

LETTERS

A GREATER CONSPIRACY

National Alliance of People's Movements (NAPM) strongly disapproves the granting of the Environmental Clearance to the Steel cum captive power plant and captive minor port with an additional 28 and 32 conditions respectively by the Ministry of Environment and Forest. The clearance is a contradiction that would reduce the credibility which the Ministry has earned for the first time and would go down in history that MoEF has supported the offences and illegalities of the Company. It completely belies the findings of the Saxena Committee and the four-member-committee constituted in past six months or so. In spite of the differences in the four-member-committee it did agree on the environmental and CRZ violations in the earlier clearance accorded and suppression of the fact by the company as well as by the State government. While the majority of the Committee had asked for complete revocation of the clearances, the dissenting member Meena Gupta had recommended that the MoEF should consider at the earliest a comprehensive EIA to be prepared both for the steel plant and for the port.

While granting clearance to the Jaitapur Nuclear power plant Mr Ramesh himself argued for the need of a comprehensive EIAs then why does he need to go back on his own wisdom and the recommendations of its own committees and not order a fresh comprehensive EIA. It is nothing but a case of trying to legalise the violations, which are occurring in not one but many projects and hence would be considered as bowing down to the pressures of the multinational corporations, corporate interests which various governments, across party lines are championing.

The attempted middle path at the cost of the livelihood and denying the rightful claims of the people who have been living there for centuries can't bring development to the people of Orissa. It is by now an established fact that the Forest Right Act claims have to be settled in the region. It is astonishing that Mr Ramesh has chosen to go back on what the State Government has always been maintaining that there are no FRA claims to be settled in the area. To give credence to the lies of the Government of Orissa and failing to mention two of his own Ministry's reports which says that there are well found violations of the FRA and there are claims on the said forest land which needs to be settled, points to a greater conspiracy.

NAPM reiterates its disapproval of the order of the Ministry and continues to extend full support to the struggles of the people of the region and their struggle to safeguard the environment and livelihood under the banner of *Posco Pratirodh Sangram Samiti* and others and whatever position they would take on the concerned clearance.

Medha Patkar, Prafulla Samantara, Roma, Ulka Mahajan, Suniti S R, Dayamani Barla, Anand Mazgaonkar, Rajendra Ravi, Mukta Srivastava, Bhupinder Singh Rawat, Madhuresh Kumar

A CONVENTION

The way Dr Binayak Sen and his two co-accused have been given sentences of life-imprisonment has raised indignation all over the country. Not only the big cities, but the so-called mofussil areas as well have joined the wave of protests. On 6 February, a convention was held in Suri, the district town of Birbhum, West Bengal at the initiative of the *Bandi Mukti Committee* (Committee for the Release of Political Prisoners), Birbhum branch. The convention was chaired by Alok Mukherjee and Kartik Hazra, and the resolution was read out by Anirban Biswas.

Several speakers, including the West Bengal Secretary, Bandi Mukti Committee, addressed the convention, and unanimously agreed that Dr Binayak Sen's sentence is part of the war waged by the state against the people in the interests of the corporates. A number of speakers, referring to the Bhopal Gas Tragedy and recent financial scandals, mocked at the ruling class notion of patriotism and sedition, saying that it is the patriotism of swindlers all out to loot nation's wealth and deprive the toiling people of their right to livelihood. The events of state repression in West Bengal also figured in the discussions, and the way Mr Probodh Purokait, a SUCI MLA was given life-imprisonment was strongly condemned. A letter written by Anasuya Sen, Binayak Sen's mother was read out.

Dilip Garai
Dubrajpur, Birbhum

HINDUTVA TERROR NETWORK

The recent confessions of the 'terror Guru' Swami Aseemanand before the metropolitan magistrate in Tees Hazari court have officially confirmed the existence of a network of terror affiliated to the RSS and its sister organisations.

Civil rights groups have long argued that the security agencies deliberately ignored leads that pointed to the hand of Hindutva groups in planning and executing acts of terror. The agencies, showing their abject bias, instead chose to pursue the beaten track of investigating Islamic terrorist organizations such as HUJI, LeT and IM-despite clear evidence pointing in the opposite direction.

All those who were accused/ arrested / tortured must be provided a compensation of at least Rs 20/- lakh each. The Home Minister and the state governments must issue an apology for the grievous loss of dignity and livelihood that innocents have suffered on account of the false charges foisted upon them.

All India Secular Forum, Mumbai