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Anti-nuclear protest to greet French president Macron, to visit India on March 11, at Ratnagiri Mahashtra

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By Our Representative

French president Emmanuel Macron should not be imposing the "untested, expensive and technically troubled" French [EPR reactor](#) on India, say two international groups, India-based DiaNuke and US-based Beyond Nuclear, campaigning against nuclear power in India and across the world. The French-supported Jaitapur Nuclear Power Project of the Nuclear Power Corporation of India has been proposed at Madban village of Ratnagiri district in Maharashtra.

The two well-known non-profit organizations' statement comes amidst plans to hold a massive protest, with the participation of 5,000 people of the villages surrounding the Jaitapur site, on the eve of Macron's visit on March 11. The Jaitapur EPR project would be the biggest nuclear power plant site in the world if built, producing 9,900 MW of electricity.

Macron's visit to India, ironically, coincides with seven years to the day since the start of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant disaster in Japan, the second worst nuclear catastrophe after the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear reactor explosion in Ukraine. France and India are expected to sign a framework agreement during the visit that would fast track a six-reactor EPR project at Jaitapur on India's west coast.

Calling for foreign corporations not to proceed with nuclear power projects in India, they said, "In addition to the French Jaitapur site, a subsidiary of the Russian nuclear company, Rosatom, has a six reactor nuclear project in Kudankulam where two of its VVER-1000 reactors are already operational. The bankrupt US company, Westinghouse, hopes to build

six AP1000 reactors in the village of Kovvada in Andhra Pradesh."



A Greenpeace protest in Toulouse, France

All these sites have seen massive protests by farmers, fishermen and villagers, whose lives and livelihoods, along with scarce water supplies, are threatened.

"The French have no right to inflict the risks and environmental devastation of nuclear power on unwilling communities in India," said Kumar Sundaram, director of DiaNuke. "The French nuclear sector is preying upon India's apparent eagerness to buy nuclear plants in order to restore their global reputation, fatally damaged by the failures of their EPR nuclear projects at home and in Finland."

"It's ironic that while Macron is selling nuclear power to India where villagers have been shot protesting it, his government is at the same time tear-gasing nuclear opponents at home," said Linda Pentz Gunter, international specialist at Beyond Nuclear. "This shows yet again why nuclear energy and democracy are fundamentally incompatible."

Macron will also visit the New Delhi Solar Summit during his stopover in India. "India is ideally suited to the distributed electricity generation provided by solar and wind energy, given its vast geography and the fact that almost 70% of its population lives in rural areas," Pentz Gunter said. "But it is clear that nuclear energy is Macron's priority agenda."

"The Areva (now Orana)-designed and EDF-constructed EPR was supposed to become the French nuclear flagship. Instead, the EPR is mired in controversy. The French Flamanville EPR, as well as one in Olkiluoto, Finland, are massively over budget, years behind schedule, and have been plagued by technical mistakes and charges of fraud and cover-ups", then statement alleged.

Orano is a French multinational group specializing in nuclear power and renewable energy headquartered in Paris La Defense, while EDF Energy UK-based producer electricity.

"Only last week, EDF admitted to substandard weldings at the Flamanville plant which also has a controversial and flawed reactor vessel lid manufactured by the Areva-owned French forge at Le Creusot which was found to have supplied defective parts and falsified quality control documents, eroding trust internationally in the EPR", it pointed out.

"Even in China, where safety controls are given less scrutiny than in Europe, further delays were just announced at the Taishan EPR site, due to cracks found in a reactor component. It marked the third delay in two years. These troubles have left Areva and EDF, both state-owned companies, fundamentally bankrupt", the statement added.



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