

In India, anti-nuclear activist rubbishes the Internal Bureau “scare-mongering” report

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Anti-nuclear activist Praful Bidwai, one of the five activists named in the Intelligence Bureau report on "Concerted Efforts by Select Foreign Funded NGOs to take down' Indian development projects." File photo: Rohit Jain Paras.} {{{IB report against themscare-mongering', say anti-nuke activists

As per the report, anti-nuclear activism coupled with protests against coal mining and the green lobby had stalled development and, in turn, slowed down the growth of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by two-to-three per cent.

Five civil rights activists involved in anti-nuclear movements across the country and named in the Intelligence Bureau report on "Concerted Efforts by Select Foreign Funded NGOs to 'take down' Indian development projects" on Friday described the report as "farcical" and aimed at "scare-mongering" to "delegitimize" genuine people's struggles.

While three of them - Achin Vinayak, Praful Bidwai and M. G. Devasahayam - jointly addressed a press conference in the Capital, two others - former Navy Chief L. Ramdas and S. P. Udayakumar who spearheaded the agitation against the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Project - joined them via Skype to challenge the IB report.

As per the report, anti-nuclear activism coupled with protests against coal mining and the green lobby had stalled development and, in turn, slowed down the growth of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by two-to-three per cent.

Stating that the report was aimed at intimidating activists to discourage people from taking a stand, Mr. Udayakumar said the IB had put his life and that of his family at risk with the kind of allegations that have been levelled. He threatened to take the IB to **legal task'' for sullyng his name. Rejecting the allegations levelled against the anti-nuclear activists, columnist Praful Bidwai said:** If a senior IB official can concoct dangerous stuff, this should worry all of us because if this is the way the IB is going to work, then national security is under threat. The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) has a more credible figure of a seven per cent loss to the GDP because of environmental destruction."

Pointing to the Environment Ministry's decision to fast-track clearances for projects, he said the report appeared to have been officially leaked to create a climate against NGOs and nip any resistance.

"Appalled and aggrieved" by the report, Admiral Ramdas said his patriotism and integrity was being questioned after a career in defence of the country. Mr. Devasahayam, a retired bureaucrat and power policy expert, said: "If this is the kind of intelligence from the IB on which India is to be governed, then god help this country."

Asked about the charge that anti-nuclear activism was foreign-funded, Mr. Vinayak maintained that the Coalition for Nuclear Disarmament and Peace, and People's Movement Against Nuclear Energy were domestically funded. "Neither are we acting on behalf of any government. We are Indians but we are opposed to nuclear power and nuclear weapons here and abroad."

As for linkages with similar movements overseas, academic Achin Vinayak said there was solidarity on the issue and urged the media to also question corporate linkages with companies across the global. "Doesn't money that comes from corporates the worldover influence policy?"

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

* *The Hindu*, Updated: June 13, 2014 21:27 IST:

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/ib-report-against-them-scaremongering-say-antinuke-activist/article6112152.ece#.U5v5GRocxmM.gmail>

Anti-nuclear activist rubbishes IB's claims on foreign connection

(Tamilnadu) - Noted anti-nuclear activist Dr. SP Udayakumar Wednesday rubbished the claims of Intelligence Bureau that he and his NGO receive the funds from the US, UK, Germany and other countries only to ensure that some of the developmental projects run into troubled waters.

It is a ridiculous and libelous claim that I was contracted through NGOs and I was submitting "fortnightly reports" to them, Dr. Udayakumar said in a press statement.

The IB in its recent report to the Union Home Ministry had said that many out of the total 85,000 NGOs operating in the country are using foreign funds to indulge into a lot of mischievous activities to hamper social and economic development.

The IB reportedly mentioned that the most obvious interference was from an NGO that was found at the Kundankulam nuclear plant in Tamil Nadu.

Dr. Udayakumar further said, "I am afraid this Fascist presupposition of the IB report is a precursor for stringent actions against individuals, groups, people's movements and minorities. As I have been singled out in this report and mentioned by name, I fear for my life and for my family's safety and security."

The IB reports reportedly states: "An enquiry of Udayakumar had revealed a deep and growing connection with the US and German authorities. In July 2010, Udayakumar received an unsolicited contract from the Kirwan Institute for Study of Race and Ethnicity at the Ohio State University USA

as a consultant on Group, Race, Class and Democracy Issues through NGOs. He was paid \$ 21, 120 upto June 2011 in a US bank account in his name and was contracted to earn another \$ 17, 600 upto April 2012 for fortnightly reports. ““As a result, Udayakumar’s contact in Germany, one Sonntag Rainer Hermann (German national) was deported from Chennai on February 27, 2012. Hermann’s laptop contained a scanned map of India with 16 nuclear plants (existing or proposed) and five uranium mine locations marked prominently. The map also included contact details of 50 Indian anti-nuclear activists hand-written on small slips of paper with Blackberry PIN graph. The map was sent via email to five prominent anti-nuclear activists, including Udayakumar.”

Whereas, according to Dr. Udayakumar he was just working as an off-campus Research Fellow in the International Program of the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, at the Ohio State University, Columbus, OH, USA for several years.

For the Kirwan Institute, I did several research and writing projects on globalization, racism, minority welfare, BRICS etc. I never did any research and writing project on India’s development or India’s nuclear program. I left that Research Fellow job in Spring 2011 when the Kirwan Institute reorganized itself under a new administration, he said.

He also rubbished the IB’s allegation that deported German national Sonntag Rainer Hermann was his “contact in Germany”.

“He was an acquaintance from Nagercoil, my hometown in Tamil Nadu. He was a hippie-type staying in a cheap hotel here in Nagercoil and participated in our anti-nuclear events. I did not receive any information or maps or monetary helps from him, nor did I give him any.” he said.

If he had done something illegal or dangerous why did the Indian authorities deport him hurriedly without taking any legal action? Dr. Udayakumar asked.

Appeal to the authorities:

Further Dr. Udayakumar also appealed to the Indian authorities to believe that ordinary citizens of India such as farmers and fisher folks have a mind of their own and can take an intelligent stand on issues such as setting up a nuclear power park or other such dangerous projects in their backyard.

Those of us who stand up, speak up and try to protect our poor and illiterate people’s land, water, air, sea, food security and nutrition security should not be considered and insulted as foreign stooges, money launderers, or smugglers, he said.

“The Indian authorities should acknowledge the simple fact that we do what we do because we love this country and its peoples. If this is how we —honest, responsible and law-abiding citizens— are treated, abused and harassed, this would only send wrong lessons to our youth and promote extremism and terrorism in this country.” he said.

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http://www.newzfirst.com/web/guest/full-story/-/asset_publisher/Qd8l/content/anti-nuclear-activist-rubbishes-ib-s-claims-on-foreign-connection?redirect=/web/guest/home
