

BHUBANESWAR 14 APRIL 2012 SATURDAY ₹3.50 PAGES 20 LATE CITY EDITION

THE  NEW
INDIAN EXPRESS

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VJAYAWADA • BANGALORE • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELGAUM • BHUBANESWAR • SHIMOGA • TIRUCHY • www.expressbuzz.com

The Kudankulam project is not a one off event and what meets the eye is the proverbial tip of the ice-berg. Many other projects in Power, Steel and Aluminum have been targeted for years by foreign NGO's

Foreign Based NGOs Derailing Economy in the name of Human Rights

A national debate has spilled over after the central government pulled out all stops to expose the unholy nexus between foreign sponsored NGOs and the protest movement against India's nuclear power project at Kudankulam. The Centre has frozen accounts of 30 NGOs following allegations of misuse of foreign funds and banned 70 other voluntary organizations from receiving donations from abroad. The question that is now being posed is that whether such protests are limited only to nuclear projects or is there a wider ramification and a more grandiose plan to slow down the Indian economy.

Besides tarnishing the reputation of India abroad and creating doubts within, the recent round of NGO protests have led to a delay in the project work and has already led to a loss of around 900 crores of rupees, according to conservative estimates.

According to the Russian ambassador, Alexander M Kadakin, India would be losing around \$1 million a day for the delay. If every power project is targeted in this way, it becomes clear that India will have to bear cost over-runs to the tune of thousands of crores of rupees besides slowing down India's economic growth.

The Kudankulam project is not a one off event and what meets the eye is the proverbial tip of the ice-berg. Many other projects in Power, Steel and Aluminum have been targeted for years by foreign NGO's.

A similar well orchestrated and concerted effort is discernible in case of protests against resource driven development projects in the eastern state of Odisha; in the name of Human Rights Violation. More so, in the case of Vedanta Aluminium that has already set up a refinery and smelter in the State without a captive bauxite mine. NGO's have targeted this particular company as it was poised to become the lowest cost producer of Aluminum in the world. Already the refinery expansion project has been put on hold and the resultant delay of around four years has escalated the project cost by around one thousand two hundred crores of rupees.

Once Odisha's huge Bauxite reserves open up then Indian Aluminium companies will become the most economical producers in the world and this can become a serious threat to all foreign companies.

Recently, individuals from Queen-

sland in Australia, Mr. J.W. Peter and Ms. Helen Findley, have separately lodged complaints with the Indian High Commission in Australia, against threat to local communities in downstream villages of Lanjigarh from Vedanta Aluminums' Red Mud Pond in Odisha.

They have urged the High Commissioner "to take immediate steps to protect these communities and to or-

quately address existing problems in a manner that respects human rights." These letters suddenly surfaced when the refinery's expansion case came up for judgement in the Odisha High Court.

How is it that these individuals sitting far off across the seas, without any first hand and in-depth knowledge of local communities, deem it their so-called moral responsibility and author-

sentiments in the name of tribal tourism. There is enough evidence to show that many foreigners come to Niyamgiri in Lanjigarh, and their intention appears to be far from noble.

There seems to be a pattern emerging in all this. This entire exercise appears to be an organized and deliberate attempt at thwarting development in India. They fund localbodies to influence and raise fear among the largely



INDIA WOULD BE LOSING AROUND \$1 MILLION A DAY FOR THE DELAY. IF EVERY POWER PROJECT IS TARGETED IN THIS WAY, IT BECOMES CLEAR THAT INDIA WILL HAVE TO BEAR COST OVER-RUNS TO THE TUNE OF THOUSANDS OF CRORES OF RUPEES BESIDES SLOWING DOWN INDIA'S ECONOMIC GROWTH.

— Alexander M Kadakin, Russian ambassador

ganize the cleanup of any pollution that may have occurred, to stop pumping any more red mud into the pond and ensure that no expansion of the Vedanta Aluminium Refinery is allowed until action has been taken to ade-

ity to protest against projects? Clearly there is more than what meets the eye.

As for the fear and concern about the leakage from the Red Mud Pond of Vedanta's Refinery and the reports of the same on May 16, 2011, the matter has already been looked into by the state Pollution Control Board. After thorough investigation the committee submitted the report: "No discharge was observed from the red mud pond or water pond or any outlet of the industry to the Bansadhara river." giving a clean chit to Vedanta's refinery. The report is available on the website of the Ministry www.envfor.nic and www.moef.nic

A month ago the Govt. of Odisha was obliged to take stringent measures to impose restrictions on foreigners in the Tribal dominated areas like Malkangiri, Rayagada and Kalahandi. These foreign tourists were seen encroaching upon the privacy of the indigenous tribes like the Bonda and the Dongria Tribes, disrespecting their culture and

ignorant and simple people who have remained insulated from civilization and development for thousands of years.

FIMI has strongly taken up the issue with the Prime Minister. In a letter sent by its Secretary General it accuses foreign lobbies who provoke local NGOs to fight Civil suit, organize protests which leads to delays and undermines the entire financial viability of the project.

The question that arises is why spend so much money in derailing India's internal development programs, that could easily have been used to feed and care for the needy across the world; which should be the true purpose of any philanthropic organization anyway? Foreign intervention and 'concern' invariably is leading to a tarnished image of India and its Corporate Houses. This is the last thing one would want, especially, when there is major development vs. environment issue to be sorted out within the country.