

## India-Japan Nuclear Agreement Must Be Opposed Through Joint Solidarity

The newly elected Indian Prime Minister would be visiting Tokyo in the later half of August to finalise a nuclear supply agreement with Japan.

This deal has been long pending despite immense pressure from the nuclear industry inside Japan, and also the nuclear lobbies from US and France whose proposed projects are being delayed in India. While the two nuclear giant of the US – GE and Westinghouse – have now majority stake from Hitachi and Toshiba, the French Areva's EPR design being set up in India design would require crucial components supplied by Japanese companies.

Even before Fukushima, the peace groups and Hibakushas in Japan have been opposed to the agreement as it sets a bad precedent: India has not signed the NPT and CTBT and has conducted nuclear tests, supplying it with more technology will encourage newer countries to go for atomic bombs and then renegotiate their international status. India was barred from global nuclear commerce after it used nuclear material and know-how that it got from the US, UK, Canada and other countries for peaceful use to conduct nuclear test in 1974. But after it tested again in 1998, it forced a change in the rules of the Nuclear Suppliers' Group and got an exemption with US help in 2008. In return, India made advance promises for huge nuclear purchases from the US, France, Canada, Russia and other countries.

It is under the pressure of these commitment to the international nuclear lobby that the Indian government has been bulldozing everything that stands in the way of implementing new reactors – undermining and diluting safety norms, curtailing transparency on nuclear-related pushing through environmental clearances at gun-point, neglecting the adverse economics of these projects, brutally crushing grassroots democratic dissent, and trying to exempt the nuclear suppliers from liability in the event of any accident. Massive grassroots protests against proposed and existing nuclear facilities are underway in several parts of India, but the government has responded with violence on innocent farmers, fisherfolk, women and children. A recent malicious report by the Intelligence Bureau labeling anti-nuclear activists as national security threat is anticipated to result in further repression and victimisation.

The nuclear supply agreement with Japan would give a final and crucial push to India's massive expansion of nuclear energy, an exception in post-Fukushima world when a global shift away from nuclear power has become a trend. Also, the deal would become the final seal of legitimacy for India's nuclear weapons and will further fuel the nuclear arms race in South Asia. An import-based civilian nuclear industry would free up India's domestic resources exclusively for weapons.

Concerned people in both India and Japan have been opposed to the nuclear agreement. When PM Abe visited India earlier this year, hundreds of people participated in

demonstrations and poster-protest all over the country. Eminent citizens wrote letters to Mr. Abe and his wife, requesting a rethink. Solidarity protests by anti-nuclear groups were staged in Tokyo and Osaka as well.

After Fukushima, it is prudent that both the countries must cooperate on renewable energy sources and alternative models of energy consumption and planning. While Japan has a historic opportunity to learn from Fukushima and lead the new energy revolution, India can aptly use the lessons and cooperation as it stands at the threshold of development where it can make real choices affecting lives of a billion people.

A resounding no to the India-Japan nuclear agreement and yes to better relations between the common people of the two countries is important for better future of the humankind.