presided over the program in the presence of Dr. S. P. Udayakumar. Professor M. S. M. Sahubar Hussain, Mr. George Gomez, Ms. Rosemarie, Mr. Anthony Dasan, Mr. Venice, Mr. Amaladhas and many others spoke at the strike. The Thoothukudi district unit of the DMDK had sent a party delegation to felicitate the hunger strike and the group included the district secretary Mr. Gomathi Ganesan, district deputy secretary Mr. Arumuga Nainar, and the Thoothukudi town secretary Mr. N. Shanmugaraja. This is the first time a major Tamil political party had shown interest in the issue. The hunger strike was widely reported in the media.

[9] November 25, 2008 to December 10, 2008
Organization Against Violence on Women

A fourteen-day awareness-raising tour was organized by the Organization Against Violence on Women to educate the people of Kanyakumari district about the physical, psychological, cultural and structural violence that are inflicted upon women in the Indian society. Besides political, economic, social and cultural violences, the government also inflicts violence on women in the form of so-called development projects. The event was organized in various towns across the Kanyakumari district for almost 3 hours every single day. The women and men volunteers gave speeches, sang songs and played musical instruments to educate the public. Many of them pointed out that the "development" project such as the Koodankulam nuclear power plant would cause so much violence on women in the form of radiation illnesses, abortion, cancer, birth of deformed and mentally-retarded children and so forth. All the speakers focused on the information that is available about the Kalpakkam projects to warn the public about the upcoming Koodankulam projects. The speakers included Lidwin, Joyce, Philo, Usha, Angel, Boaz, Anthony Dasan, Venice and S. P. Udayakumar. Many local people, shopkeepers, bystanders, and others attended the events with enthusiasm. The tour was concluded on the Human Rights Day at Kanyakumari. The following was the schedule of the two-week tour:

November 25: Nagercoil (Ponnappan Thidal)
November 26: Marthandam (Gandhi Maidanam)
November 27: Karungal (Bus Stand)
November 28: Mulagumoodu (Junction)
November 29: Thuckalai (Thasildar Office Junction)
November 30: Colachel (Bus Stand)
December 01: Monday Market (Bus Stand)
December 02: Manavalakurichi (Bus Stand)
December 03: Rajakkamangalam (Bus Stand)
December 04: Parvathipuram (Bus Stand)
December 05: Ramanputhoor (Bus Stand)
December 06: Marungoor (Bus Stand)
December 07: Aralvaimozhi (Bus Stand)
December 08: Nagercoil (Stadium)
December 09: Mylaudi (Bus Stand)
December 10: Kanyakumari (Near Gandhi Mandapam)

Part III (2007)

Key Events in 2007

[1] February 14, 2007

Aborted Public Hearing II

Alarmed by the plan of the Koodankulam authorities to take water from the Pechiparai irrigation dam in Kanyakumari district, several farmers' organizations and fisherpeople's associations started organizing against that dangerous move. This dam water plan was recorded in the official EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) report that the Koodankulam authorities had prepared for the additional four nuclear power plants they were planning at Koodankulam.

Several meetings were organized in October 2006 to plan the centenary celebrations of the Pechiparai Dam and to think about the ways and means of preventing the Koodankulam authorities from usurping the irrigation water from us to use it in the wasteful and dangerous nuclear programs. The newly set up "Kanyakumari District Water Resources Protection Federation" organized a massive public meeting on November 4, 2006 at Thuckalay to discuss the threats to our water resources from various quarters, including the nuclear dragon. The Koodankulam authorities cunningly ducked and conveniently claimed that they were setting up desalination plants with Israeli technology and hence they were not going to take Pechiparai dam water. When we pointed out their claim in the official EIA report and in a recent journal article written by a senior nuclear official, they claimed that they were all mistakes. Typical nuclear behaviour!

The TNPCB (Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board) was going to hold the postponed public hearing for the Koodankulam nuclear power plants III, IV, V and VI on January 31, 2007 at 10:30 am at Koodankulam. The newspaper ads said that the hearing would be held at the town hall at Koodankulam but later we found out that the public hearing would be held at one of their own meeting halls in the nuclear power project township itself.

The public hearing announcement indicated that the possible issue of displacement of the local people would also be dealt with in the meeting. This last straw broke the proverbial camel's back for the Koodankulam public. They were already deeply disturbed by the facts that the promised 10,000 jobs never came and the proclaimed economic boom never happened. When they were also going to be kicked out of their village, the Koodankulam people said **enough is enough**, founded the **"People's Rights Movement"** and organized protest marches, fasting, road blocks and so forth on three consecutive days in late January 2007. Seeing the latest

developments in Koodankulam, the neighboring fishing and farming villages also rose up with fresh energy and enthusiasm. None of them want to have four more additional nuclear power plants in their midst and they also want to stop the construction of the first two plants. Taken aback by this popular upsurge and groundswell, the authorities quietly postponed the public hearing once again. The nuclear authorities from the topmost boss to the bottommost peon tried in vain to reassure the people that nobody would be displaced. Typical nuclear behaviour! They came up with all kinds of ridiculous ground plans to explain that they could have upto eight plants on the existing land. Our most decent, most democratic and most lameduck Prime Minister (White)Manmohan Singh signed the deal for the four additional nuclear plants at Koodankulam with the Russian President Putin on January 27, 2007 even before the public hearing was held for the same. Perhaps he knows that the whole public hearing exercise is a sham and a fraud on the people of India. The plan for Koodankulam seems to include six Russian-made VVER nuclear power plants producing 6000 MW power, two Indian-made fast breeder plants producing 400 MW power each, a possible reprocessing plant, and also a weapons production facility. This dangerous "temple of science and technology" will be the biggest nuclear facility in the entire world. With the public hearing postponed indefinitely, the nuclear authorities are scheming on how to trick the people of Tirunelveli, Kanyakumari and Thoothukudi districts of Tamil Nadu into the deadly nuclear trap. The local press and other media who are pampered by the nuclear ads and booze (and what not) do not want to report anything that is unpleasant for the nuke bosses. The political parties that speak so much about the Tamil race and its welfare, tend to think that the people of the southern districts are Martians who deserve to be nuked. The religious elements are busy with their enlightened escapades. So the local people are left to fend for ourselves. We are organizing slowly, steadily but surely. Wish us luck and do something in your area too for the danger of nuclearism is taking over the entire globe. Latest Developments I received a phone call from a senior IB officer on February 12th around 9 PM and he talked to me for almost 1.5 hours wanting to know how many people would come for the Feb 15th hunger strike, who would be the leaders, what is planned afterwards etc. etc. We had a candid conversation and I made it clear that people do have a right to express their desent in our democratic polity. He kept repeating the fear that we may not be able to control the 'mob' or sustain the campaign and may indeed push the ordinary people into harm's way. I politely told him that we are not violent people, we do not instigate them against anybody or anything, but what we are doing is an awareness campaign. That was an "interesting" conversation, to say the least. On 13th February around 1 PM, a "Tirunelveli Inspector" called me and 'interrogated' me over the phone. On the 14th noon, a Special Branch CID came to Dr. Lal Mohan's house where he, Mr. Y. David and I were meeting. He was very eager to know when Medha Patkar was coming and where and all that. He also talked to his boss in front of us and answered all his questions. Several other friends have been receiving phone calls from the IB, CID and other police departments. The Indian State is taking the struggle very seriously and is a bit worried about Medha Patkar coming to Koodankulam. Obviously, the DAE/NPCIL is putting a lot of pressure on the State from behind the screen. It is so hard for them to stomach this kind of popular participation and their autocratic nature and composition cannot simply digest even a small

dose of democracy. They are annoyed, agitated and even scared. 15th is the big day! Several thousand people from fishing and farming villages will be sitting on a day-long fast and organize a "public hearing" to express our total opposition to the Koodankulam nuclear power project. It will be a wonderful, nonviolent expression of our collective disapproval of the upcoming power plants (I and II) and the additional plants (III, IV, V, and VI). [2] One-day Hunger Strike on February 15, 2007 The one-day hunger strike has been a great success. Some 7,000 men and women and children from 175 fishing and farming villages from Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi and Kanyakumari district fasted together. This event was also treated as the "public hearing" organized by the public themselves. Scores of people –fishermen, farmers, women, social activists, doctors, teachers, lawyers, scientists, priests and youth- expressed their opposition to the Koodankulam plants. They all demanded immediate closure of the ongoing projects (I and II) and the planned projects (III, IV, V and VI). The whole day people made passionate speeches and the audience gave undivided attention to all of them. Earlier in the day, when Medha Patkar and we arrived at the venue of the strike at around 9 am, several activists complained that many people had been prevented by the police from coming to the strike and many vehicles were diverted. When the organizers objected to this behavior of the police, one senior officer told me that they had diverted the vehicles for half an hour as they expected a huge crowd. I failed to understand how that would help in crowd management. Another officer claimed that the police searched all the vehicles as they wanted to prevent people from bringing weapons to the venue. Again I could not see who would bring weapons to a hunger strike headed by a noted nonviolent fighter such as Medhaji. The police officers wanted us to announce in public that the police hadn't done any mistake (which we chose to ignore). But several participants told us that they had been stopped, diverted and even harassed by the police. Some also told that a rumor had been spread in some fishing villages that there could be police firing at the venue in order to prevent people from coming to the hunger strike. Despite all this, people kept coming and by 11 am, thepandal' was full of people.

Medhaji gave a powerful and passionate speech detailing the plight of nuclear victims in different parts of the country such as Jadugoda, Tarapur, Kalpakkam, Kakrapar, Kota etc. As in these places, the government gave no information, no knowledge and no public debate about the nuclear reactors in Koodankulam or about the India-US and India-Russia nuclear deals. She categorically asserted that the people of India did not need any foreign advice on how to take care of our fisherpeople, sea and fish, and farmers, land and crops.

Medhaji asserted that the nuclear power and bomb were two sides of the same coin and said that she would be with the people as long as they fought the nuclear menace. Referring to the Tirunelveli collector's announcement that the next public hearing would be conducted on March 31st under the chairmanship of the Tamil Nadu Electricity minister Arcot Veerasami, she said that this was unacceptable as per the environmental notification of 1994 (that was again modified in September 2006). She said we would problematize such as arrangement. She said the local communities would lead the

Koodankulam fight and the national leadership would provide every support. She also explained the Action 2007 program that is to be launched on March 19, 2007.

Concluding the hunger strike later in the day, Medhaji asked the people to shun the caste and religious divides and fight united against the atomic power and bomb projects. She suggested organizing training programs for the youth so that they can learn from each other. She asked the local people to show films, sing songs, make speeches and slogans and to organize elocution and essay competitions among students to spread the anti-nuclear message. She suggested that the CNDP (Coalition for Nuclear Disarmament and Peace) be requested to organize its next convention in the Koodankulam area followed by a convention of various people's movements from all corners of the country.

She advised all the Gram Sabhas of all the villages in the Koodankulam area to pass a resolution against the Koodankulam nuclear power projects. She also stressed the need for involving women and youth in the struggle and suggested a small group of people traveling to all the different nuclear sites across the country and doing a detailed study of the nuclear menace.

Y. David, a leader of the People's Movement Against Nuclear Energy, spoke about the history of the Koodankulam struggle and its future course of action. Gabrielle Dietrich, Lal Mohan, Anton Gomes, Mano Thankaraj, Balaprajapathi Adigalar, Tamil Manthan, Dhanraj, Alankaram Bharathar, Peter Dhas, Kavitha, Rosammal, Fatima Babu, Ganesan, Dinesh, Murugesan, Frederick, Gilbert Rodreigo, Jeromios, Jayakumar and parish priests Panneerselvam, Venis Kumar, Jesuraj, Suseelan, Arul Raj, Jagdish, Clarence and many others spoke.

After concluding the hunger strike at 5:30, the struggle committee and Medhaji had a quick meeting to plan the future course of action.

[3] The struggle committee met on February 24, 2007 at Valliyoor. The Koodankulam struggle is picking up speed. Most coastal villages in Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi and Kanyakumari districts and several farming villages in these districts have set up struggle committees.

[4] The people of Koodankulam took out a massive rally on March 17, 2007 demanding a CBI enquiry into the quality of the nuclear power plants construction. The people there feel that the material used for the construction are of very poor quality and that compromises the safety and security of the people.

[5] The struggle committees of many farming and fishing villages held a consultation meeting on March 19, 2007 at Koodankulam and discussed the strategies for the March 31, 2007 public hearing at Tirunelveli collectorate (Tirunelveli, 10 am). Several thousand people plan to gather there and express our opposition to the public hearing and to the plants. Several young people and organizations in Kerala are also planning a press meet and a

day-long protest against the Koodankulam plants toward the end of March.

[6] March 24, 2007; Idinthakarai Fast

On March 24, 2007 some 6000 to 7000 people came together for a day-long fast and protest against the Koodankulam nuclear power project at Idinthakarai village near Koodankulam. The fasting demonstration began exactly at 10 am with a minute-long silence to remember the victims of recent Nadigram police firing. Following the felicitations of several parish priests, many anti-nuclear activists, women's movement leaders, panchayat office-bearers, farmers, fishermen and youth spoke about the impending dangers of the Koodankulam nuclear power project and called for its immediate closure. There were street-plays, music, songs, dance and slogan shouting in between passionate speeches.

At the end of the day, the following resolutions were passed unanimously:

[i] Those of us who have gathered here in Idinthakarai today demand that the central and state governments stop the construction of the Koodankulam nuclear power project that defies all the IAEA rules with regards to high and dense population in the project area.

[ii] We condemn the eye-wash public hearing that is going to be held for the nuclear power projects 3, 4, 5 and 6 after carrying out all the groundwork for these projects and signing the agreements with the Russian authorities.

[iii] We demand the immediate cancellation of this fraudulent public hearing.

[iv] We condemn the atomic energy officials such as Agrawal for repeating the same lies over and over that nobody would be evacuated from the Koodankulam area, that the land, the water and the sea would not be affected in any way, that the Pechiparai dam water would not be taken to the plant, and that radiation was not a serious threat to the local public.

[v] We condemn those individuals who act as handmaidens to the nuclear department and organize fasts in support of the Koodankulam nuclear power project.

[vi] We demand that the Indian government conduct a referendum in Tirunelveli, Kanyakumari and Thoothukudi districts in Tamil Nadu to see if the local people want the Koodankulam nuclear power project in their midst or not.

[vii] We demand that the land that has been acquired and the buildings that have been constructed for the Koodankulam nuclear power project be turned into other assorted industries that foster the lives and livelihood of the local people.

[viii] We resolve that only those political parties that oppose the Koodankulam nuclear power project would be supported in the following elections.

[ix] We demand that the public representatives from the Koodankulam project affected areas pass resolutions in the local bodies against the nuclear power project.

[7] People's Public Hearing in Thoothukudi

The Anti-Nuclear Confederation is organizing a "People's Public Hearing" on March 30, 2007 at Thoothukudi. People of the area, retired judges, academics, economists, lawyers, nuclear, agricultural and fishery scientists will be participating in the program. Victims of nuclear power plants and nuclear establishments from various parts of India have consented to present their cases before the public hearing panel. Anton Gomez is making all the arrangements.

[8] The people of Perumanal, Koothankuzhi and Chettikulam villages are planning to organize day-long hunger strikes in their villages also.

[9] April 4, 2007; Koodankulam

On March 31, 2007 the Tamil Nadu government had called for a 12-hour bandh (shut down) from 6 am till 6 pm to protest against the Indian Supreme Court's staying the law that provided for 27 percent reservation for Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in higher educational institutions. The ruling party and all its allies endorsed the bandh and there were no buses, autos, taxis, trains and even planes operating on the bandh day.

But the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) and the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd. (NPCIL) that are dominated and controlled by "upper castes" chose to ignore the statewide shut down and operated its buses and other vehicles. This brazen violation of the sentiments of the Tamil people must have irked some and they may have stoned the NPCIL vehicles to protest against bandh violation.

The NPCIL authorities, however, cunningly blamed the local anti-nuclear activists for the alleged "attack" on the Koodankulam power plant workers. They are said to be conducting meetings in Koodankulam and in Mumbai on how to deal with what The Hindu newspaper calls the "assault issue".

All the major newspapers in English and Tamil (that had run full-page advertisements for the NPCIL a few days back) chose to repeat the Koodankulam authorities' story. Several politicians are running to the rescue of the plant also.

The nuclear-loving The Hindu newspaper (April 4, 2007) reports: "[T]he latest development has necessitated some obstinate measures, which cannot be discussed here. However, I can assure that we'll take

really firm steps in the next few days to ensure the safety of workers and our material," the Director (Projects), S. K. Agrawal, told The Hindu Monday...Sources said another round of discussion within the core group of NPCIL would be held in Mumbai to finalise "some tough strategies" to be taken against the attackers.

[10] November 12, 2007; Letter to Indian MPs

Dear Honorable Members of Parliament:

Greetings from the People's Movement Against Nuclear Energy operating in southern Tamil Nadu.

As you prepare to start the Winter Session of the Parliament to discuss, among other things, the India-US nuclear deal, we write to request you to oppose the deal for the following reasons:

- [a] Deal should be seen in concurrence with defence deals/agreements, and all political, economic ramifications
- [b] Deal will entangle India in US war machinery
- [c] Deal will give rise to arms race between India and China, and between India and Pakistan
- [d] US ships will frequent Indian ports for fuelling, maintenance, repair
- [e] US has bad reputation on agreements; Bush record is even worse
- [f] Our sovereignty and autonomy will be hurt
- [g] US companies stand to gain so much
- [h] Hyde Act, a US national act, will bind us to support US policies
- [i] Hyde Act will still be supreme
- [j] India's principled stand on non-proliferation will be compromised
- [k] India may view Middle East through US glasses
- [l] India supported UN resolution against Iran on nuclear issue
- [m] Iran-Pakistan-India gas deal dropped (we get 30% more energy in Iranian gas deal; Deal will make us pay five times more price to US)
- [n] Non-aligned foreign policy comes to an end
- [o] Now we can produce 5-10 bombs; with Deal, we can produce 25-40 bombs; South Asia will become a nuclear hotspot.

Not only the India-US nuclear deal but also our deal with Russians should be scrapped. Please consider the following facts also:

[i] Nuclear power is very very costly; DAE hides the cost under defense expenditures, R&D budget, government subsidies etc. Nobody, not even the MPs, know the true and accurate DAE budget.

[ii] Nuclear waste problem is very much unresolved; when we produce all this nuclear power, what will we do with the huge amounts of nuclear waste?

[iii] We have to consider the huge cost of decommissioning all these plants after 30 to 40 years.

[iv] Nuclear power projects are highly centralized and hopelessly

secretive; people will have no control whatsoever on this power generation process.

[v] If India needs more power, let us explore hydal, wind, solar sources; they are safer, healthier, environmentally sensitive and sustainable.

[vi] Nuclear power is certainly NOT the answer for climate change. Just consider how much steel and cement these power projects consume and thereby the amount of fossil fuels they gobble up directly and indirectly.

[vii] The low-level radiation from these nuclear power plants over tens of years will give rise to all kinds of cancer, mental retardation, birth defects, genetic mutation among our people.

[viii] The nuclear deals with Americans and Russians will make our people poorer, sicker, more vulnerable, and more exploited.

Dear Members of the Parliament, please save this country and its people from the clutches of the nuclear dragon. Please oppose the India-US nuclear deal and the India-Russia nuclear collaboration. Give us and our children a nuclear-free future! We don't want nuclear bombs or nuclear power!

Best regards,

Members
People's Movement Against Nuclear Energy

Part IV (4th Quarter of 2006)

Events in the 4th Quarter of 2006

[1] October 6, 2006
Koodankulam Public Hearing

The Koodankulam nuclear power project authorities had planned to conduct a secretive public hearing on October 6, 2006 at the Tirunelveli collector's office. They had published a small ad in the most obscure Economic Times newspaper which almost nobody reads in our part of the country and in the Tirunelveli edition of a Tamil daily, Dinakaran, which is also not the most popular Tamil newspaper. The Koodankulam authorities had planned to keep the number of the public small so that they could manipulate the outcome as they wished.

They had also chosen a Friday afternoon (3 P.M. to be precise) so that they could hurry up the meeting and wrap it up in less than two hours. With the formality completed in a few hours with a few

people, they thought they could merrily add four more mega nuclear power plants that would generate 4,000 MW electricity.

Alas, things turned out to be very bad for them. Some 700 to 800 people had turned up and the group included many rural women who were not reluctant to speak their minds. In fact, they were so sincere to the cause, articulate and hence very forceful.

At 3 PM, the Koodankulam authorities had taken their seats with bottled mineral water in front of them to face the afternoon heat in a relatively small-sized concrete hall. They did not even bother to arrange a pot of unsafe river water for the public. The small hall was teeming with people from Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi and Kanyakumari districts.

As soon as the district collector showed up at around 3:15 PM, one of the public asked the Koodankulam authorities what arrangements they had made to select the speakers from the public. Realizing their unpreparedness, one official started collecting the names of the public who wanted to speak their minds. Then another officer started their 30-minute slide-show with the first slide depicting the various uses of nuclear power. No sooner did he show the first slide when a prominent person from Kanyakumari district stood up and said that we were not there for a lecture on nuclear power.

Some sections of the crowd started shouting slogans, asking the Koodankulam authorities not to kill the Nature, not to kill the people and to terminate the whole nuclear power project at Koodankulam. It was so noisy and confusing that nobody could speak anything or hear anybody.

Several members of the public approached the district collector and expressed their concerns both individually and collectively. The sitting MLA from Radhapuram constituency, one Mr. Appavoo, tried to play the big brother role and undertake the task of facilitating the public hearing. Unhappy with his track-record, the public booed and shouted him down. After almost an hour of chanting and sloganeering, the district collector managed to find a brief break to announce that he was asking the Koodankulam authorities to take out ads for the public hearing in all the major daily newspapers with enough lead time for the people to prepare for the public hearings and to hold the public hearings in all the three affected districts. Some members of the public also asked for a Tamil translation of the Environmental Impact Assessment report and public hearing in Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam and Pathanamthitta districts of Kerala.

Several members of the public raised objections to taking the Pechiparai dam water (which is in Kanyakumari district) to the Koodankulam plants. The EIA clearly mentions that the dam water would be taken to the plant through embedded pipes. When some members of the public brought this to the collector's attention, the nuclear authorities claimed that they were not going to take the dam

water but would use desalination plants instead. When the unambiguous dam water plan in the EIA was pointed out, the nuclear authorities claimed that the EIA was outdated. Then the question was how they could conduct a public hearing with an outdated EIA. Thus the Koodankulam authorities' bluff was called.

However, the biggest joke of the day was some of the Koodankulam authorities asking us in private and friendly conversation to be "democratic and fair". We asked them back if they were democratic and fair. Their nervous smile answered that question.

The public dispersed around 4 PM with the satisfaction that a small but important battle was won. But there are many more "miles to go before we sleep, and miles to go before we sleep."

[2] October 11, 2006

Letter to Kanyakumari Collector

The District Collector
Kanyakumari District
Nagercoil

Dear Sir:

We write with reference to your reported statement on the Koodankulam nuclear power project taking water from the Pechiparai dam published in the evening Tamil daily, Tamil Murasu dated 10/10/2006 on page 8. In this news report, you are said to have claimed so categorically that there is no plan whatsoever to take water from the Pechiparai dam for the Koodankulam project. You also seem to have exhorted the public not to give credence to these "rumours." It is not clear, however, if you said all these in a press meet or in an exclusive interview you gave to this particular newspaper.

In the light of the above situation, may we bring your kind attention to the following pertinent facts please:

[i] The "Comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment" for the Koodankulam projects (prepared by National Environmental Engineering Research Institute) states very clearly on pages 2.35 and 2.36 (under Chapter 2.3 - Water Environment, Subheading 2.3.2 Water Requirement): "Fresh water from Pechipparai dam, which is about 65 Kms NW of the project site, is proposed to be used for meeting various water demands. The quantities of fresh water for various purposes are as follows:

Domestic use: 414 m³/day

Service Water: 480 m³/day

Fire Water Make-Up: 500 m³/day

Chemical Water Treatment

(Process Water for proposed 4 units): 19200 m³/day "The report further states that" For meeting

fresh water demands,
water from Pechipparai dam will be brought to the site through
embedded pipeline." The above breakdown amounts to 20,594 m³ water
per day and this much water is used only for four nuclear power
plants. If and when all the planned eight power plants start
functioning in Koodankulam, some 41,000 m³ water would be required
per day.

[ii] In a very recent article entitled "The VVERs at Kudankulam"
(published in Nuclear Engineering and Design, 236, 2006), Mr. S. K.
Agrawal, the former Koodankulam project director and now the
director (projects) of NPCIL, and his co-authors state very clearly
on page 835: "The requirements of fresh water are very small and
will be drawn from the Pechipparai Reservoir. The fresh water
requirements will thus not affect the drinking water and
agricultural needs of the local population." This article, published
only a few months ago, confirms the Pechipparai water usage detailed
in the "Comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment."

[iii] On December 7, 2004, the Tata Group claimed in an official
communique [\[1\]](#): "...

Tata Projects has now secured a prestigious EPC contract from
Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd. for the execution of 7680
cu.m. per day seawater desalination plant with an extended O&M
period of five years, to be implemented within 20 months at
Kudankulam in coastal Tamil Nadu. This plant will cater to the need
of DM and potable water requirement of the 2000 MW Nuclear Power
Plant project. This will be the first sea water desalination plant
adopting multi-vapour compression (MVC) technology in India. The
contract value is over Rs 1000 million."

The small reverse osmosis plant that is set up for domestic use
within the Anuvijay Township near Koodankulam should not be confused
with the above desalination plant that is meant exclusively for the
power plants. It is a known fact that the above desalination project
has not even been started yet. And that means the Department of
Atomic Energy (DAE) and the Nuclear Power Corporation of India
Limited (NPCIL) authorities are scheming to take Pechipparai water
for the ongoing Koodankulam nuclear power plants.

[iv] If the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) and the Nuclear Power
Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) authorities have really decided
against taking Pechipparai water for the Koodankulam plants, they
should prepare a new EIA that details the fresh water sources for
the Koodankulam plants. The authorities should not present the
outdated EIA as an official document to conduct the upcoming public
hearings.

[v] It is also quite pertinent to point out that there was a crop
failure in some parts of Kanyakumari district during 2004-05 and the
affected farmers were given a drought relief compensation of Rs. 10
per one cent land. When there is not sufficient water to meet the

needs of the farmers at times, we can hardly afford to give water to the nuclear power plants. The Pechiparai dam that was constructed in 1906 has been getting silted slowly and a fresh 'capacity survey' has to be commissioned before we even think about using the water for non-agricultural purposes.

Given this situation of contradictory claims and confusing stands of the nuclear authorities, we are not sure how you claim so categorically that Pechiparai water would not be taken to Koodankulam. If you are in possession of any material evidence or concrete undertaking from the nuclear authorities to that effect, would you be kind enough to share those with us. In the absence of any of which, it is only fair on your part to retract your statement and not to dismiss our genuine concerns as "rumours."

With best regards and all peaceful wishes,

Sincerely,

Dr. R. S. Lal Mohan, Conservation of Nature Trust
T. Peter Dhas, Tamil Nadu Fish Workers Union
Adv. Maria Stephen, Najilla Velanmai Vivasayigal Sangam
N. Paramani Dhas, Anandhan River Farmers' Association
K. Padmadhas, Bhoomi Padukappu Sangams' Federation
Dr. S. P. Udayakumar, People's Movement Against Nuclear Energy

Enclosures:

- i) Relevant pages of EIA
- ii) Relevant pages of Agrawal article
- iii) Tata Group Webpage

[3] October 14, 2006
KSMTF Press Release

KSMTF (Kerala Swatantra Malsya Thozhilaligal Federation) DEMANDS EIA (Environment Impact Assessment) AND PUBLIC HEARING ON KOONDANKULAM NUCLEAR POWER PLANT IN THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, KOLLAM, PATHANAMTHITTA AND KOCHI.

As we all know a Nuclear Reactor is a Radioactive waste-making machine. A typical 1000 Mega Watt Nuclear reactor creates about 250 pounds of "spent fuel" that is the nuclear waste. A small amount of electricity is also produced. However looking at the economics, that is the cost of mining the radioactive ore, the cost of production of the nuclear fuel (milling, enrichment, and fuel fabrication), the cost of construction of the power plants, the cost of cancers, leukemias, and birth defects caused by numerous radiation releases during power plant operation and during each phase of the nuclear fuel cycle, the cost of storing and/or reprocessing the used reactor cores, the cost of transporting them between each stage, the cost of cleaning up and "decommissioning" the reactor, and the cost of catastrophic failure if the reactor cores are dispersed into the

environment. One has to bear a heavy cost. Do we need such power plants? No, not at all.

The Koodankulam Project will have a devastating effect on Kerala coast. The commissioning of this project will be the end of "God's Own Country". People living in Kerala right from the Tamil Nadu border till Kochi will all be affected by radiation, since the Koodankulam project is a mega project.

The fish catch will go; only dead fish will be there for the fishing community to catch that will be the end of the fishing community. People living on the coasts will be prone to various kinds of cancers. The discharge of hot water with radioactive pollutants into the sea will increase the temperature of the seawater and damage the health of the fish and the people who eat that fish. Our fishermen will lose their livelihood and sink further into poverty and misery. And the already malnourished farming families will stand to suffer even more.

Moreover, the southern tip is also seismically vulnerable and has had quite a few small tremors. There have also been minor volcanic eruptions in Tirunelveli district. Cyclones, huge monsoon thunderstorms, unrelenting sea erosion, and increasing global warming can also prove to be potential dangers. And if a tsunami strikes it will be a major disaster.

The Koodankulam nuclear power plant coupled with the sand mining operations of the Indian Rare Earths Limited and other private parties on our shores is threatening our fisherfolk's lives and livelihood. Our agricultural land, our water resources, our air, and our food chain are all going to be contaminated by the additional burden of radiation that will emerge from the Koodankulam nuclear power plants.

Tourism will also come to an end since the westerly winds will bring with it all the radioactive waste to the coasts of Kerala. And no foreign or Indian tourist will like to risk in a radioactive zone. In total it will be the death knell for Kerala. The Kerala government cannot allow commissioning such a dangerous project. They must immediately demand cancellation of this nuclear power plant for the sake of millions of keralities living on the coast.

KSMTF demands that the DAE (Department of Atomic Energy) and the Government of India respect the Right to Life and Livelihood of our farmers, fisherfolks and others of southern Tamil Nadu and Kerala and cancel the Koodankulam project forthwith.

There is no transparency and accountability whatsoever by the Dept of Atomic Energy and Government of India when it comes to Nuclear Power Plant. They even threaten their opponents with the Atomic Energy Act of 1962. All this is done under the cover of the Official Secrecy Act.

The people of southern Tamil Nadu and Kerala would like to bring your kind attention to the great dangers the Koodankulam nuclear power plant will pose to our health, safety, our children's well-being, to our natural resources, and to our overall environment. We, the people of Kerala along with our brothers and sisters in Kanyakumari, Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi districts of Tamil Nadu, have been demanding the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) and the Government of India to respect our Right to Information and to release the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), the Site Evaluation Study, and the Safety Analysis Report that are claimed to have been done for the Koodankulam Nuclear Power Project back in 1988. Even though these studies are now outdated and many changes have been brought about in the project, we have the right to know what the government and the Indian nuclear establishment really argue.

Even more worrying is the fact that the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board has been sidestepped by the DAE in getting proper permission for setting up the Koodankulam project. And the mandatory Public Hearing has not been conducted to this day. The Public hearing has to be conducted not only in Tamil Nadu but also in Kerala. The first attempt to conduct a fraud public hearing at Tirunelveli was stopped by the people during the first week of October this year.

KSMTF demands a proper EIA and Public Hearing on the project to be conducted by the DAE and Government of India in Trivandrum, Pathanamthitta and Kollam districts of Kerala also since these areas are close to the Plant site.

T. Peter, KSMTF

[4] October 23, 2006
Thuckalay

The Kanyakumari District Water Resources Protection Federation is organizing a meeting
On November 4, 2006, Saturday
At 2:30 PM
At Thuckalay Elias Asramam, Thuckalay
to discuss the threats to our water resources from various quarters.

Compiled by S. P. Udayakumar

P.S.

* Source: S. P. Udayakumar, The Koodankulam Handbook. Nagercoil, India: Transcend South Asia,

2004 (ISBN: 81-89312-00-6).

Footnotes

[1] http://www.tata.com/tata_projects/releases/20041207_epc.htm