

Admiral L Ramdas [retd]
PVSM, AVSM, VrC, VSM
Former Chief of the Naval Staff
Magsaysay Awardee for Peace

A21, Sainik Puri
Secunderabad
Andhra Pradesh- 500094
lramdas@gmail.com
0-9860170960, 040-65248855

April 19 2013

It is with deep anguish that I write to you, once again, to draw your attention to matters that affect the safety of our people in light of the latest revelations regarding the Koodankulam Nuclear Power Plant in Tamil Nadu. Frankly I hesitated to write, since my recent letters to did not seem to merit a serious response from your office.

My decision to go ahead and share my concerns was finally influenced by the fact that I have known you for almost three decades now – in all your `avatars' as professor, secretary in the Finance Ministry, and Finance Minister, when I was the Naval Chief. I am addressing this letter to the good doctor who took office as Prime Minister bringing with him impeccable credentials as a man of integrity and genuine commitment to the people of India.

I am hoping that you will live up to my expectations in the matter of taking immediate note of serious developments at the KKNPP.

It is no secret that I have been against nuclear energy in India. However, today I seek to highlight the mounting evidence available [see annexures] regarding the fears expressed in countless forums, about safety and in particular, allegations of corruption associated with the shoddy manufacture and supply of sub standard materials by the Russian suppliers to the KKNPP over a period of time publicly articulated in a newspaper article by Dr AK Gopalakrishnan, a former head of the AERB. This is shocking to say the least. Even worse however, is the studied silence from the highest office in the land – namely the PMO. This, together with the recent press release from AERB [placed at Annexure] which is a masterpiece of pious platitudes, totally minimises the seriousness of the situation, and sadly discredits the professionalism of both our political and scientific establishments.

You are well aware that unlike any other project being executed in the country today, nuclear power plants in particular must be treated with utmost caution and must include multiple safeguards before commissioning. An accident at Koodankulam, or any other nuclear plant site could be catastrophic. The world is still counting the cost – human and ecological - of the devastation caused by the nuclear accidents in Chernobyl and Fukushima. The growing allegations, from Russian and international sources, of graft and widespread involvement in the supply of sub standard materials, by Russian Company ZiO-Podolsk in Koodankulam, does not augur well for building any kind of confidence among the people who are likely to suffer most. The Peoples Movement against Nuclear Energy [PMANE] has consistently stressed this in countless submissions, documents and depositions.

I assume that the DAE and the NPCIL have already brought these facts to your notice and alerted the authorities in this regard.

Many respected and responsible voices across the country have been raising the alarm over several years now with regard to our seemingly insatiable appetite to implement nuclear power projects at any cost. Alas all of these seem to be falling on deaf ears. In my view, you can no longer afford to ignore the warning signals and need to act now with speed and determination .

In view of all the foregoing I would like to therefore recommend :

- Immediate suspension of all activities towards commissioning of Reactors 1 and 2 at Koodankulam.
- The Government should set up a special team comprising independent experts with impeccable credentials, [ie other than those in the DAE and NPCIL] to do a thorough and comprehensive investigation of the actual state of the materials, the structures and the likely areas which have been compromised. This must be carried out BEFORE the reactor is commissioned, as has been clearly articulated by Dr Gopalakrishnan.

I look forward to an Executive Order from my Prime Minister – ordering all activities at KKNPP to be put on hold pending the outcome of this investigation. This will be a true reflection of a courageous leader for whom the concerns for the well being and safety of his people will remain uppermost . At this point of time, the Russian nuclear industry, or for that matter any other foreign nuclear supplier, need us more than we need them – and there is no reason for us to either protect them or safeguard their poor performance which could endanger our people.

I am placing a number of enclosures at the Annexure which elaborate the points I have made.

Today the nation is angered and saddened by the terrible and wanton violence wrought on a young five year old girl in Delhi. A nuclear disaster has the potential to snatch away thousands of young ones and this is certainly not something that any government would like to see happen.

I sincerely hope that your sagacity will prevail over political compulsions.

With highest regards,

L. Ramdas

Shri Manmohan Singh

Prime Minister, Race Course Road
New Delhi 110011

cc: Ms J. Jayalalithaa, Chief Minister , Tamil Nadu

cc: Director, NPCIL, DAE,

Enclosures at Annexure

- Letter to CM, T Nadu – PMANE
- Article in New Indian Express, dated April 20 – Dr AK Gopalakrishnan
- Press release – April 20 – AERB
- Letter in response to [3] from PMANE
- Links to original documents on websites