



Mixed reaction to public hearing on LNG Terminal

Staff Reporter

People of Kakinada have expressed doubts over the safety to public life and possible environmental hazards to the region due to the proposed Floating Storage and RE-gasification Unit (FSRU)-Based Liquefied Natural Gas Terminal at Kakinada Deep Water Port.

The Andhra Pradesh Gas Distribution Corporation Limited (APGDCL), in association with the GDF SUEZ and the Shell is proposed to develop the LNG import, storage and re-gasification and bulk natural gas supply terminal with a capacity of 5.25 million tonnes per annum.

The proposed terminal is built on an island jetty located in the sea about 1.5 km from the Kakinada coast. An environmental public hearing was conducted here on Thursday, in which people from the cross section of the society came out with their views. Those who supported the project cited reasons such as importance of natural gas for the industrial development of the region and employment to the local people. While the others who strongly opposed the project have expressed several apprehensions about the construction and maintenance of the terminal and the cascading affect of any untoward accident on the people residing in the vicinity.

Joint Collector R. Mutyala Raju, along with the Kakinada RDO B.R. Ambedkar and Environmental Engineer of the Andhra Pradesh Pollution Control Board Ravindra Babu has conducted the public hearing that continued for about three hours.

“The Gas Authority of India Limited is a partner of the APGDCL that is promoting the floating terminal. The GAIL’s negligence claimed 22 lives in Nagaram village of this district very recently. Who is going to take the responsibility in the event of the occurrence of similar tragedy in the proposed terminal? Are you going to build this project at the cost of public safety?” asked M.S.N. Sastry, a resident of Pithapuram. Echoing similar opinion, Swamy Naikar of Kakinada wondered why the project was proposed deep into the sea. “The project cost may be escalated, but there will not be any doubts about the public safety in the long run,” he pointed out.

“The officials are not making any mention about the residents of Hope Island. Are you going to vacate us from the hamlet for the construction of this project?” asked Macha Bhaga Raju, a fisherman from Hope Island. Television journalists Anji Babu and Dattu sought to know whether preference would be given to the local youth in employment and the mechanism to put a check to the pollution effluents of the terminal.

National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI) has conducted the environmental impact assessment and its Regional Director Sheik Pento Saheb said that they had taken the inputs from the government records and gave details about the steps to taken to mitigate the risks. In all, 23 people from different walks of life participated in the public hearing and aired their views.

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