

# GREENPEACE

## MEDIA ADVISORY

### **TATAs co-owned Dhamra Port Company Limited behind allegations?**

On July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2007 an anonymously written note, printed on blank paper was circulated among select media houses. It claimed that Greenpeace had tampered with the biodiversity assessment of the Dhamra port area prepared by North Orissa University. It has now come to light that this document was authored by the Environmental Officer of DPCL, Mr. Amlan Dutta. The same note was circulated by Dutta on the email list serve 'Natural History of South Asia' on Tuesday July 3, 2007. Upon being queried, Amlan Dutta stated that he was the author of the note in a separate email to the group. He confirmed that he had indeed written the note and had done a 'comparison' of the 'North Orissa University report' and the 'Greenpeace report' himself (see annexed document).

DPCL is a 50:50 Joint Venture company between TATA Steel and construction giants, L & T. The current chairman of the board of this company is Mr. B. Muthuraman, who is also the Managing Director of TATA Steel. Clearly DPCL, and by implication the TATAs, are involved in the baseless allegations that have been leveled at Greenpeace.

### **Background**

Greenpeace India had entered into an agreement with the North Orissa University in February 2007, to conduct an independent and scientifically credible biodiversity assessment of the Dhamra Port Area.

Refer to the following table for a chronological sequence of events.

<b>DATE</b>	<b>ISSUE</b>
Feb 8th 2007	Study is commissioned by Greenpeace India to the North Orissa University, Prof. S.K.Dutta as the Principal Investigator, on the basis of a agreement between GP India and NOU.
Feb 10th 2007	Study, led by Dr. S.K.Dutta commences
May 24th 2007	The report in its entirety goes for publication with the prior informed consent of the Principal Investigator, and thereby the North Orissa University (including chapters recommendations, foreword etc.)
May 30th 2007	Greenpeace releases a critique of the flaws and inadequacies of the only EIA commissioned for this project (1997).
June 8th 2007	"Biodiversity Assessment of Dhamra Port Site and Surrounding Areas, Orissa", is jointly released by Dr. S.K.Dutta, Principal Investigator of the study, and Head of Department, Zoology, North Orissa University, and Ashish Fernandes, Oceans Campaigner, Greenpeace India at Bombay to the media. Dr. Dutta jointly addressed the media along with Greenpeace

July 1st 2007	In a press conference at Bhubaneshwar, Vice-Chancellor of North Orissa University, Mr. Sudarshan Nanda, Principal secretary of Transport and Commerce, Mr. Priyabrat Patnaik and Principal Secretary of Higher Education, Mr. Ashok Tripathy level allegations of report doctoring at Greenpeace. Dr. S.K.Dutta reiterates that the findings in the report published were his. He also mentions the fact that the impact assessments and recommendations made on the basis of the findings were not authored by him.
July 5th 2007	In a press conference at Bhubaneshwar, Greenpeace establishes the allegations as baseless and malafide, meant to distract the public from the real issue – the presence of rare species on the port site and presence of turtles in the offshore waters. Greenpeace provides evidence in the form of the agreement signed between the two parties, as well as correspondence between the two parties, which clearly showed that the report was published only with the prior informed consent of the Principal Investigator, Dr. S.K.Dutta. Greenpeace renews its call to stop work on the Dhamra port in view of the clear evidence of rare species, including turtles, on and around the site.

Against this background, the following questions arise:

1. What and / or who are the hidden forces behind these allegations being raised, more than three weeks after the release of the report on June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2007.
2. Why would the North Orissa University permit Dr. S.K.Dutta to jointly release the report with Greenpeace at Mumbai on June 8<sup>th</sup>2007, if they were uncomfortable with its contents, as later claimed by the vice-chancellor.
3. The report was sent for publication only after the Principal Investigator, and thereby the North Orissa University, were made aware of the contents and their feedback was received, as per their response to Greenpeace India, May 16<sup>th</sup> 2007.How did the North Orissa University permit the publication of the report if the contents had been tampered with as they have claimed?
4. What is the role of the Principal Secretary for transport and commerce, Mr. Priyabrat Patinaik in such a fabricated dispute? At whose behest is he intervening?
5. A proposal submitted by the Additional PCCF and CWW's office, Forest department (Wildlife alls for the notification of an ecologically sensitive zone for a radius of 10 km. around Bhitharkanika National Park, Bhitharkanika Sanctuary and Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary. This would include the Dhamra Port Site Area, a recommendation also made by Greenpeace. In clear opposition to this, the transport and commerce secretary and the higher education secretary have jumped to the defence of the port authorities. If the department of forest and wildlife is convinced that the Dhamra port site area is ecologically significant, why is it being suppressed, and at whose behest?
6. The presence of rare species at the port site has been proved. TATA Steel, its subsidiary DPCL, and the state government now have to state how they can go ahead with a mega port in the same area, ignoring the very serious ecological impacts it will have.
7. Is the Orissa Government's job to protect the environment as per its constitutional duty or is it to act in a blatantly partisan manner to protect private and corporate interests?

### **Summation**

Greenpeace renews its call to stop work on the Dhamra Port on the basis of the scientific findings by the North Orissa University. Greenpeace is not opposed to the construction of ports per se, but Greenpeace is concerned about the development of infrastructural projects in ecologically sensitive areas, and in the absence of comprehensive and independent scientific studies. The Dhamra port project is one such instance.