



# Project Report on Beyond Headlines

A Photo Exhibition on Uranium mining  
Jadugoda today, Domiasiat tomorrow?

16-01-2004 to 20-01-2004

Hall No – B, Stall no 355/356, Nesco Grounds,  
Western Highway, Goregaon (East), Mumbai 400 063.

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# Acknowledgement

My thanks goes first and foremost to my wife, Ruchita Khurana. She began by cheerfully supporting my efforts to put up this photo exhibition – and ended up contributing many hours of her own time and her keen eye to its completion.

This photo exhibition would not have been possible without the financial support of the **Global Greengrant Fund** and **Coalition For Environment and Development**.

My sincere thanks to Mr. Marko Ulvila, chairman, Coalition For Environment and Development, Finland, Dr. R. Sreedharan, Chairman, Mountain Environics, New Delhi. Mr. Ravi Agarwal, Director, Toxics Link, Mr. Rohit Jain of SRUTI, Mr. Vijay Pratap, Mr. Suresh Nautiyal of Vasudeva Kutumbkam, Mr. Pradip Saha, Mr. Raj, Mr. Richard, Mr. Rajeev of Center for science and Environment, Mr. Sanjeev Sane of Socialist Front, Mumbai. Mr. Ashok and Mr. Lahiri of Delhi Forum, Mr. Ghanshyam Biruli of JOAR, Jharkhand. Mr. Gideon Kharkongr of NEEDS, Shillong, Mr. Rajesh Teneja, Profolab.

A very special thanks to all those well wishers from friends to auto driver to porter to rikshaw wala, who helped me making this photo exhibition a grand success.

P.Madhavan  
3 March 2004  
New Delhi

*Beyond Headlines A Photo Exhibition on Uranium mining Jadugoda today, Domiasiat tomorrow?* Was organised by Coalition For Environment and Development, Academy of Mountain environics and READS in Mumbai, India. The exhibition was supported by Global Greengrant Funds, mm &P, JOAR, and Profolab (for photo prints).

## Aim

The main aim of this photo exhibition was to showcase the effects of uranium mining in Jadugoda and create an awareness about the future proposed uranium mining in India like Domiasiat, Meghalaya.

## Purpose

Photo Exhibition was organised as one of the event in World Social Forum (WSF). The main purpose of doing it in WSF was to highlight the issue to the visiting national and international social community about radiation effects on Jadugoda the only existing uranium mine in India and about the proposed uranium mining in Domiasiat.

## Location

The exhibition was put up in the stall No – B 355, 356, Nesco Grounds, Western Highway, Goregaon (East), Mumbai 400 063.

## Title

**Beyond Headlines** was selected as a title because these issues never form part of the headlines of newspapers despite being very important to nation and people of this

sovereign democratic republic. Everyday there is an incident, be it an accident or a cancer death due to radiations that goes unreported because public has no fundamental right to know about such threats to their health and environment. The department of Atomic Energy in India has not made public any report on the health effects of radiation in its uranium mines and in atomic plants. Though there have been several accidents at nuclear installations, affecting the health of workers and the people in the adjoining areas, no data had been disclosed. The Atomic Energy Act (1962) ensures its non-availability to the public, as all information related to nuclear technology is classified data. The information about the nuclear power and its installations, inventories, spent fuel, waste etc, are unknown to “we the people of India” while it is readily available for rest of the world. In the backdrop of the above mentioned situation it was decided to put up a Photo Exhibition on the issue of uranium mining and its ill effects.

Photo exhibition was divided in two sections - one was Jadugoda today and other was Domiasiat tomorrow?

In *Jadugoda today* a total of 10 pictures were displayed all of which were Black and White showing an old and existing mine in India, to depict gray area in the safety of uranium mining and black hole in nuclear policy. In *Domiasiat tomorrow*, a total of 8 pictures were displayed, all of which were colour to show, it being the next target for mining, and to show the virginity of this area, which lies untouched by the human greed. Pictures were carefully selected from hundreds of pictures taken by the author of this report during his trip to Jadugoda and to domiasiat as part of his research and photo documentation project on Uranium mining in India funded by Global Greengrant Funds (GGF).

Photos were selected to tell the story about the area, people, lifestyle, about the Uranium Corporation of India Limited (UCIL), its activities, the effect of radiation on the people especially the children, the crusader, etc. The photos were selected by the eminent photographers and designers from Delhi.

## **Date and Time**

The exhibition was opened on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2004 at stall no B – 355, 356, Nesco Grounds, Western Highway, Goregaon (East), Mumbai 400 063. The exhibition was opened at around 0900hrs and closed at 2200hrs throughout the exhibition days. The exhibition was concluded on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2004.

## **Prominent persons**

who visited the exhibition are

- Rajendra Singh of Tarun Bharat Sangh
- Ravi Agarwal of Toxics Link
- Swami Agnivesh
- Pradip Saha of Center for science and Environment
- Vijay Pratap of Vasudeva Kutumbkam
- Lennard Rousos of ILCO, Holland
- Toni Four, Former board member, Greenpeace international, Spain.

## **Photo Exhibition related events**

Meeting was organised titled No More Uranium No More Hibakusha.

# Result

Desired result was achieved by this photo exhibition. Overwhelming response from the visitors, their curiosity to know more about the issue are evident from the feedback messages, they left behind as the visitors note.

# Conclusion

A photograph speaks thousand words – an old statement put to test and found authentic. Unexpected response from the visitors triggered the ideal mind to do more on the lines. And this is not the end of the struggle or beginning, never too late, the campaign has to upshot.

# Jadugoda today



## *Miles to go ....*

*Jadugoda, literally meaning “magic land”, intrigues an outsider. Located in the Potka and Mosabani block of east Singhbhum district of Jharkhand, Jadugoda is 25 Km from Jamshedpur. The place is home for the Santhali and Ho tribes of Jharkhand.*

### ***Uranium Corporation of India Limited***

*Uranium Corporation of India Limited (UCIL), subsidy of Atomic Minerals Division (AMD) started mining uranium for the country's nuclear programme in Jadugoda in 1956. Thus Jadugoda became the first non – ferrous mine to go into operation with 40 tons under the indicated category and another 1000 tons*



### ***This is the life***

*Before the mines opened, the local people were entirely dependent on agriculture and forest produce for survival. As in the rest of Jharkhand, adivasis in this region too own some land, though landholdings have shrunk over generations due to repeated subdivisions. In the absence of irrigation, only one crop can be grown.*

### ***Predator Pond***

*During uranium mining and milling, enormous amounts of uranium tailing are produced. The ore contains only 0.05% of uranium. After the separation of uranium, rest of the ore (99.95%), which has become a heavily contaminated fluid, is dumped into big dams. This by-product is called **tailing**. About 90% of all radioactive material present in the ore, stays in the tailing. Contaminated water continuously creeps under the dam: the air is poisoned with radioactive dust and radioactive gases like radon. The tailing pond was constructed near the villages Telaitand and near Chatikocha in Jadugoda without any proper safety measures. The tailing ponds have also become a dumping ground for other radioactive wastes. Wastes from the Hyderabad Nuclear Fuel Processing*



***Scarred for life!***

*The aspects of mining and processing are such that it inevitably leads to an increased exposure of the community, especially the workers, to ionizing radiations from uranium and its associated elements such as radium and radon. Ionizing radiations cause an increase in cancer and birth defects.*





### ***Mother and Child***

*Some parents will never feel the proud joy of seeing their children self-sufficient.*

### ***(Misery)<sup>2</sup>***

*The aspects of mining and processing are such that it inevitably leads to an increased exposure of the community, especially the workers, to ionizing radiations from uranium and its associated elements such as radium and radon. Ionizing radiations cause an increase in cancer and birth defects.*



### ***(Not) on my own***

*Bhatin. Next to Bhatin mine is its tailing pond which is half a kilometer crow fly distance. The worst cases are found in this village. This picture is one of them. Mithun Patro, 8Years, son of contact worker Sudhir Patro. Mithun was born mentally handicapped and he cannot do anything except smile when you meet him. He cannot even stand on own legs*





### **Crusaders**

*Jharkhandis Organisation Against Radiation (JOAR) is a prominent local group engaged in spreading awareness on radiations and its ill effects among the local population. The organisation also helped organize scientific surveys of the health and environmental consequences of uranium mining. (In picture Shri Ghanshyam Birulee, president of JOAR).*



***A yet pristine***

*There are seven families belonging to Lyngdoh Langrin clan who reside in the Domiasiat village area of about 15 sq.km. They live in an ecological space where they have to endure the blood-sucking leeches, which clings to their body every now and then. They rub a mixture of lime, tobacco and salt, which they always carry to avoid these creepy creatures.*



### ***Twice a Week***

*Domiasiat, a small hamlet in West Khasi Hills District of the state of Meghalaya is about 130 km from Shillong, which is the state capital. This little “once an unknown place” has recently come into the limelight and could be the much talked about place in the country. Domiasiat is more or less an untouched pristine place since there is no connectivity with the outside world. A curious explorer would have to trek through a rugged topography for an hour and a half to reach there. What is even more challenging is riding on rooftops of a bi-weekly bus through an unsurfaced road to reach Wakhaji, which is the closest village to Domiasiat.*



***Home sweet home***

*Anthropologists do believe that the Khasis are the remnants of the first Mongolian overflow from the traditional cradle of the Indo-Chinese race and that they established themselves in their present habitat at a very remote period. Their language is the only surviving dialect of the Mon Khmer group of languages. There is a distinct similarity between the Khasi language and the Mon Khmer-Palaung dialects prevailing in Burma and Indo-China. Racially, the Khasis are very akin to the Indo-Chinese tribes but are by no means pure Mongoloid.*



### ***Target***

*Traditionally Khasi males had important duties as hunters and defending the community in case of war.*

### ***Contained and Sustained***

*About 23 villages from all directions surround Domiasiat with a population of about 5000 people. The region is backward with no proper basic facilities like drinking water, sanitation and electricity. The transport and communication network are yet to be developed.*





### ***Khul 'na' Sim Sim***

*In the year 1991-92 the Department of Atomic Power, Government of India found a trace of rich Uranium in the periphery of Domiasiat village. It was estimated to be one of the best in terms of quality and is also at a more shallow depth of 10-50 feet from the crust. It was said that this was a new find after the four-decade-old mining at Jadugoda in Jharkhand, which is almost depleted. The Uranium Corporation of India Limited (UCIL) started exploration on an experimental basis at the site called Nongbah Jynrin, which is 5km south of Domiasiat. But the fear of severe repercussions, resulting from radiation and the fear of any repetitions of the health hazards that once ravaged Jadugoda, several non-governmental organizations and the public at large protested and resisted the extraction of Uranium. This made UCIL cease the work and abandon the place. Now there is only the remnant of dugout pits, which are meticulously, covered by thick concrete.*

Beyond Headlines

*A Photo Exhibition on Uranium mining*

*Jadugoda today, Domiasiat tomorrow?*

*By*

**P. Madhavan**

*You are cordially invited to visit the photo exhibition on*

**Uranium mining organised jointly by**

*World Social forum, READS*

*and Academy of Mountain environics*

*The exhibition will be inaugurated in the*

*presence of the tribals of India on*

***Thursday, 17<sup>th</sup> of January 2004, 11.30 AM,***

***Venue: mm&P Solidarity Tent.***

***Nesco Grounds, Western Highway, Goregaon (East), Mumbai 400 063.***

*The exhibition will remain open for all till*

***Wednesday, 21<sup>st</sup> of January 2004.***

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*In collaboration with Global Green Funds,*

*mm&P, JOAR*

*and Profolab (for photo prints)*

# Event Photos









# Thank you

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