

# DOCUMENTS ON

The Resistance Movement of the People

Against the Location of National Test

Range ( NTR ) Baliapal-Bhograi

in the Dist. of Balasore, Orissa.

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## Broken Assurances

It is shocking to know that the Defence Ministry is hell-bent to locate the National Test Range ( NTR ) at Baliapal - Bhograi, in the Balasore District of Orissa. From this Range Rockets / Missiles will be fired to a distance of 6000 Km and Satellites will be launched thousands of kilometers up in the space. It will become like that of Cape Kennedy Centre of USA. What pains us most is the Government's obduracy not to listen to reason. The project will displace a lakh of persons initially from 126 villages spread over 400 hundred sq. km, and a rich agricultural area will be destroyed. The announcement to the effect that area is cut to contain 6100 families in about 68 villages is not believed by any one. The demand of the people is to shift the project to another area where no or nominal displacement of people and property will take place. On the 20th March 86 the Prime Minister promised to the delegation of the effected persons led by Madhu Dandavate, M. P. that he will consider alternate sites if suggested to him. Rajiv Gandhi was in a jovial mood on that day, entrusted the task i.e., to suggest alternate sites by consulting ( your ) experts to Madhu Dandavate. "After some home work is done I will visit the area", the PM told to Bhagaban Dutta, a freedom fighter belonging to his party, a member of the delegation.

To our utter surprise Arun Singh, Minister of State for Defence negated the assurance given by P.M.

by inviting us ( Dr. Harekrushna Mahatab, Biju Pattanaik and myself ) to discuss 'land acquisition and rehabilitation' programme on 16th April 86 at Delhi. Biju Pattanaik and myself had participated in the discussion of course with a protest. Dr. Mahatab could not attend due to ill health. However in a letter to Arun Singh he wrote "His ( Biju's ) views may be taken as my views". Since we found the discussion went haywire and that government exhibited a closed mind and had pre-determined the issue of location we walked out of the meeting.

However the said meeting which was mostly handled by Shri Arunachalam, scientific advisor to Defence Ministry revealed many interesting points regarding the location of NTR. Six places were finally clinched; they are Dwaraka, Sriharikota, Rajasthan Deserts, Andaman Islands, Sagardeep, Sat Bhaya, where according to us the project could be located causing any displacement of people and destruction of property. It needed indepth discussion. But the suggestion was summerily dismissed. It showed arbitrariness of the Government side. As for instance when Government agreed that the Andaman Islands are a suitable place for the location of the project, but it will cost "hundred times more" as Arun Singh said. Our position was firstly, it will not cost more, secondly, even if it costs more it could be balanced by not encountering other odds such as human misery and destruction of a green belt. It therefore needed an indepth discussion. Unfortunately it was not agreed to.

Similarly when the assurance given to the Chief Minister of Orissa who was present in the meeting by Arunachalam to the effect that peasants can cultivate lands was denied and the C.M. made a mention of

it in the meeting, Arun Singh suddenly intervened and suggested a most impractical thing—Peasants can cultivate when there will be no firing.

Now the questions that arise are as follows :—

- (1) Whether P.M. will keep his assurance given to the delegation of the affected people on 20th March 86 or not ?
- (2) When in world over even in U.S.A., France, U.K., China, U S S. R such projects have been located in marshy, sandy places, mountain terrains, deserts etc., far away from human habitation, why then this one should be located at Baliapal displacing a lakh of persons ?
- (3) For ecological reasons the two thousand Megawatt thermal Power station in Talcher, Orissa ( where there is no forestry ) is not cleared by the Central Government, why then such a lush green belt at Baliapal is allowed to be destroyed by the Defence Ministry ?
- (4) When the submarines in the Indian Ocean of Big Powers carry Rockets / Missiles fitted with nuclear war-heads should not the Government be compelled to use nuclear weapons at least Willy-Nilly for the purpose of Deterrence ?
- (5) If not, whether four thousand crores of Rupees expenditure on a non-priority sector will be justified when our Defence needs on priority sectors are great ?
- (6) After accidents that accured at Charnobyl, Bhopal, Cape Kennedy etc., the 6 kilometers security free zone at Baliapal is not too small ?
- (7) Citizens and Parliamentarians have no right to discuss all aspects of the project before it is decided to be located ?

- (8) When the N T. R. at Baliapal will become like the Cape Kennedy Center in U. S. A as is claimed by the Minister of State for Defence, is it not preposterous to say that the area as small as that of villages containing 6100 families (which has been now cut from 126 village and about 13,000 families) will be sufficient for the purpose ?
- (9) Or this is just a tip of iceberg of the area to be acquired ?
- (10) Is it correct in the national interest to ruin a prosperous agricultural area which exports fish and agricultural products worth crores of rupees when alternate sites are available ?

These and many other questions arise in people's mind which is not answered by any one in the government. By merely saying that the work of the "patriots" is to support the project since the government thinks it is of "National Importance" as the P.M. has said is meant to rouse an emotional fervour bereft of reason.

The assurances given to the people by the highest quarters are not honoured. The governments and its leaders turn a deaf ear to the frantic appeal of the people to save them from destitution. However the grim determination and strong will of the people not to succumb to injustice and state terrorism and to fight for truth on the path shown by the Father of the nation is quite high. In this hour of their peril they need precious sympathy and support from all quarters.

Suelpur, Balasore;  
the 15th July 86.

**Samarendra Kundu**

MEMORANDUM TO  
**Shri Rajiv Gandhi**  
Prime Minister of India.

New Delhi

20-3-86

Dear Prime Minister,

1. We, the representatives of more than a lakh of persons from Baliapal-Bhograi have come all the way to Delhi to express our sorrow and anguish and convey our deep resentment and record our protest at the government's decision to locate the National Test Range ( Missile/Rocket ) in our area in the District of Balasore, Orissa. The location of the National Test Range will not only displace more than one lakh persons from a thickly populated area but will render an agriculture prosperous area into a desert. About three lakh persons who live on the trade, commerce, transportation and industry of the agriculture produce of the area will become destitutes.

2. In the economically backward state of Orissa the project area about 200 sq. km. is like an oasis in the midst of a desert. It grows coconut, betal leaves ( has more than 30,000 betal-vine yards ), cashew, jute, oil seeds, rice, paddy, mat straws etc. A large number of fishermen live on the catch of the fish from sea, river and sweet water. It exports goods worth Rs. 200 crores

outside the state at a time when Orissa alone imports consumer goods to the tune of about two thousand crores annually. Many public institutions such as Colleges, Schools, Temples will be destroyed. The total loss of property is estimated at Rs. 760 ( seven hundred sixty ) crores of rupees. ( For details see the annexure ). Will the Government be ruthless, inhuman, insane and despotic and order the Bulldozer razing the houses to the ground and levelling fields even if it matters deaths to many? We pray to you, the Prime Minister, most fervently to see that the people are not driven out from their homes and hearths and uprooted from their lands where they are settled for centuries.

3. Sir, you are a great protagonist of maintaining ecological balance in the country. The project area has a deep green belt and it looks like a little Andaman. Due to erosion and deforestation and imbalance in ecological condition in the country it is said that the Rajasthan desert is advancing towards Delhi at a speed of one KM a year. N. D. Tiwari Committee has said that in India, 33% of the forest covered trees are reduced to 13% now. One hundred prominent citizens of our country in a signed statement have shown grave concern at the deteriorating state of environment of our country which makes poor people suffer most and make the country a desert. You being a votary of maintaining ecological balance in the country, Mr. Prime Minister, we beseech you not to allow the Defence department plunder a green garden into a desert in the phoney name of maintaining security of the country.

4. It has been said that the displaced persons will be suitably compensated and will be rehabilitated in

the rocky land of Raibania and Nilgiri Hills. Even though a decade has passed many displaced persons of Rengali Dam, Talcher Coal Mines, etc. have not been rehabilitated properly as yet. In this case once the people are driven out, it will meet the same fate.

5. Mr. Prime Minister, we fail to understand that much is made out of a study group report of the Defence Minister which says that this area is the heaven born one—the only “suitable area” for location of the project. There is no logic or rhyme whatsoever in this contention. Human miseries have not at all been taken into consideration while preparing this departmental report. We humbly pray that this project should be shifted to some other place where there may be nominal displacement of people or if such place is not available the project in the larger interest of the people and the country should be scrapped.

6. Shri J. B. Pattnaik, the Chief Minister of Orissa, for the first time in August 1984 announced the location of this project at Baliapal-Bhograi area and said that it will cause nominal displacement but will provide employment to people. In the last General Election to Parliament, your party used it as a plot to get votes so that when elected they will get the mandate of the people and will be able to shift the project, once they got elected they forgot about the project.

Most respectfully we would like to inform you that the people of the area, district and the State are restive and are determined to resist the project, if located at Baliapal-Bhograi area. There have been several protest



meetings cutting across the party lines. The unprecedented movement of the people has to be seen to be belived. They have taken a vow better to die resisting the location of the project than die like flies on destitution.

We most humbly pray that you will be kind enough to review the matter *de novo* and visit the area at least once and on humanitarian consideration be good enough to shift the project to any other alternative site and failing to shift the project be good enough to cancel it altogether. We pray that till you have not visited the area no further action towards acquisition of land, etc. will be taken.

Yours sincerely,

Representatives from the area  
and others.

Dr. V. Venkatesh, M. P.,	Madhu Dandawate, M. P.
G. C. Bhuyan, M. P.	S. K. Mishra, M. P.
Sarat Kumar Dev, M. P.	Samarendra Kundu
Gadadhar Giri	Gourahari Das
Sitanath Jena	Bhagaban Chandra Raj
Jogendra Nath Sahoo,	Gourahari Das at Jamatakula
Purusottam Behera	Gangadhar Pradhan
Purna Chandra Raj	Kumud Chandra Raj
Jogendra Nath Sahoo	Pravakar
Brundaban Raj	Arun Kumar Jena
Bhagabat Biswal	Benudhar Hazara
Dinabandhu Parida	Gouranga Jena
Manas Kumar Datta	Naba Kumar Jena
Narendra Nath Das	Ananta Kumar Das
Ram Chandra Behera	Rajendra Biswal
Gouranga Biswal	Bhagaban Dutta

## ANNEXURE

# ASSESSMENT OF LOSSES

Loss of the private properties if the proposed Test Range is set up

### 1 Value of Lands

- |   |                   |
|---|-------------------|
| a) Paddy field 25,000 acres<br>Rs. 50,000/- acre        | Rs. 125 crores    |
| b) Govt. Land 5,000 acres<br>Rs. 25,000/- acre          | Rs. 12.25 crores  |
| c) Homestead Land 10,000 acres<br>Rs. 200,00/- acre     | Rs. 200.00 crores |
| d) Orchards, Gardens 15,000 acres<br>Rs. 100,000/- acre | Rs. 150.00 crores |

### 2. Value of Crops

- |   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| a) Cost of paddy over 25,000 acres<br>10 qntl/acre Rs. 200/- qntl.                | Rs. 5.00 crores  |
| b) Cost of betel vines of 30,000 nos.<br>Rs. 20,000/- betel vines                 | Rs. 60.00 crores |
| c) Cost of coconut & other fruits<br>( 200,000 trees )                            | Rs. 20.00 crores |
| d) Cost of Inland fishes  | Rs. 2.00 crores  |
| e) Cost of Groundnuts, Oil Seeds<br>& Cashewnuts etc.                             | Rs. 7.00 crores  |
| f) Cost of Sea Fishes   | Rs. 50.00 crores |
| g) Cost of House building woods   | Rs. 10.00 crores |
| h) Cost of fire woods   | Rs. 5.00 crores  |
| i) Cost of Bamboos  | Rs. 3.00 crores  |
| j) Cost of high yielding 10,000 acres<br>paddy crops 20 qntl/acre                 | Rs. 4.00 crores  |
| k) Value of paddy straw for sarod &<br>Dalua about 35,000 acres<br>Rs. 300/- acre | Rs. 1.05 crores  |

### 3. Cost of Buildings & Temples Etc.

- |   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| a) Private Pucca Buildings about<br>200 nos. Rs. 150,000 approx/house | Rs. 3.00 crores  |
| b) Private Semi pucca Building<br>3,000 nos.                          | Rs. 18.00 crores |
| c) Semi Permanent houses about<br>9,000 nos. Rs. 15.000 appx/house    | Rs. 13.50 crores |
| d) Cost of Temples 200 nos.   | Rs. 2.00 crores  |
| e) Cost of Wells, Tube wells  | Rs. 0.05 crores  |

### 4. Value of Govt. Properties

- |   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| a) Cost of Roads & Bridges<br>200 Km 50,000/- Mm.   | Rs. 1.00 crores |
| b) Cost of Scool & College Building<br>2 Colleges 13 High Schools,<br>30 M. E. Schools, 50 Primary School<br>approximately cost | Rs. 7.50 crores |
| c) Cost of Dispensary & M. A. C. etc.   | Rs. 1.00 crores |
| d) Cost of Electricline & other<br>installations  | Rs. 5-00 crores |
| e) Cost of G. P. Houses with<br>Grain Gola etc.   | Rs. 0.24 crores |
| f) Cost of Library &<br>Yuvak Sangha Houses   | Rs. 0.25 crores |

### 5. Cost of Small & Cottage Industries

- |   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| a) One coire rope industries                          | Rs. 0.25 crores |
| b) Salt factory at different localities               | Rs. 2.00 crores |
| c) Fish Depo 4 numbers                                | Rs. 1.25 crores |
| d) Bamboo Basket & Mat & Matress<br>making industries | Rs. 2.00 crores |
| e) Huller Machines & Oil<br>Extraction Mills          | Rs. 1.00 crores |

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Rs. 712.34 crores

## Biju Patnaik Opposes Test Range Location at Baliapal

In a letter to the Prime Minister he calls for prevention of  
"seeds of nuclear war."

Dear Prime Minister,

Since it has appeared in the press that location of the Test Range is to be at Baliapal in Balasore District in Orissa, I thought it proper to bring a few facts to your notice.

It was rather sad that Sri Arun Singh, Minister of State for Defence brushed aside proposals for alternate sites although it would have obviated large scale human displacements and concomittant problems.

Andaman-Nicobar islands chain was dismissed by Sri Arun Singh with a sweeping and untenable observation that the location of the Test Range at the islands would cost 100 times more. Obviously some where the computer had gone away.

A far better site on the Gujrat coast at Dwaraka was not considered feasible merely because of its proximity to Karachi and likely telemetric intervention from Pakistan. If Pakistan were to intervene electronically, surely India could easily counter it especially when Pakistan is planning its own Test Range on the coast west of Karachi.

Sagar island was dismissed on the plea that the land was "Soft". I mentioned to Sri Arun Singh that he

should see the Paradeep harbour in Orissa which was constructed entirely on marshy land and similar land at Sagar would not present any problem for piling or construction. No reasoning seemed to appeal to Sri Arun Singh and his technical advisers since they had firmly fixed their sight on Baliapal, inspite of avoidable large scale displacement and misery that would follow. Obviously a large chunk of avoidable human misery was of no consequence to our distinguished and democratic political and scientific leaders.

I am considerably disturbed about starting an exceedingly high-cost Test Range under the aegis of the Defence Ministry, **military use of which can only be had by missiles with nuclear warheads.** How can such a concept be compatible with your exemplary crusade against nuclear proliferation, if India engages itself in building the vehicles for nuclear strike. How would be Prime Minister of India defend himself as the saviour of human race while preparing for nuclear war. Can we honestly say that India has to respond to and outbid Pakistan's efforts in this direction. What then is our response to the existing Chinese nuclear launches across Tibet which could vapourise Bombay, Delhi, Calcutta and a host of other human concentrations north of the Vindhyas, in less than five minutes. Why does the Defence Department feel that Baliapal site will not some day come under the spectrum of telemetric intervention from the soil of Bangladesh through the 'good offices' of China or U. S. A. What prevents nuclear devastation being let loose on India either from Tibet or Diago Gracia in the event of nuclear conflict in our sub-continent.

In the meantime, it is not beyond comprehension that continuous explosion of American or French satellites costing over Rs. 5,000 crores, all within one year, could easily be the outcome of laser-telemetric intervention from nuclear submarines or roving satellites, thus providing far more effective disincentive to the Star-War programme than thousands of International nuclear scientists voicing their strong opposition to it.

May I appeal to the Prime Minister to review the entire matter afresh. One defective Russian reactor has created havoc. Must India also participate in the ultimate 'crime' of destroying life in this Planet.

When millions of men and women all over the world are on the march to protest against every form of tool and vehicle that may lead to nuclear holocaust, would your Government consider it wise if tens of thousands of people of Orissa join their helpless brothers and sisters of Baliapal to prevent planting of "seeds of nuclear war".

With personal regards,

Yours sincerely,

**Biju Patnaik**

# Madhu Dandavate's Letter to P. M.

10 Ashoka Road  
New Delhi - 110001  
17th April, 1986

My dear Rajivji,

I feel deeply concerned because the proposals that had emerged at the meeting with you, on 20th March, 1986 on the issue of National Test Range were ignored in the meeting convened yesterday by Shri Arun Singh Minister of State for Defence. Shri J. B. Pattnaik, Chief Minister of Orissa and his colleagues were present at the meeting. Shri Biju Pattanaik and Shri Samarendra Kundu also attended by invitation.

Prior to this meeting convened by Shri Arun Singh I had a telephonic talk with him in which I had clearly indicated to him that at this meeting Shri Biju Pattanaik, Shri Kundu and others will discuss only the question of alternate sites of national test range.

Despite this I regret to inform you that though at this meeting clear alternate proposals were put forward, they were rejected outright on one pretext or the other without any indepth consideration.

This displayed Government's pre-determined close mind on this issue contrary to your expressed desire at the meeting with us on 20th March, 1986.

I, therefore earnestly request you to review the entire problem *de novo* along with us and explore alternate sites whereby massive human misery of the displaced persons could be avoided.

I learnt that Shri Arun Singh had stated in the meeting yesterday that the proposal to locate national test range at Baliapal was already taken 4 years back with the concurrence of the Chief Minister of Orissa. A little more delay in finalising the decision regarding the alternate site will not create any problem.

May I expect a reply from you at the earliest ?

With kind regards.

Yours sincerely,  
**Madhu Dandavate**



## **Baliapal is not a suitable place for Locating National Test Range**

**Nilamoni Routray** former Chief Minister of Orissa in a letter to Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi dt. 16-6-86 writes .... "..... you will please find that **no where in the world any country has shown such disregard and contempt for the interests and sufferings of masses as is being shown here by the Defence department. There is no parallel instance to cite in the world** " He counsels "As Prime Minister of the country you can not afford to be impatient. **You can only be considerate and that alone would enhance your prestige and that of a high office you hold....**." Nilamoni Routray had appended a note to his letter in support of his point of view.

### **On test range for testing arms and ammunitions in different countries.**

In the matter of establishment of a National Test Range for Rockets, Missiles and other military weapons, we should not presume that India is the only country that is desirous of setting up such a defence establishment. Super powers like USA or USSR and some other countries like Great Britain, China and France have not only established such ranges, but are also far ahead of us. It is imperative for us to learn and for our Prime Minister, Defence Department and the Chief Minister of Orissa to know the ground rules, principles and criteria that guided those countries in the matter of establishing their



National Test Ranges for short-range testing as well as very long range testing of missiles and other weapons and how scrupulously and consciously they have avoided densely populated areas, eliminating uprooting of masses of people and destruction of fertile cultivable lands. On the otherhand, they selected sandy deserts, swampy and uninhabitable lands and reclaimed them away from populous areas, while selecting sites for such establishments.

The United States of America has got both short range and very long range centres for testing rockets, missiles and other weapons. In the matter of selection of sites for such centres the Government of USA had taken utmost care not to uproot people and destroy cultivable lands. Their short range testing centre covering a range of 100 miles is called the white Sand Missile Range in the New Mexico State of USA, in the white Sand Desert Valley and within an area of 100 miles by 40 miles. America's very long Range Rocket and missiles ( ICBMs ) testing centre is at Cape Kennedy formerly Cape Canaveral ) in the State of Florida on the Atlantic coast. In selecting this site the US Government have exhibited their wisdom in avoiding displacement of their people. **This is the largest missile range and space centre in the world and in establishing this not a single man was displaced, not a single house was demolished, not a drop of tear was shed and not an acre of arable land was acquired.** The total area of Florida State is 58560 square miles and the population of the entire State in the year 1950, when this long range centre was established was only 27,00,000 ( 27 lacs ). **Out of the total area of the State 4,424 square miles are swampy low lands that submerge with the tide and as such quite uninhabitable. This is the area where Cape Canaveral now Cape Kennedy**

**is located,** The uninhabitable nature of the land and the primitive characteristics of the surroundings can be better appreciated from the following picture given by the assistant editor of the Washington-based National Geographic Magazine written after a decade of the foundation of this missile and space centre.

"Imagine, for a moment, a desolate expanse of sand and snarled brush that just out into the Atlantic like a bent elbow. Alligators bask in its swamps, snakes infest its undergrowth, birds of many species wing its air lanes and hordes of voracious mosquitoes drone in its thickest. Of human habitation, however, there are but few signs - a venerable light house and several forlorn old houses. That would be Cape Canaveral a decade ago. Wild life still claims the Cape. Despite Canaveral's metamorphosis, other wild-life remains in residence. Workers often see rabbits and armadillos. Occasionally some one sights a wary bobcat. Gulls, vultures, hawks and pelicans still abound"

It has to be admitted that in the matters of knowledge and experience and preparation of defence and in the installation of vital defence institutions at strategic points, Great Britain is superior to us in many respects. Great Britain, however, spread the proof testing operations to different areas. For instance, tanks are tested at Castle Douglas in Scotland, artillery at Holyhead in Wales and infantry weapons and ammunitions in England. **There are short range Weapons Proving Grounds like our existing proof and establishment organisation at Chandipur in Balasore District.** But so far as their Long-Range rockets and missiles are concerned their testing centre was not in Great Britain but in south Australia in the

vicinity of Victoria desert at a place called Woomera Range. This may sound strange and astonishing, yet the British people in their wisdom selected this site obviously to avoid the displacement of English people, demolition of their houses and destruction of their cultivable land as well as ensuring location of the Range at a place where danger to people is minimum. Such are the feelings of the British people, their armed forces and their Government towards the sufferings of their common man and society.

France is one of the four nuclear powers. It will be beneficial and instructive to study the efforts of the French Government in the matter of selection of sites for testing rockets, missiles and other weapons including nuclear weapons. That will give enough idea as to the criteria they fixed and the guide-lines they followed in their choice of sites for such purposes. They deliberately selected places far away from human habitation and in uninhabitable areas like sandy deserts, lonely uninhabited islands and marshy regions. When Algeria in Africa was in their possession they had their Test-Range at Reggane in Sahara, the biggest desert in the world. When Algeria became free and independent the French Government closed down their Test Range in Sahara and went to some islands in their possession in the South Pacific Ocean. Here the French Government established their Test Range in the Polynesian group of islands namely Wallis and Futana at a distance of about 12000 miles from France. Here also after few years they had to face hostile demonstrations from the local inhabitants in the surrounding islands against such tests including surreptitious tests of nuclear Weapons. The states in the South Pacific Ocean

formed a forum to carry on this agitation and they resolved to make the South Pacific Ocean a Nuclear - free Zone and urged upon France for co-operation. An embarrassed France ultimately had to move out to French Guiana in South America on the Atlantic coast - a distance of 8000 miles from France and located their Test Range and space centre there. In selecting such a place for testing their long range weapons France has exhibited her great concern for the safety and sufferings of humanity and has equally demonstrated her conscious efforts to avoid uprooting of people and the attendant problems of misery and rehabilitation. A study of the physical geography and population of French Guiana will confirm the assertions made above. The French Guiana with a coastline of 190 miles has a total area of 35907 sq. miles with a population of only 73022 according to 1982 census, roughly 2 persons per sq. mile. Out of the total area of the country only 5000 sq miles are habitable and the rest 30,000 sq. miles are marshy low lands and uninhabitable. It is here that the French Government have established its long range missiles test and space centre at a place called Kourou. **Incidentally it may be of interest and very relevant to know that the number of people who are sought to be uprooted for the proposed National Test Range at Baliapal are more than the total population of French Guiana.**

The USSR is another super power, perhaps at par with USA in the matter of establishing such long range missile and space centre in a very big way. The Russians have located this Centre in Siberia whose area is 53 lacs square miles and where hardly one person lives in one square mile. The same considerations and human

problems that weighed with USA, Great Britain and France have obviously weighed with the Russians as well.

China is also very much ahead of us in its strategic missile development. It has located its launching range centre in Central China in the Mountain Belt which is a "confused mass of low hills not suitable for human habitation" and is as vast as 1,25,000 square miles. China is also utilising the vast areas of Gobi desert in Central China for such test purposes. Its location of launching bases in the Tibetan area is well known. There is hardly any population problem in this area.

From the above instances it may be seen that in almost all the countries that have gone in for setting up rocket and missile range testing centres, their Governments and defence personnel have deliberately and consciously located their missile range centres in uninhabited swampy lands, sandy deserts and mountain ranges, but our Government and our defence advisers in their whims and caprices are insisting on selecting the most densely populated area which is otherwise known as the granary of Orissa. The Defence establishment of USA, USSR, France, China, and Great Britain could work at their missile range centres in marshy lands, in forests, in mountain ranges and in deserts but our scientists and Defence personnel want easygoing areas at immense social cost to our citizens, and thus have rejected places like Andamans, Sundarban Islands) and Dwaraka on Gujarat coast as unsuitable for missile range centre on some plea or other like unhealthy marshy lands, proneness to cyclone and nearness to foreign countries. Dwaraka is rejected for its nearness to Pakistan and Sundarban is rejected for its marsh. The distance of Dwaraka is about 100 miles from Pakistan and

similarly the distance of Baliapal from Bangla Desh is also 100 miles. In this atomic age distance has got no meaning at all. Strategically and otherwise Anadaman Islands would be the most suitable place for setting up the proposed missile-range test-centre in order to strengthen our defences in that part of our country and for increasing our command over Indian Ocean. This is a task and responsibility which Government of India have neglected so far. But most surprisingly our defence advisers have deliberately shut their eyes and rejected this location for its alleged proneness to cyclone. This is a diabolical misstatement trotted out with impunity for the purpose of misleading the Prime Minister and the Government. The truth is that, as borne out by authentic records, Andamans are rarely affected by a cyclone. On the contrary, it gives out accurate information relating to the direction and intensity of cyclones better than from any other point in the bay and provides warning signals to vast amount of shipping in this part of the Indian Ocean through an well equipped meteorological station at Port Blair. Generally the climate of Andamans may be described as normal for tropical islands of similar latitude.

A ridiculous impression is sought to be created by responsible persons in authority in Orissa, that the onslaught of Pakistan cannot be checked unless the National Test Range is located at Baliapal and that India's defence Department by their attitude is also encouraging such absurd propaganda. If there is any truth in this type of assessment then to ward off the Pakistani thrust it will be most appropriate to locate the Test Range either at Dwaraka on the Gujarat Coast or in the Rajasthan Desert.

After all, what is going to be achieved at Baliapal National Test Range and what are the purposes for

which this test range is being set up. In the language of the Defence, it is nothing but a proving ground for military use of arms and ammunitions. Its location has got no strategic significance for the defence of the country. If that would have been so, then the nuclear powers like Great Britain and France would not have established their Test Range or proving ground thousands of miles away from the parent country. It can be located in any sparsely populated area having suitable range site. In accordance with military expert opinion as depicted in Encyclopaedia Britannica "the testing range is a 'Proving Ground', an area set aside and usually specially modified and equipped to 'proof test' military devices and military vehicles. The purpose of such testing is to show up, by excessive or distorted operation, the weaknesses of an item or any of its components to determine whether the item's operation fits into a standard pattern ; or to determine the life expectancy of any product. In many instances 'items are tested to destruction ; in the case of ammunition, the test is actually an expenditure of sample quantities from each lot made. In all cases data are collected, evaluated and used in further development or in making engineering or production improvements. **Proving grounds for Rockets and guided missiles are distinctive primarily because of the much greater ranges invoved. They are usually located in sparsely populated areas where missiles may be fired for a distances of 100 miles or more ; sometimes they are on coasts so that firing may be out to sea**".

Would our Government of India and Orissa State pause to ponder over the entire problem.

Bhubaneswar

**N. Routroy**

Dt. 16-6-1986

Formerly Chief Minjster of Orissa

**Samarendra Kundu, former Union Minister of State for External Affairs in a letter to P.M. says that location of National Test Range at Baliapal will invite a "big disaster**

At : Suelpur Street  
P.O. / Dist. Balasore.  
Dt. 12-5-86

Dear Shri Gandhi,

I am indeed shocked to read in the local newspaper ( The Prajatantra ) dated 10th May '86 that the Defence Ministry has finally decided to locate the National Test Range at Baliapal - Bhograi area. If true there can not be any big disaster than this.

I hope you will please recall that on the 20th March '86 when representatives of the displaced persons met you under the leadership of Shri Madhu Dandawate, M.P., where myself, G Giri, Ex - M.L.A., Sarat Kumar Deb, M.P., V. K. Mishra, M.P., Dr. V. Venkatesh, M.P., Shri G. C. Bhuyan, M. P. and others were present, you were good enough to observe that we should ( our experts ) suggest alternative sites for the location of the National Test Range and then an indepth discussion will follow. Answering to the request of the delegation that you should visit the area you had said that let some useful "home work" be done on finding an alternative site and then you will visit the area,



Thereafter to our great surprise invitations were sent to us (myself, Biju Pattnaik and Harekrushna Mahatab) by the Minister of State for Defence to discuss the problem of rehabilitation of the displaced persons on 5th April at Delhi. We had written to the Minister that this is contrary to the decision arrived at in the meeting held with you on 20th March. With protest we had participated in the meeting. In the meeting of 16th April '86 to our pleasant surprise atleast six places (Dwaraka, Kanyakumari, Sriharikota, Satbhaia, Andamans, Sagardeep) came to our knowledge where the National Test Range could be located without causing large scale displacement of the people. The suitability or otherwise of the location of NTR in these places needed indepth discussion but to our surprise we found as if the Govt. had predetermined the location of NTR at Baliapal - Bhograi and showed a closed mind to discuss in depth the location of it at other places.

After we met you we had already began some work to find alternative sites for location of NTR. If the project is located at Baliapal - Bhograi as mentioned in our memorandum submitted to you it will displace more than a lakh of persons from a very prosperous area. From a humanitarian angle you should provide ample opportunity to us to suggest alternative sites for its location.

In view of it I would request you to spare some-times to listen to different points of view on location of NTR and visit the area and than take a decision.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,

**Samarendra Kundu**

## The growing support

Besides the affected people in particular and the people of Orissa in general many other important persons have come out with open condemnation of the Government's decision to locate the NTR at Baliapal and Bhograi. Two octogenarian Freedom fighters, eminent statesman, reputed journalists **Dr. Harekrushna Mahatab** former Chief Minister and **Dr. Radhanath Rath**, Editor of "the Samaj", have voiced their protest at the location of National Test Range. While Dr. Mahatab in various writings called it on a great human problem and Government have no right in a democracy to ride rough shod over the wishes of the people. Dr Radhanath Rath has opposed the location in his editorials, speeches and in the protest rallies and has expressed apprehension that entire Orissa will become a cantonment area.

Another octogenarian renowned Sarvodaya woman leader **Smt. Malati Choudhury** in a statement has said this is an anti-people project and it will cause incalculable human misery and will only help to add to the war machines of the state.

The Janata Party and its leaders including **Chandra Sekhar, Biju Pattnaik, Madhu Dandavate, M. P., Nilamoni Routroy** and many others whose name could not find place in this small booklet have gone out of their way to protest this location of the NTR. When **Madhu Dandavate, M. P.** and **Pramila Dandavate, Ex - M. P.** toured the area they were moved to find the grim determination of the

people to resist the location, what may come, and were horrified to find that a lush, green prosperous agricultural belt is rendered into a desert. They warned that it will become another 'Bardoli' of free India if Government goes ahead with the location of the Project.

A fact finding team consisting of **Prof. G. M. Mohapatra, Prof. Joy Krushna Mishra, Poet. Braja Nath Rath, Mana Mohan Mishra, Binod Mohanty** and others toured the area on behalf of Ganatantra Adhikar Surakha Sangathan ( G. A. S. S ) and in their report have strongly opposed location of the project and have called upon men of goodwill and all patriotic and democratic forces to raise their voices in protest.

**Dr. Sadasiva Mishra**, eminent economist and **Dr. Manmath Das**, eminent historian and former Vice-Chancellor, **Harihar Mohapatra**, retired Chief Justice, Trade Union Organisations, Political Parties, Teacher, Student and Women Organisations, Voluntary Organisation, Utkal Sammelan and many other organisation have lent their support to the people's movement. Of course **Bipin Chandra Samal** a Retired Government employee and **Gadadhar Giri**, Ex - M.L.A. as the two Presidents of the Khepanastra Birodh Committee and **Samarendra Kundu** Former Union Minister of State for External Affairs and many others have been live-wire of the people's movement. Almost all national dailies and periodicals have highlighted the issue. It is heartening to know that people are not alone in their hour of peril. With ever increasing support of the people they are hopeful that they will overcome the disaster that has befallen on them.

**Khepanastra Ghati Birodh Committees.**

# Prime Minister's Letter to Biju Pattnaik

New Delhi

June 23, 1986

Dear Shri Patnaik,

Thank you for your letter of 2nd June 1986 regarding Government's decision to establish a National Range at Baliapal in Orissa.

I am more than a little surprised at your reaction to the meeting organised by Shri Arun Singh and the concerned officials in the Ministry of Defence. However you are entitled to your own views and I will not, therefore, attempt to rebut or refute your complaints of arbitrary treatment at their hands. Let me only say that I believe they made a special efforts to initiate the discussions and I am sorry the event has not proved useful.

There are certain points you have made which are fundamentally incorrect and I am, therefore, setting the record straight :

- 1) We have no nuclear weapons programme and the National Test Range has no such components.
- 2) The location has been determined almost exclusively by geographical factors after examining a vast array of alternatives including those mentioned by you.

- 3) My Government and I am exceedingly conscious of our responsibilities to avoid causing "human misery" and with that in view we have cut the requirements of the Range to the maximum extent possible.
- 4) The range is intended for use both by the Department of Space and Defence. Our Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle project will be very much more feasible from this site as will our surface to Air and other tactical missiles projects.
- 5) Every effort will be made to ensure that 6100 families displaced from the proposed site are suitably resettled at nearby location and suitably rehabilitated in terms of income generation potential.

I believe that this facility is one of overwhelming national importance. Eminent citizens and patriots like yourself should make every effort to ensure that this fact is made known to the local populations and steps being taken to ensure their welfare are suitably communicated.

With warm regards.

Your sincerely,

**Rajiv Gandhi**